



Leadership in internal communications

Leading profitable processes and managing people

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Abstract:

This research focuses on leadership in internal communications, particularly within the context of Avaus, a company that produces various consultancy services, focusing on its internal media management. The study aims to explore the pivotal role of internal communication channels in fostering employee engagement and aligning them with organizational strategies. The primary research question investigates how effective internal communication can influence overall organizational performance and employee satisfaction. Utilizing quantitative methodologies, the research delves into two selected internal documents and they are scrutinized for their effectiveness in content dissemination, message conveyance, and promoting a collaborative work environment. The research incorporates an analysis of Avaus's specific communication challenges and solutions, balancing information sharing with the risk of information overload in a dynamic corporate setting. The main theories referenced include organizational communication strategies, media management, and employee engagement models. The results demonstrate a significant correlation between well-structured internal communication practices and enhanced employee productivity. The conclusions drawn emphasize the importance of adapting communication strategies to align with organizational culture and goals, thereby optimizing internal media management for better business outcomes.

Keywords: Internal Communications, Media Management, Employee Engagement, Organizational Strategies, Avaus.

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Foreword

The research conducted at Avaus focuses on examining the impact of internal media management on organizational communication and employee alignment. The central research question delves into how employees perceive and engage with internal communication tools and strategies, and the extent to which these facilitate alignment with the organization's goals and strategies. To investigate this, the study adopts a quantitative approach, primarily utilizing a structured survey. This survey, influenced by the theoretical frameworks of Fairhurst and the insights of Field (2021), is designed to collect comprehensive data regarding employee interactions with and attitudes towards internal communication mediums.

By focusing on quantitative data, the study aims to statistically analyze the correlations and impacts of internal media tools on organizational dynamics. This analysis is particularly pertinent in the context of Avaus' six fundamental values: collaboration, ambition and mastery, ownership, human touch, fun, and results, offering measurable insights into how these values are embodied and promoted through effective communication strategies within the organization.

In the realm of Media Management, recognizing the distinction between its external and internal aspects is pivotal. Internally, the media landscape is multifaceted, comprising various mediums each serving distinct purposes, essential to effective media management (Field, 2021, 01 Introduction to internal communication section). Internal communications have causal effects on external communication, their implementation of strategy and therefore also revenue that is the main focus in private sector companies, such as Avaus.

This internal media includes vital communication channels and platforms for information dissemination, message conveyance, and content sharing among employees and stakeholders, which are crucial for promoting communication, collaboration, and information exchange within the organizational structure. At Avaus, these tools encompass intranets, emails, employee newsletters, internal blogs, podcasts, and company-wide meetings, each fulfilling specific functions from document repositories to platforms for sharing industry insights and facilitating discussions.

Defining internal communication, as highlighted by Field (2021), involves addressing its broad and varied nature. The Institute of Internal Communication (IoIC) stresses the importance of clear, timely communication for employee understanding of their roles and organizational events. Further, the IoIC identifies key reasons why internal communication is crucial today: the economic climate's impact on job security and employee loyalty, the necessity of aligning employee understanding with customer experience expectations, the trend towards more democratic and consultative organizational structures, the evolving nature of communication technologies, and the need for adaptability in the face of frequent organizational changes (IoIC, ndb).

These factors significantly influence the effectiveness of internal media channels at Avaus, affected by organizational size, culture, and communication needs. Effective internal communication is vital for maintaining informed, engaged employees, aligned with the organization's strategic goals and objectives. Avaus's approach, drawing from these insights, examines the benefits of information sharing, establishing common work methodologies, and aligning employees with organizational strategies.

Leadership's role in shaping perceptions of events is critical, as they can control the context in which events are perceived, recognizing framing opportunities (Fairhurst, 2010, Reality Construction Rule #1: Control the Context section). At Avaus, leaders view communication not just as rhetoric but as a strategic tool for shaping reality and influencing sensemaking, aligning with both Field's (2021) and IoIC's perspectives. Language is pivotal in this process, as nuanced and precise language use allows leaders to draw distinctions and reveal options for navigating complex situations (Fairhurst, 2010, Reality Construction Rule #2: Define the Situation section). Moreover, there is an acknowledgment of the role of unconscious processes in language use, essential for harnessing our unconscious in communication.

The IoIC also notes the significant influence of emotions and values in message behavior within organizations. At Avaus, this insight is applied in internal media management strategies, recognizing the impact of emotions in framing, often denied or overlooked (Fairhurst, 2010, Reality Construction Rule #6: Control Spontaneity section).

Building on these concepts, the research questionnaire conducted at Avaus, deeply rooted in the principles of Fairhurst and the insights of Field (2021), explores how communication steers organizational dynamics and assists in setting common strategic targets. This questionnaire

aims to delve into Avaus employees' interpretations and engagements with internal media tools and communication strategies.

In summary, this research at Avaus, informed by Fairhurst's ideas and Field's insights, highlights the significance of language and communication in media management. It underscores how strategic communication, when effectively employed, can align employees with organizational objectives, facilitate a common understanding of corporate strategies, and aid in navigating the complexities of the internal media landscape in a corporate setting.

1 Augmenting engagement and strategy comprehension

Engaging employees in a company's strategic planning process is crucial, as it ensures organizational coherence by aligning all members with the company's mission, vision, and objectives, thereby fostering a collective sense of purpose. This is particularly relevant at Avaus, where engagement is achieved through continuous development and discussion of the company's alignment, both in broad-based kick-off events for the entire workforce and in more focused sessions with upper management.

At Avaus, the tangible aspects of these discussions are materialized through specific files or workbooks, like those chosen for this research. These materials are instrumental in fostering engagement, as leadership communication is not just about instructing or informing subordinates, but rather about engaging them so they are motivated to contribute to the organization's collective goals. This aligns with the observation by Van Quaquebeke and Gerpott (2023) that the concrete importance of communication is often obscured by the verbosity of contemporary leadership theories, which are frequently devoid of outlining concrete leadership communication behaviors.

Moreover, the self-concept perspective on leadership effectiveness, as outlined by Van Quaquebeke and Gerpott (2023), suggests that leaders should support both subordinates' collective self-construal and their sense of self-efficacy. This is particularly relevant for Avaus, where strategic engagement involves not only inviting employees to aspire toward collective goals but also helping them believe that they can contribute to these goals. Leaders at Avaus should and try, therefore, employ situationally appropriate communication, alternating between tell-and-sell and ask-and-listen approaches based on subordinates' needs, to ensure both

engagement and a sense of agency in goal pursuit. These documents aim to be the the 'always-on' support pole for workforce, between live events and meetings.

This approach aligns with the findings of Van Quaquebeke and Gerpott (2023), who emphasize the need for leadership communication flexibility to effectively engage subordinates at work. By integrating such flexible communication strategies into its strategic planning process, Avaus can enhance employee engagement and align it with the organization's broader goals."

Gail Fairhurst, in "The Power of Framing: Creating the Language of Leadership" (2010), emphasizes the significance of communication in steering an organization towards its market objectives. Internal communication acts as a primer, laying down a mental framework that influences future recall and associations (Fairhurst, 2010, pp. 63-65). This concept underlines the impact of repetitive association on memory and strategic alignment within an organization.

The primary challenge in conducting this research through questionnaires was to ensure that the study's research question validated the chosen method. Yuksel Ekinici, in 'Designing Research Questionnaires for Business and Management Students' (2015), asserts the necessity of generating reliable and valid information through questionnaires. This is achieved by a systematic inquiry, starting with a clear definition of the research problem, which can be informed by personal observations, secondary data analysis, or a review of relevant academic literature. Subsequently, developing a theoretical framework is essential to identify relevant factors and variables appropriate to the research problem.

The research aimed to clarify how internal strategic materials are perceived by employees and how this perception correlates with their daily work and the overarching strategic alignment impacting business outcomes. Tsedal Neeley's "Remote Work Revolution: Succeeding from Anywhere" (2021) outlines critical factors for cultivating a common culture in multilocal teams. Among these, three main actions are particularly relevant to this research, focusing on supporting the internal documentation process:

- Set the Compass: Initiating sessions that establish clear objectives, exemplified by Avaus' bi-annual kick-off events.
- Discuss Work Practices Together: Establishing communication norms to foster an inclusive and psychologically safe team environment, as seen in Avaus' bi-weekly breakfast sessions for country offices.

- Acknowledge Contributions and Opportunities for Improvement: Regular discussions with managers, which are conducted monthly at Avaus.

Beyond the scope of the research, these tactics and habits are instrumental in aligning documentation processes and enhancing the understanding and iteration of strategic materials within the organization.

Engaging employees in the strategic development process is vital for fostering a sense of ownership and accountability towards the organization's strategic objectives, leading to enhanced engagement, motivation, and commitment. Individuals across various organizational levels possess critical insights and innovative ideas that can significantly contribute to improving processes, products, and services. Their involvement not only facilitates novel solutions and opportunities but also highlights concerns and observations that might remain unaddressed without open dialogue on strategic alignment.

A diverse group of employees provides a range of perspectives, contributing to more informed and comprehensive decision-making. This diversity helps mitigate potential blind spots in the strategic plan. Furthermore, as strategy often entails changes in operational procedures, involving employees in the planning process can simplify the management and implementation of these changes by fostering a deeper understanding of the reasons behind these modifications.

In "The Leadership Habit: Transforming Behaviors to Drive Results," Berberick, Lindsay, and Fritchen (2017) highlight the significance of leadership behaviors in achieving significant outcomes. They advocate for leadership behaviors and documentation to be explicitly connected to expected outcomes, arguing that tangible demonstrations of a company's mission and values in daily activities influence employees more than abstract statements. This documentation is crucial for enhancing business acumen within the organization, helping employees understand how their roles influence key organizational drivers such as people, revenue, operational efficiency, product quality, and innovation.

Neeley's (2021) work in "Remote Work Revolution: Succeeding from Anywhere" underscores the importance of maintaining strategic alignment in remote work environments, particularly for companies like Avaus. She emphasizes the need for a unified group identity in multilocal settings to boost engagement and align individual efforts with the overall

strategic success. In diverse project landscapes, structured ways of working and consistent, predictable documentation are key to maintaining motivation and direction.

Employee engagement, boosted by their involvement in strategic discussions, typically results in greater productivity, loyalty, and satisfaction. Transparently sharing strategic plans and fostering inclusive participation in their development ensures effective communication and engagement. This practice not only improves morale and job satisfaction but also positively influences retention and performance.

Adapting to the dynamic nature of the business environment requires a flexible and responsive organizational structure, and involving employees in strategy discussions enhances this flexibility. Such involvement offers valuable learning opportunities, deepening employees' understanding of the industry and broader business context, and furthering their professional development. Overall, including employees in the strategic planning process leads to a more robust and effective strategy, aligning the organization towards a shared vision and ensuring successful strategic execution.

2 Avaus marketing innovations - case study

The research focuses on Avaus Marketing Innovations, serving as a case study to analyze the influence of strategy work, cultural cornerstones, and shared work practices on employees' emotions and reactions to strategic documentation. Avaus, a company dedicated to fostering customer-centricity and driving business growth based on well established marketing automation, specializes in leveraging data for strategic purposes. The firm is at the forefront of developing Generative AI solutions, delivering significant value while aiding clients in conceptualizing a vision for the future, particularly in personalized customer experiences. Their approach integrates technical, analytical, and organizational capabilities, emphasizing a return on investment and challenging established norms ("Avaus," n.d.).

As a strategic partner, Avaus offers counsel in marketing, sales, and service capabilities, focusing on Data and AI-driven growth and advocating for customer-centric organizational structures. Their expertise encompasses strategic advisory, data governance, and AI capabilities, specializing in emerging fields such as experience technologies, Generative AI,

and data analytics. Avaus is distinct in its commitment to delivering tangible value from technology and data investments through active client engagement ("Avaus," n.d.).

Strategically, Avaus aims to expand from a regional leader in the Nordic region to a prominent European entity. This growth strategy involves intensifying their presence in core markets like Finland and Sweden and expanding into new territories like Germany and Italy, supported by a delivery center in Poland ("Avaus," n.d.).

The organizational culture at Avaus is anchored in six fundamental principles, which include collaboration, ambition and mastery, ownership, human touch, fun, and results. These principles are aimed at fostering teamwork, continuous learning, accountability, work-life balance, a positive work environment, and focusing on tangible growth and client ROI. Avaus also pursues technology partnerships to enhance their innovative solution offerings to clients. In summary, Avaus is strategically positioned to assist businesses in embracing data-driven growth and preparing for future challenges in the business landscape ("Avaus," n.d.).

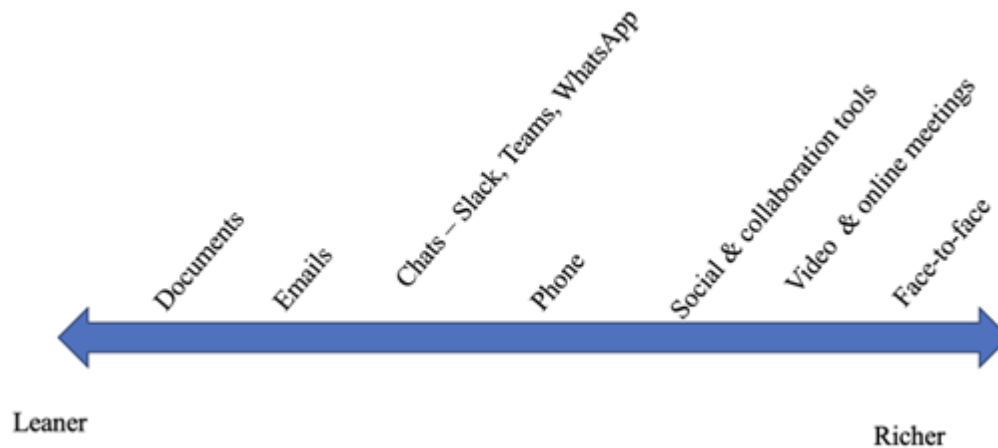
2.1 Avaus handbook – document review

The "Avaus Handbook: Approach Overview" offers an insightful glimpse into the operational ideologies and fundamental principles of Avaus, a company distinguished in boosting sales and marketing through data-driven and automated solutions. This summary aims to shortly encapsulate the handbook's essence, examining its structural composition, pivotal concepts, and their broader implications, thereby enlightening Avaus' distinctive organizational identity and methodology.

Strategically, the handbook establishes Avaus' foundational beliefs and operational schema, highlighting a client-focused approach, scalability, collaborative cross-functionality, and the ethos of continuous learning. These principles direct the workforce towards unified value generation in sales and marketing, exploiting Avaus' strengths in data and automation. This translates into actionable strategies, empowering employees to enhance client experiences and align with Avaus' overarching goals.

In "Remote Work Revolution: Succeeding from Anywhere" (Neeley, 2021), the handbook is identified as lean media, contrasting with the more comprehensive rich media. Lean media are

deemed efficient in straightforward scenarios (Neeley, 2021, p.70). The handbook exemplifies this, employing lean tools in strategy execution, resonating with Avaus' ownership-centric and result-oriented values, and focusing on skill mastery and proactive development.



Fairhurst, G. T. (2010). The power of framing: Creating the language of leadership (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass. Figure 1. Examples of lean versus rich media.

"The Power of Framing: Creating the Language of Leadership" by Fairhurst (2010) underscores the impact of communication in leadership. Effective framing fosters collective goal comprehension, enthusiasm, cooperation, trust, and a substantial organizational identity (Fairhurst, 2010, p. 51). The Avaus Handbook mirrors these aspects, clearly presenting its objectives and strategies. It sets foundational goals like fostering customer-centric organizations and aims to be a top European consultancy by 2025 with expertise in data and automation. It outlines a collective path, setting expectations for growth and direction.

The handbook also details Avaus' competencies, emphasizing a cross-competence environment vital to their identity. It addresses complex client needs in data-driven marketing and sales. Enthusiasm and cooperation are fostered through a focus on business impact and client satisfaction. Trust is built through consistent business outcomes, emphasizing client needs. The "Factory route" demonstrates a standardized, replicable process, building internal and external confidence.

Avaus defines its identity through cultural cornerstones, outlining expected behaviors and attitudes of "Avausians." This cultural foundation connects everyday actions to the company's broader goals and mission. The handbook applies Fairhurst's framing principles in leadership,

highlighting the importance of deliberate communication in crafting an inspiring organizational narrative.

The handbook begins with an introductory section, systematically addressing Avaus' organizational framework. Key sections include confidentiality protocols, reader guidelines, and a comprehensive description of Avaus' identity and goals. It explores Avaus' cultural cornerstones, mission, vision, strategic goals, and future direction, and elucidates Avaus' methodology through nine guiding principles encompassing client-centeredness, focus on business outcomes, scalability, efficacy of cross-functional teams, and systematic development.

The handbook effectively communicates Avaus' core values and methodologies. It emphasizes delivering value in sales and marketing through data and automation, highlighting client-centricity, scalability, and systematic development. Confidentiality and the collaborative nature of the document are emphasized, promoting the organization's values. The guidelines encourage active engagement and learning, targeting both new and existing employees as a resource for understanding Avaus' ethos and client engagement processes.

The handbook introduces key concepts like client obsession, scalability, use-case-based approach, cross-functional teams, systematic development, operational efficiency, end-customer activation, and a "privacy by design" approach. These concepts are integral to Avaus' strategy, focusing on efficiency and scalability.

The Avaus Handbook effectively translates principles into practical applications, urging continuous learning and adaptation. It underscores the role of assets, methodologies, and best practices in client engagements. The focus on efficiency and replicability aligns with the goal of delivering value in marketing and sales. Overall, the "Avaus Handbook: Approach Overview" is a comprehensive, structured guide to Avaus' organizational identity and approach, conveying the importance of client-centricity, scalability, and systematic development, thereby serving as an actionable resource for Avaus team members.

2.2 Avaus Strategy 2020-2025: Rookie intro - document review

The "Avaus Strategy 2020-2025: Rookie Intro" document presents a comprehensive overview of Avaus' ambition to evolve into a leading European boutique consultancy by 2025, focusing on enhancing sales and marketing outcomes through data-driven approaches and automation. This analysis will concisely dissect the strategic outline, reflecting on its goals, methodologies, and organizational impact while incorporating academic perspectives on leadership and strategic framing.

Avaus' growth target is ambitious: to emerge as a premier consultancy with over 300 experts, recognized as an employer of choice. Their strategy pivots on three foundational elements: customer-focused consultation, scalability and speed, and strategic partnerships with accountability. Each element underpins Avaus' commitment to delivering measurable business results, reflecting a culture that revolves around exemplary performance.

Central to Avaus' approach is the enhancement of scalability and speed in clients' marketing operations. This involves eradicating internal client roadblocks and establishing a technical infrastructure conducive to rapid growth. Further, Avaus places significant emphasis on deepening customer understanding and tailoring services to meet specific needs, ranging from data engineering to strategic market positioning. This customer-centric approach likely involves a nuanced comprehension of individual customer preferences and behaviors.

Strategic partnerships and a results-driven accountability framework underscore Avaus' commitment to tangible outcomes. This approach aligns with the leadership framing principles discussed in Fairhurst's "The Power of Framing: Creating the Language of Leadership" (2010), where language and leadership dynamics are intertwined. Avaus' strategy, articulated through this lens, fosters a collective organizational understanding and goal orientation.

Avaus describes its strategy through distinct phases: "Align," "Build," "Scale," and "Optimize/Democratize." Each phase represents a temporal stage with specific priorities and goals. The "Align" phase (Months 0-3) focuses on synchronizing organizational efforts with client objectives, ensuring a unified vision. The "Build" phase (Months 4-18) involves constructing technical and operational solutions, emphasizing speed and removing obstacles to enable scalability. This phase includes implementing 20-30 use cases to showcase the business value of Avaus' approach.

The "Scale" phase (Month 18 onwards) concentrates on refining workflows to scale the data-driven approach, incorporating organizational change, and learning from both successes and failures. The final phase, "Optimize or Democratize" (Month 24 onwards), aims to accelerate development based on ROI, sharing insights and encouraging a data-driven culture both internally and with clients. This phase also emphasizes making data and customer insights widely accessible, democratizing data within the organization.

Avaus' strategic narrative, structured in phases, instills organizational knowledge and charts a trajectory for growth and market adaptation. This methodical approach cultivates cooperation and trust, fostering enthusiasm for the company's future prospects. Furthermore, Avaus' strategy reflects a construction of meaningful organizational identity. By positioning itself as a trusted partner and desirable employer, and by committing to strategic partnerships and accountability, Avaus articulates a leadership framework that balances aspirational goals with measurable outcomes. The emphasis on transparency and knowledge sharing within the organization not only reinforces Avaus' collective identity but also exemplifies the leadership's dedication to openness and knowledge dissemination, crucial for nurturing trust and collective commitment (Fairhurst, 2010, p. 51).

3 Theoretical framework - business strategy implementation

The complexities of strategy implementation in business are fundamentally influenced by communication dynamics, as highlighted by Samra-Fredericks (2003). The study's findings on coauthoring practices in strategic debates shed light on how collective voices are either adopted or marginalized, offering insights into group direction, unity, and member roles. Such an understanding is pivotal in gauging the underlying issues in strategy formulation, as emphasized by Nathues, Endedijk, and van Vuuren (2023).

In the contemporary business milieu, characterized by rapid changes and uncertainties, effective strategy implementation is closely tied to knowledge management. Drawing upon Marcin Stępień's research, "Knowledge Management in the Implementation of the Company's Business Strategy" (Stępień, 2023), this framework examines the role of knowledge processes—from creation to application—in strategic decision-making.

Stępień (2023) elucidates that knowledge management, aligning with strategic objectives, is critical for enhancing a firm's adaptability and responsiveness. It becomes particularly significant amidst environmental volatility, including economic, regulatory, and technological shifts. Here, the concept of dynamic capabilities, as proposed by Teece (2007), is integral. These capabilities reflect an organization's proficiency in evolving its knowledge base, essential for adapting business strategies effectively.

Further, fostering a culture of continuous learning and knowledge sharing is vital for organizational agility. In this context, emotional energy, as defined by Collins (2004), emerges as a crucial factor. As Vuori (2023) notes, emotional energy, aligning with organizational values like collaboration and human touch, significantly influences strategy implementation, particularly in ambiguous contexts.

Yue, Men, and Ferguson's (2010) research underscores the importance of trust, especially in transformational leadership and transparent communication, for fostering openness to change. Supporting Oreg (2006) and Rousseau and Tijoriwala (1999), this study highlights the need for leaders to acknowledge and address employee concerns, fostering a supportive culture conducive to innovation and change.

In conclusion, integrating knowledge management with business strategy, underpinned by effective communication, trust, and emotional engagement, is essential for navigating the complexities of today's business environment. This framework not only aligns with theoretical perspectives but also offers practical insights for strategic implementation in dynamic settings.

4 Methodology of the research

When conducting a questionnaire to explore people's perceptions of shared documents, it's crucial to acknowledge the challenges in formulating questions about attitudes. As highlighted by Bradburn et al. (2015), attitude questions are inherently subjective and do not have "true" answers. This is because attitudes are internal states, existing solely in a person's mind, and cannot be observed or measured externally. This notion is particularly relevant when considering the primary benefits of using a questionnaire, such as collecting data from a large number of respondents and ensuring consistency in responses.

The subjective nature of attitudes, as described by Bradburn, Sudman, and Wansink (2015), means that questions related to perceptions of shared documents need to be crafted with an understanding that responses will be influenced by individual perspectives and mental states. This perspective is vital when considering the anonymity advantage of questionnaires, where respondents might feel more comfortable sharing their opinions. Anonymity can lead to more candid responses, but it's essential to remember that these responses reflect personal perceptions, which can be consistent or inconsistent, clear or unclear, but not categorically true or false.

In light of these insights, the design of questionnaires for mapping people's conceptions of shared documents becomes even more critical. Ensuring clarity, brevity, and relevance in questions, while also considering participants' motivations and privacy concerns, can aid in eliciting genuine responses. This approach aligns with the need to observe how answers are affected by different factors, as there is no external standard to validate the responses to attitude questions (Bradburn et al., 2015). The emphasis on piloting the questionnaire and analyzing response rates gains additional importance, as it helps refine the survey to better capture the nuanced and subjective nature of attitudes towards shared documents.

It's important to consider the potential downsides and weaknesses inherent in research conducted through online questionnaires. Bolton & Brace (2022) provide valuable insights into these challenges. They describe the questionnaire as a medium of remote conversation between the researcher and the respondent, a conversation crafted by someone who is not physically present. This dynamic presents a unique challenge: ensuring that the questions written have the same meaning to all respondents, regardless of how they are read on a screen or how an interviewer might articulate them (Bolton & Brace, 2022, Challenges of remote conversations section). This aspect highlights a key difficulty in remote survey research – the potential for misinterpretation or variation in understanding of questions, which can lead to inconsistencies in the data collected.

Furthermore, as Bolton & Brace (2022) observe, surveys typically depend on self-reported information from respondents. They point out that respondents, who are usually volunteers, might not find it worthwhile to provide precise or thoughtful responses, especially for questions they consider trivial or for tasks that offer little to no reward. This might include recalling mundane details articulating emotions about topics – things they may have never consciously considered. The question then arises: even if respondents can recognize their feelings and

emotions, are they able to accurately articulate them or do they consider spending time on doing so valuable? (Bolton & Brace, 2022, Obtaining the best answers section).

Building upon the observations of Bolton & Brace (2022) regarding the limitations of self-reported information in surveys, Wilson (2013) offers further guidance on enhancing the effectiveness of questionnaires, particularly in the context of exploring perceptions of shared documents. Wilson emphasizes the importance of choosing words that are universally understood by all respondents.

Additionally, Wilson (2013) addresses another common pitfall in survey design: the use of "double questions." He advises designing questions that address a single issue to avoid confusion and ensure the accuracy of responses. Double questions, which are essentially two questions posing as one, are not only difficult to answer but also compromise the quality of the data collected. They are a frequent mistake even in professionally designed surveys.

Wilson provides examples of such questions, suggesting that they should be split into separate items with appropriate response alternatives (Wilson, 2013, Wording of Questions section). This advice complements the concerns raised by Bolton & Brace (2022) about the reliability of self-reported data, especially when respondents are asked to articulate their emotions or opinions on subjects they haven't consciously considered. Together, these insights from Bolton & Brace and Wilson form a comprehensive guide for designing effective questionnaires, especially when delving into the subjective realm of shared documents' perceptions.

Concluding the chapter on conducting questionnaires to explore people's perceptions of shared documents, the case of the Avaus questionnaire serves as an illustrative example. The design and implementation of the Avaus questionnaire reflect the principles and challenges discussed throughout this chapter. Initially, the questionnaire asked respondents to summarize the primary objective of internal documents, an approach that aligns with the need for clarity and purpose in communication, as highlighted by Wilson (2013) and Bolton & Brace (2022). This step not only evaluated the documents' clarity but also probed respondents' understanding, reflecting the subjective nature of attitudes and perceptions discussed by Bradburn et al. (2015).

5 Case study process at Avaus marketing innovations

In the winter of 2022, Avaus initiated a research project to examine how its strategy was integrated into daily work and decision-making. This involved a structured questionnaire divided into three segments for different hierarchical levels within Avaus' international organization. This division was based on the understanding that strategy is typically disseminated top-down, though in a conversational manner for development and implementation. The questionnaires, detailed in appendices 1, 2, and 3, were uniform in the number of questions and themes, with variations in tone and wording for different organizational ranks.

Uniform phrasing in surveys ensures consistency in understanding and comparability of responses. However, varied wording was used to accommodate the different vocabularies and familiarity of respondent groups: decision-makers/advisors, management, and regular employees. This approach, following Ekinici (2015), required separate analysis for each subgroup.

Anna Trygg, the country lead for Avaus Sweden, facilitated the questionnaire's design, providing familiar documents to all Avaus employees. This familiarity aimed to make completing the concise ten-question survey efficient. The survey was introduced in bi-weekly breakfast sessions and supplemented by bi-monthly reminder emails.

The Avaus questionnaire, which was designed as an evaluative tool, assessed the impact and effectiveness of internal documents. It began by asking respondents to summarize the primary objective of these documents, evaluating their clarity and purpose. Additionally, it inquired about any further questions or thoughts that the documents might have stimulated, aiming to identify potential gaps in content or areas that required clarification.

A substantial part of the questionnaire probed the balance between emotional and logical language within the documents, determining whether Avaus' language tended more towards rationality or emotional appeal. This aspect was crucial for understanding how the content was received and interpreted by the employees.

The questionnaire also evaluated how effectively Avaus' vision and mission were communicated, assessing whether these elements were perceived as distant ideals or attainable,

actionable goals. This helped in understanding the motivational impact of these statements on the employees. Another significant component was how respondents could translate the content of the documents to align Avaus' vision and mission with the daily work of their teams. This question aimed to gauge the practical applicability of the documents in everyday operations and leadership.

Moreover, the questionnaire delved into the overarching themes present in the materials, such as the translation of business vision and strategy into concrete plans. It sought to identify which aspects of Avaus' strategy were most prominently addressed and how they aligned with the company's long-term objectives. Finally, it examined the presence of Avaus' cultural cornerstones within the documents. Respondents were asked to identify which aspects of the company culture were most and least represented, aiding in understanding how well the company's values and ethos were embedded in its strategic communications.

The survey faced challenges, notably a low response rate, which impacted the overall success of the data collection process. The engagement among employees was lower than anticipated, partly due to the demanding nature of billable work in consultancy and a lack of familiarity with the documents among the workforce. Anna Trygg, the country lead for Avaus Sweden, facilitated the questionnaire's design, providing familiar documents to all Avaus employees. This part of the process was to make sure that the surveys were concise and efficient. The survey was introduced in bi-weekly breakfast sessions and supplemented by bi-monthly reminder emails.

To improve future iterations, the factors contributing to the low response rate should be addressed, possibly by revising the distribution strategy or adjusting the questionnaire to enhance employee engagement. This would encourage higher participation for a more representative dataset.

The lack of motivation among participants was a critical factor, as seen in the numeric results: the employee version was answered by seven people, the team lead and managers by five, and the executive level by three, from a total workforce of around 100. This low engagement highlighted the need for ensuring the relevance and perceived value of such questionnaires to motivate higher response rates.

6 Results and analysis

Through a detailed survey and analysis of the results, the research seeks to understand how these documents shape the company's strategic direction and operational effectiveness. Key themes explored include the perceived purpose of internal materials, their role in articulating the company's vision and strategy, and their impact on team dynamics and project execution. The findings provide Avaus with insights to enhance the alignment of its strategic goals with employee understanding and engagement.

6.1 Assessing internal documents' Impact on employee and project management

The chart below encapsulates respondent preferences regarding the utility of organizational materials at Avaus. The purpose ascribed to these materials is quantitatively represented, with the majority of respondents endorsing their role in the cultivation of a unified strategic vision, as indicated by the predominant selection of "Develop a collective sense of goals, objectives, and strategies."

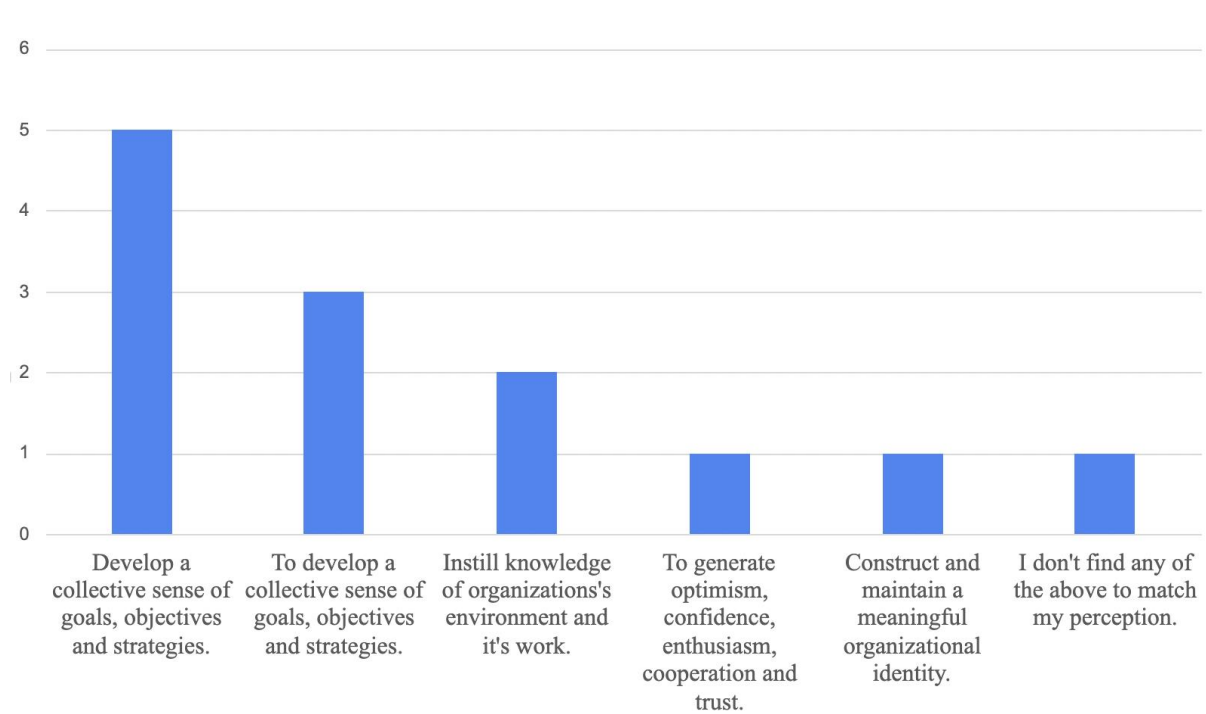


Figure 2. Avaus questionnaires – question one, compilation of responses. Backman, M. (2023).

This preference highlights the materials' efficacy in aligning individual and organizational objectives, a key component in the operational coherence of the firm. In stark contrast, fewer

respondents perceive these materials as instrumental in shaping organizational identity, suggesting a potential reassessment of the materials' role in conveying the unique corporate ethos of Avaus.

Intermediate selections, which emphasize the emotional and cognitive reinforcement provided by the materials, including optimism, indicate a moderate acknowledgment of these facets in organizational development. Yet, these areas appear secondary to the overarching strategic alignment. The data suggests a primary valuation of materials that articulate and reinforce strategic alignment within the organization. Simultaneously, it underscores the need for a nuanced approach to material development that encapsulates the full range of employee expectations and the multifaceted nature of organizational engagement.

The chart also notes a non-negligible contingent of respondents who find that none of the provided options resonate with their perception. This divergence points to a possible misalignment that warrants further inquiry, ensuring that organizational materials are resonant with the entire employee spectrum at Avaus.

6.2 Synthesizing perceived goals in document objectives

The responses to the questionnaire question, "Describe in your own words in one sentence, what do these documents try to achieve?" collectively encapsulate Avaus' multifaceted strategy.

"Frame how we do things"
"A direction towards a common goal"
"Set the foundation for new (and existing) employees to understand what Avaus does, how and why."
"To give clear guidance to Avaus Strategy."
"Alignment on what we do, how we do it and why it is important"
"Outline Avaus ambition and priorities to achieve it"
"WHY we exist, WHAT value we create for our clients and HOW we do it."
"Help and guide employees to maintain a clear focus on what our company is pursuing"
"Knowledge share as efficiently as possible"
"To make every Avausian understand the common, important matters and goals in an understandable, simplified way."
"They try to give us a common way of looking at customer and how to solve their problems"
"Clarity"
"Illustrate the Big picture"
"Internal communication of Avaus; company profile, missions, goals, and targets."

These answers, while varied, converge on a central theme of establishing a coherent and unified understanding of the company's mission, methods, and client value proposition. They emphasize setting a foundational understanding for both new and existing employees,

elucidating Avaus' operations, rationale, and strategic objectives. This is aimed at ensuring alignment across the organization in terms of actions and importance, clearly outlining the company's ambitions, priorities, and the rationale behind its existence. Furthermore, they stress the significance of maintaining a focused approach within the company, sharing knowledge efficiently, and simplifying complex ideas for universal understanding among Avaus employees.

The responses also highlight the importance of a common perspective on customer engagement and problem-solving, aiming for clarity in communication, and presenting a comprehensive view of Avaus' internal structure, profile, mission, goals, and targets. This holistic approach reflects an endeavor to instill a shared vision and operational coherence within the company, fostering an environment where every employee is attuned to the organization's objectives and methods.

6.3 Stimulating further Inquiry on the strategic documents

The third question of the questionnaire was 'If these documents would probe one further question from you - what would it be?' The answers varied but can be analysed as there are themes that carry within the answers below. This question seeks to delve deeper into the coherence of Avaus' strategic planning, understanding the roles and competencies of different teams, and evaluating the effectiveness of their methods in distinct market contexts. It also probes the extent to which Avaus' strategies are reflected in its internal and external communications, ensuring that these strategies are not only well-articulated but also practically applicable and distinct from industry norms.

“Where do we describe the "WHAT" of what we do = the bulk of a business strategy “

“How will this impact our customers?”

“Where is the action plan?!”

“More information about our competence areas and the role of each team in achieving our vision and executing our strategy.”

“What are the key success factors to achieve the goals”

“What are the things that WE do not focus on (that might still be in our DNA)”

“How our approach differs from our competitors”

“Could the simplified lists or visualisations be better integrated in both documents, so they support each other?”

“How can I utilise Factory model with a non-factory client?”

Reflecting on the diverse strategic elements highlighted in Avaus' responses, a synthesized inquiry emerges: "How do Avaus' outlined strategies, specifically in terms of business focus, customer impact, and detailed action plans, interconnect to ensure the achievement of

ambitious targets like a 25% revenue growth? Furthermore, how does Avaus differentiate its approach from competitors and adapt its models, such as the Factory model, to suit various client scenarios, including those not traditionally aligned with these models?"

Analyzing Avaus' strategic approach based on the responses provided requires a multi-faceted examination of the company's business practices, strategies, and their implications. The first area of focus is the core business strategy, specifically identifying the "WHAT" of Avaus' activities. This involves an in-depth look at how clearly and effectively Avaus defines its primary business functions and goals. Understanding this foundational aspect is crucial, as it sets the stage for all other strategic endeavors and their alignment with the company's mission and vision.

An examination of Avaus' action plan is also critical. This involves scrutinizing the details and articulation of the company's action plans, their alignment with overall goals, and their feasibility. A well-defined action plan is vital for guiding the organization towards its objectives and ensuring that all team members are working cohesively towards common goals.

The analysis needs to be extended to understanding the roles of different teams within Avaus and their contribution to the company's vision and strategy. This involves looking at the specific competencies of each team and how these are utilized and integrated within the broader strategic framework. It's important to assess how each team's unique skills and expertise contribute to the overall success of the company.

Furthermore, identifying key success factors as outlined in the responses is crucial - focus should be on determining the essential elements necessary for achieving Avaus' strategic goals, such as the targeted 25% revenue growth. Understanding these factors provides a clear picture of what drives success at Avaus and where the company should focus its efforts.

Conversely, exploring the areas that Avaus may not focus on, which could still be part of its organizational DNA, offers insights into the company's strategic choices and priorities. This helps in understanding the rationale behind certain decisions and how they align with the company's long-term goals.

Another significant aspect is how Avaus differentiates itself from competitors. This requires a comparative analysis to understand Avaus' unique selling points and how these set the

company apart in a competitive market. It's vital to assess how Avaus' approach and strategies distinguish it from others in the industry.

Additionally, the effectiveness of integrating simplified lists and visualizations in Avaus' strategy documents needs assessment. This involves evaluating whether such integrations enhance understanding and create synergies between different strategic components, making complex strategies more accessible and comprehensible, or with the vast amount of information available, should the visual aspect be simplified.

The adaptability of Avaus' models, such as the Factory model, for non-factory clients is another critical area. It's important to assess how flexible Avaus' methodologies are and how they can be adapted to suit various client scenarios, ensuring robust and versatile strategies.

Finally, investigating the methods employed by Avaus to achieve specific targets, including a 25% revenue growth, is important. This encompasses examining both the theoretical frameworks and practical applications of these strategies, to understand their effectiveness and identify potential areas for improvement.

6.4 Analyzing emotion and logic in organizational language

To address the question of whether Avaus' language in the provided documents leans more towards being driven by logic and reason or being emotional, a scale of 1 (indicative of logic and reason) to 5 (emotional language) is utilized. The numeric values as indicate a general trend towards logical and reasoned language, as evidenced by the predominance of ratings such as 2 and 3. These lower scores suggest a linguistic style that, while not entirely devoid of emotion, is primarily guided by logical structuring and rational expression.

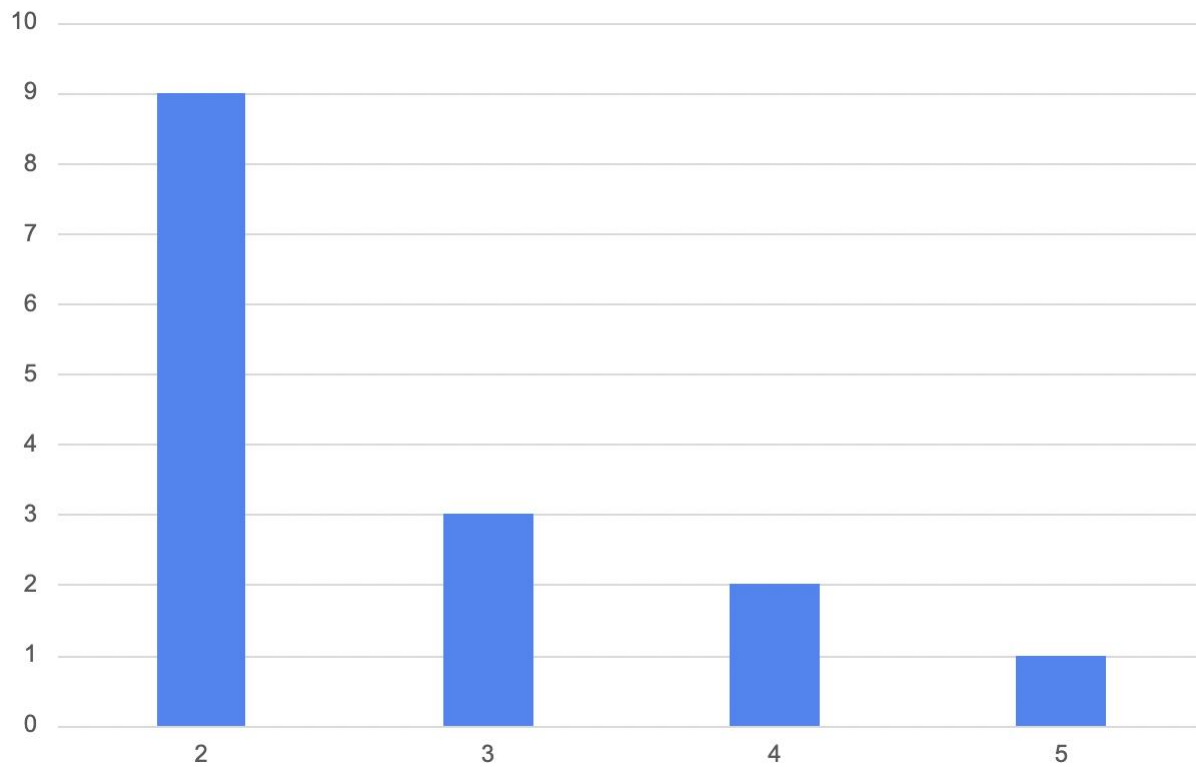


Figure 3. Avaus questionnaires – question 4, compilation of responses. Backman, M. (2023).

The presence of occasional higher ratings, like 4, indicates opinions that for some, emotional language is more pronounced. However, these are not the norm but rather exceptions within the broader context of the documents. Therefore, it can be inferred that while Avaus does employ emotional language at times, this usage is not the overarching characteristic of their communication style. Instead, it appears that Avaus predominantly relies on a more reasoned and logical approach in their language, using emotion more sparingly to possibly accentuate specific points or to engage the reader on a more personal level.

In conclusion, Avaus' language, as represented in these documents, is closer to being driven by logic and reason, with sporadic yet strategic use of emotional terms. This balanced approach allows for clear, rational communication while also acknowledging the role of emotions in enhancing the relatability and impact of the content.

6.5 Evaluating clarity and attainability in vision and mission

From the statistical perspective, the majority of respondents have rated the organization's vision and mission as a 4 on a scale from 1 (vision and mission seem distant) to 5 (vision and mission

feels linear and attainable). This indicates a positive perception overall, suggesting that the majority of stakeholders believe the vision and mission are relatively clear and can be realistically achieved. There are, however, no responses at the extreme ends of the scale (1 or 5), which may signal a lack of strong opinions or a central tendency bias where respondents avoid extreme options.

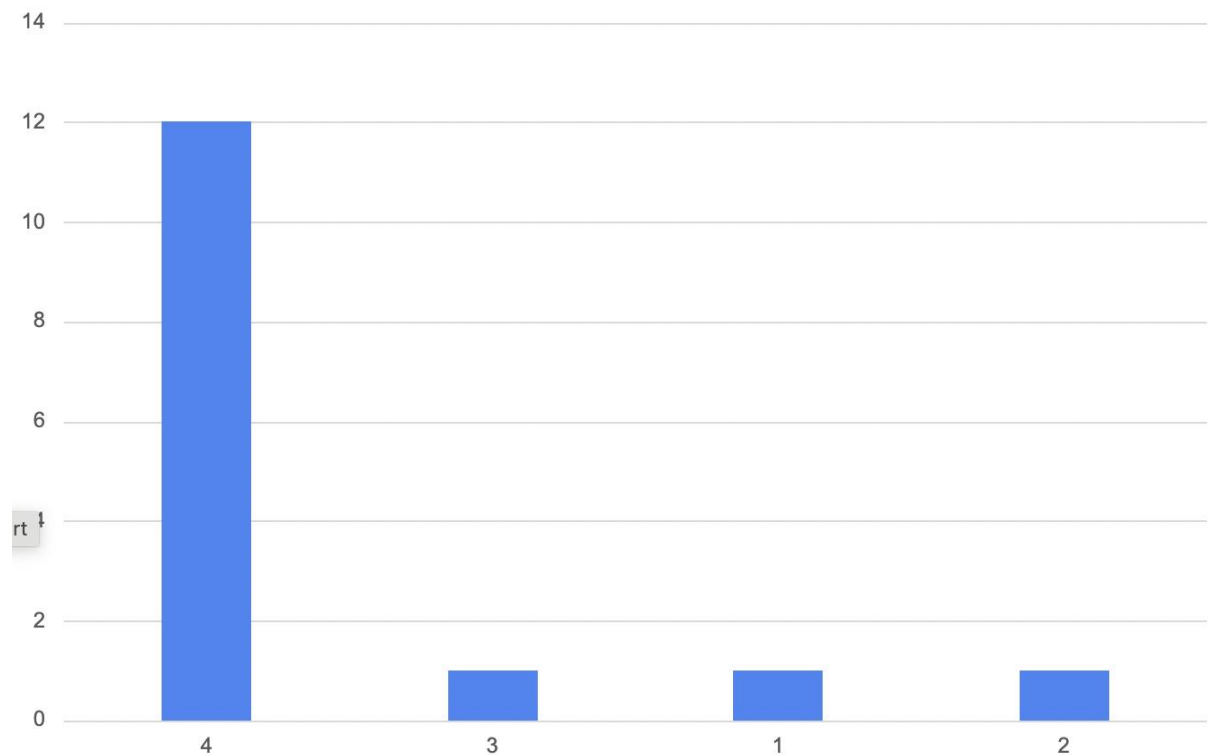


Figure 4. Avaus questionnaires – question 5, compilation of responses. Backman, M. (2023).

In organizational theory, a clearly articulated and attainable vision and mission are fundamental to guiding strategy and ensuring organizational alignment. The data suggests that the organization has been moderately successful in communicating its vision and mission, although there is room for improvement to achieve maximum clarity and a sense of attainability. The absence of ratings at the highest level could indicate a perceived gap between the current state and the ideal state as articulated by the vision and mission statements.

In terms of strategic management implications, the organization might focus on bridging the gap between the current perception and the highest attainability score. This could involve refining the vision and mission statements for greater specificity, ensuring they are grounded in the organization's capabilities and realistic about the challenges ahead. The organization might also benefit from engaging with its stakeholders to understand the drivers behind their perceptions and to involve them in the process of redefining and operationalizing the vision and mission.

6.6 Bridging strategy, vision and team operations

The sixth question pursued to assess the ability of respondents to translate the organization's strategic documents into their team's daily operations. Specifically, the question asks whether respondents can communicate the content of the organization's vision and mission in their own words in a way that bridges them to the everyday work of their team, with a rating scale from 1 (finding the documents hard to deploy as leadership tools) to 5 (feeling that the documents streamline leading people).

The results indicate a strong leaning towards the higher end of the scale, with the majority of responses clustering at 4. This suggests that most respondents feel fairly confident in their ability to relate the strategic vision and mission to their team's daily tasks, indicating a sense of coherence between high-level strategic documents and ground-level operations. The data shows that respondents mostly feel the materials are effective leadership tools that can be utilized to guide their teams.

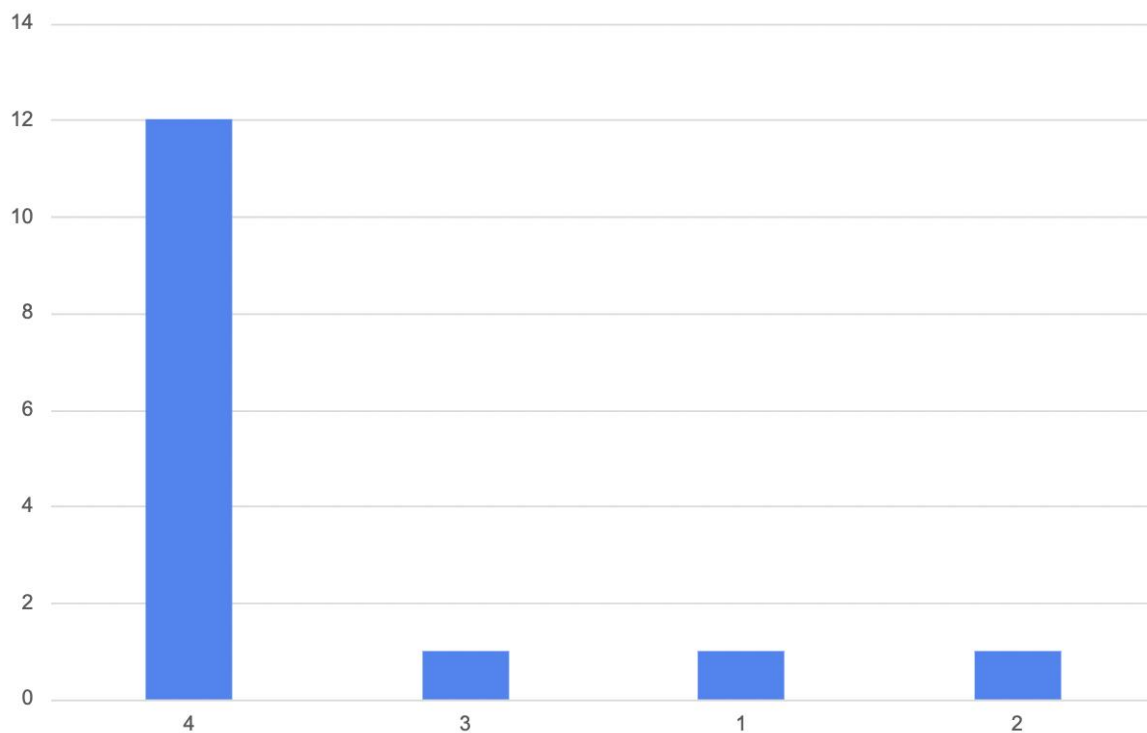


Figure 5. Avasus questionnaires – question 6, compilation of responses. Backman, M. (2023).

From an academic standpoint, one would interpret these results as indicative of a successful translation of high-level strategic objectives into actionable items. This implies a good level of strategic alignment within the organization, where the vision and mission are not just aspirational statements but are integrated into the daily workflow and understood by those leading teams.

The lack of any responses at the lowest end of the scale (1) suggests that there is no significant struggle with the application of these documents. However, the absence of the highest score (5) across the responses might indicate a slight disconnect or room for improvement in fully integrating the vision and mission into daily operations. It could also point towards a natural and healthy skepticism about the extent to which such documents can influence day-to-day work, or it may reflect a realistic assessment of the challenges inherent in applying abstract strategic principles to concrete tasks.

6.7 Identifying key themes and organizational drivers

The survey results depicted in the chart below, when examined under the straightforward headline "Which organizational driver do you find most prominently addressed in the

documents?", offer a revealing look at the internal narrative and priorities that an organization's documentation is communicating. The dominant emphasis on operational efficiency is indicative of a strategic leaning towards enhancing productivity and optimizing processes, which are a central theme in the company's materials. This focus may suggest that the organization prides itself on being lean and effective, with a clear-cut directive towards minimizing waste and maximizing output.

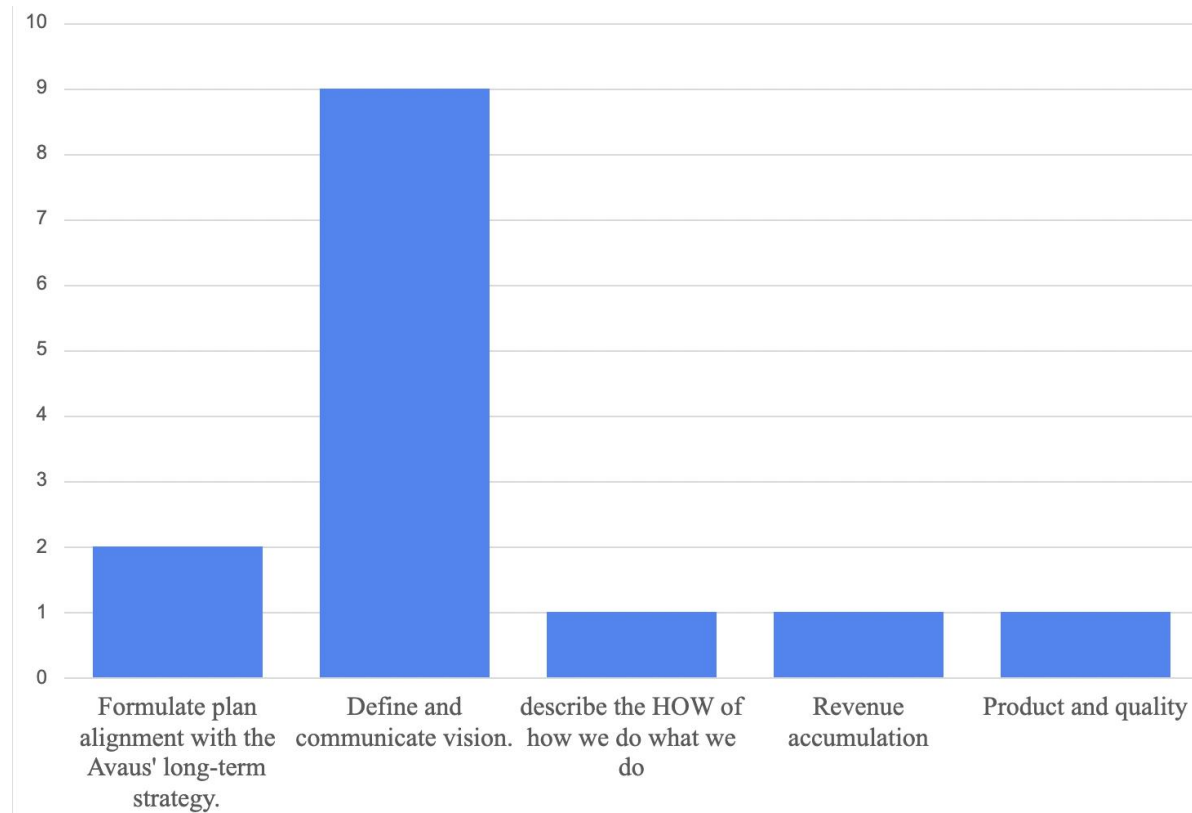


Figure 6. Avaus questionnaires – question 7, compilation of responses. Backman, M. (2023).

Following operational efficiency, product and quality being the second most prominent organizational driver addressed in the documents points to a conscientious effort towards maintaining high standards in what the company produces. It speaks to a quality-centric approach, potentially aiming to establish or maintain a strong market position through excellence in product or service offerings.

The complete absence of selections for People and Teamwork, however, stands out as a stark omission. This lack could reflect a discrepancy between what the company practices and what it preaches, or it might indicate a need to more explicitly articulate the value of human capital and collaborative efforts in its formal communications. Such an oversight could be problematic if it leads to undervaluing the role of employee engagement and teamwork in driving organizational success.

Furthermore, the low emphasis on revenue accumulation may point to an operational and quality-first strategy, with the assumption that financial success will follow as a result of excellence in these areas. Alternatively, it could reveal that revenue generation is not as pressing a concern as the foundational aspects of operational and product excellence, or it may hint at a potential blind spot in the company's strategic planning.

In conclusion, the survey responses under this headline paint a picture of an organization that has a clearly defined set of priorities, with a significant focus on the mechanics of its operations and the quality of its output. However, the results also signal a potential oversight in not highlighting the importance of people and teamwork, which could be a critical area for the organization to address in order to ensure a balanced and holistic approach to achieving its objectives.

6.8 Aligning Avaus' strategy with longterm planning

Analyzed under the headline "The aim has been to translate business vision and strategy into concrete plans through the materials. Choose what you find the most overarching theme in the content," presents a clear preference among the surveyed individuals for a specific thematic focus within the organization's documents. The overwhelming majority have identified 'Define and communicate vision' as the most overarching theme, signaling that the materials are primarily designed to articulate the organization's vision.

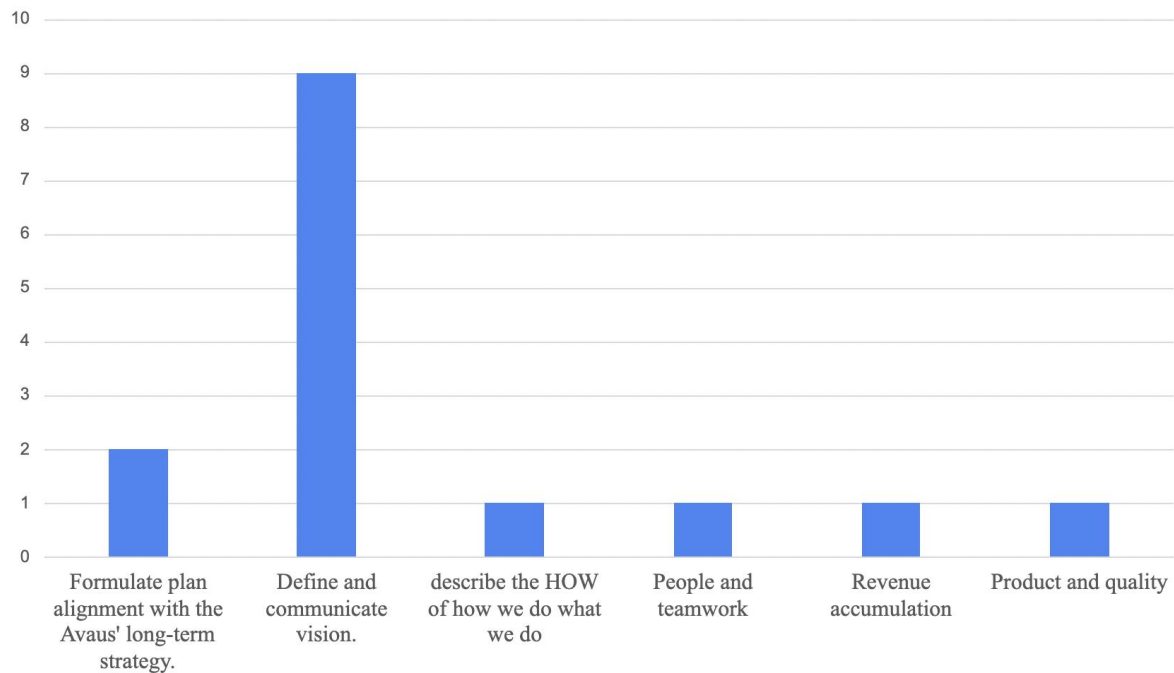


Figure 7. Avaus questionnaires – question 8, compilation of responses. Backman, M. (2023)

The prominence of this choice suggests that the organization places a significant emphasis on ensuring that the vision is not only clearly defined but also effectively communicated within the organization. This might be reflective of a strategic intent to align all stakeholders with a shared direction and purpose. It's a foundational step in any strategic process, as a well-articulated vision sets the stage for all subsequent planning and operational activities.

The other themes—'Formulate plan alignment with the Avaus' long-term strategy,' 'describe the HOW of how we do what we do,' 'Product and quality,' 'Revenue accumulation,' and 'People and teamwork'—received notably fewer selections. This indicates that while these elements are recognized within the materials, they are not perceived as the primary focus. The presence of 'Product and quality' and 'Revenue accumulation' themes suggests that there is also some attention to the outcomes of the strategic plan and the financial objectives of the organization. However, it is 'People and teamwork' that seems to receive relatively little emphasis, suggesting this area may not be as thoroughly addressed in the documents as the others.

The graph's insights could potentially highlight a strategic choice by the organization to prioritize the communication of its vision above other elements, which could be due to the belief that a strong, shared vision is the most crucial driver of organizational alignment and strategic success. However, the lower emphasis on other themes, especially 'People and

teamwork,' could suggest a gap that the organization may need to address to ensure a more balanced approach to strategy execution that fully engages all aspects of the organization's operations and culture.

6.9 Evaluating organizational values in strategic materials

The data, in response to Question 9, "Which of our culture cornerstones you find MOST present in the materials?" provides a quantitative glimpse into the perceived cultural emphases within the organization's materials. The responses overwhelmingly indicate 'Ambition & Mastery' as the cornerstone most represented, suggesting that the company's materials are strongly projecting a culture that values continuous improvement, expertise, and a striving for excellence.

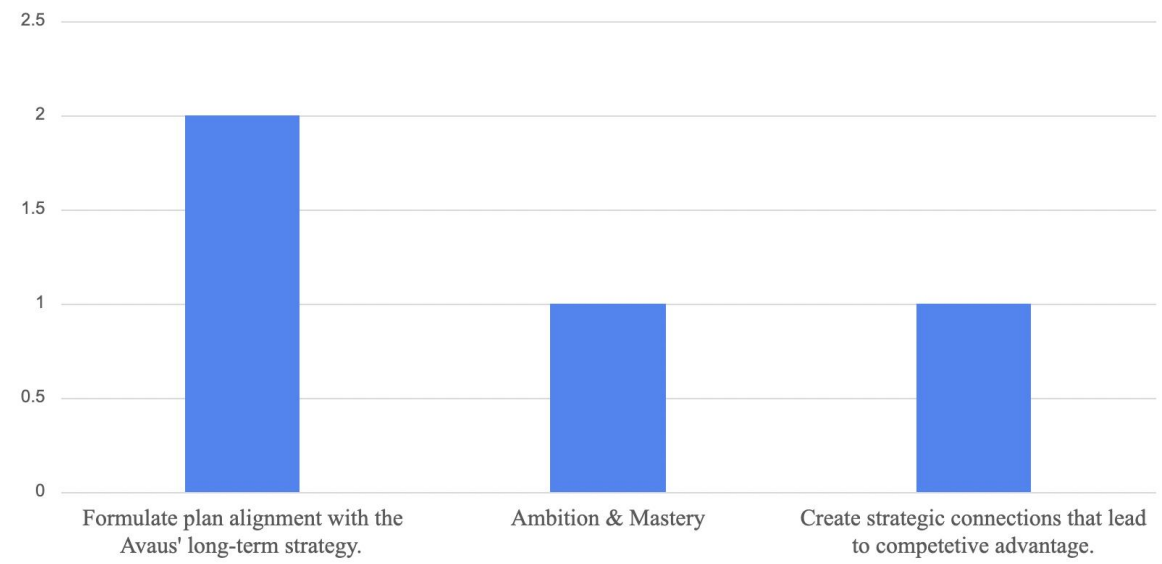


Figure 8. Avaus questionnaires – question 9, compilation of responses. Backman, M. (2023).

The prominence of 'Ambition & Mastery' can be interpreted as a reflection of the organization's identity and its strategic focus on developing a competitive edge through skilled performance and high aspirations. This emphasis aligns with a growth mindset where challenges are seen as opportunities to advance and where the skills and goals of the workforce are paramount.

Interestingly, 'Results' and 'Collaboration' also receive some acknowledgment, albeit significantly less than 'Ambition & Mastery.' The recognition of 'Results' suggests an outcome-oriented culture where the end product or achievement is a key driver. The presence of 'Collaboration' hints at an appreciation for teamwork and joint efforts, yet its lower prominence

in the materials indicates it may not be as central to the organization's identity as 'Ambition & Mastery.'

The category 'Create strategic connections that lead to competitive advantage' has a moderate presence, pointing to some focus on strategic thinking within the organization's cultural narrative. 'Formulate plan alignment with the Avaus' long-term strategy,' while noted, seems to be less emphasized, which could suggest either an assumed understanding or a potential area where more explicit communication could be beneficial.

Overall, the data suggests a culture that prizes individual development and achievement, aiming to foster a workforce that is highly skilled, ambitious, and driven to produce results. The lower visibility of 'Collaboration' and strategic alignment may indicate areas for future development or stronger emphasis to ensure that all cultural cornerstones are integrated and resonate equally within the organization's materials.

The other themes 'formulate plan alignment with the Avaus' long-term strategy,' 'describe the HOW of how we do what we do,' 'Product and quality,' 'Revenue accumulation,' and 'People and teamwork'—received notably fewer selections. This indicates that while these elements are recognized within the materials, they are not perceived as the primary focus. The presence of 'Product and quality' and 'Revenue accumulation' themes suggests that there is also some attention to the outcomes of the strategic plan and the financial objectives of the organization. However, it is 'People and teamwork' that seems to receive relatively little emphasis, suggesting this area may not be as thoroughly addressed in the documents as the others.

6.10 Cultural gaps - Identifying underrepresented values in organizational communications

To Question 10, "Which of our culture cornerstones you find LEAST present in the materials?" the data delivers an evaluative view on the cultural aspects that are perceived to be underrepresented in the organization's documentation. Notably, 'Fun' is highlighted as the least present cornerstone, followed by 'Collaboration,' 'Human Touch,' 'Results,' and 'Take Ownership' with 'Ambition & Mastery' observed to a lesser extent.

The pronounced absence of 'Fun' as a cultural cornerstone within the materials may raise questions about the organizational environment and its approach to work-life integration. This could suggest that the organization's materials and, by extension, its culture, are more oriented towards serious, outcome-focused themes, possibly overlooking the importance of enjoyment and personal fulfillment in the workplace which can be crucial for creativity, employee satisfaction, and retention. Hu (2023) notes, 'When followers find the humor funny and appropriate, leader humor can elicit positive emotions in followers.' This underlines the potential of humor to trigger positive emotional responses, such as joy and happiness, in the workplace. Furthermore, Hu (2023) explains, 'Leader display of humor also transmits leader's positive emotions to followers who receive those humorous communications via the emotional contagion process,' suggesting that humor can be a powerful tool for emotional connection and morale boosting.

However, it is crucial to consider the context and appropriateness of humor. Hu (2023) cautions that 'followers only experience positive emotions when they judge leaders' humor as funny, appropriate and meaningful.' In this regard, Gloor et al. (2023) add depth to the conversation, explaining that the effects of humor on organizational hierarchies are complex and multifaceted. They assert, 'To understand humor and its effects on hierarchies, we must first understand what makes things funny,' highlighting the nuanced nature of humor in professional settings.

The impact of humor extends beyond just emotional uplift; it can also influence the dynamics of leader-follower relationships. Hu (2023) compares this to a dance, stating, 'Just like the tango dance moves can bring two parties closer or farther, leader humor embedded in the social interaction can be a move to either increase or decrease the leader-follower distance.' Gloor et al. (2023) contribute to this analogy by discussing how 'upward humor'—humor directed from subordinates to superiors—can either stabilize or destabilize hierarchical structures depending on its delivery and reception.

In essence, the strategic use of humor by leaders, as highlighted by Hu (2023), and the intricate dynamics of upward humor explored by Gloor et al. (2023), can play pivotal roles in shaping organizational culture and dynamics. While humor has the potential to enhance job satisfaction, work engagement, and follower morale, its effectiveness is contingent on its appropriateness and the context in which it is used.

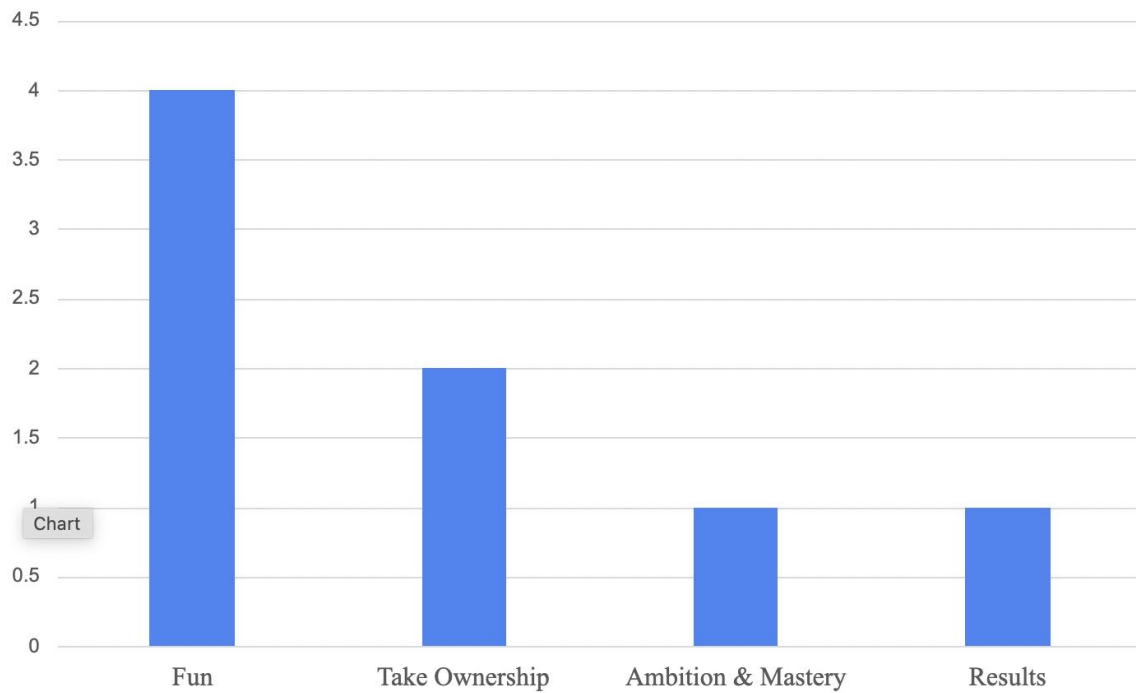


Figure 9. Avas questionnaires – question 10, compilation of responses. Backman, M.

The relative scarcity of 'Collaboration' noted in the materials is also telling, especially given the current emphasis on teamwork and cross-functional partnerships in driving innovation and productivity. This could reflect an oversight in the documentation or a cultural nuance that prioritizes individual achievement over collective effort.

Similarly, 'Human Touch' receiving a low presence might indicate a gap in communicating the organization's commitment to personal relationships, empathy, and individual contribution, which are integral to a holistic and engaging work environment.

While 'Results' and 'Take Ownership' are considered to be present to some degree, their lower prominence compared to other cornerstones like 'Ambition & Mastery' may suggest a culture that, while driven, does not emphasize these attributes as strongly in its documented materials.

In summary, the data points to a potential misalignment between the cultural ideals the organization may wish to espouse and what is actually reflected in its materials. The findings suggest an opportunity for the organization to revisit its documentation to ensure that all of its valued cultural cornerstones, especially those that foster a positive and collaborative work environment, are adequately represented and infused into the organizational narrative.

7 Conclusions

Avaus' internal questionnaire reveals significant insights into the organization's strategic communication and employee engagement. The low response rate, attributed to employees prioritizing billable work and unfamiliarity with documentation, highlights a challenge in engaging employees comprehensively.

The survey suggests that organizational materials at Avaus mainly serve to develop a collective understanding of goals and strategies, indicating a strong drive for strategic alignment. However, their effectiveness in crafting the company's unique identity appears limited, pointing towards a need for content that not only conveys strategic directives but also embodies the organizational ethos.

A notable gap is the absence of 'Fun' in the cultural narrative, which raises questions about the work-life integration and the emphasis on enjoyment and personal fulfilment in the workplace. This aspect is critical for fostering creativity, employee satisfaction, and retention, as suggested by Collins (2004) in the context of emotional energy in the workplace.

The questionnaire also probes the strategic depth of Avaus' documents. While strategies are well-defined regarding business focus and customer impact, there is a lack of differentiation from competitors and adaptability in client scenarios. This aligns with Stępień's (2023) emphasis on the importance of knowledge management in strategy implementation, particularly in adapting strategies to diverse contexts.

Avaus' documents primarily use logical and reasoned language, with strategic emotional undertones, indicating a balanced communicative approach. This reflects Samra-Fredericks' (2003) observations on the impact of communication in strategy-making. The vision and mission are clear, yet there is a perceived gap between the ideal and the current state. Organizational drivers like operational efficiency and product quality overshadow teamwork and revenue generation, suggesting a focus on process optimization and quality.

Culturally, 'Ambition & Mastery' are prominent, resonating with a culture that values expertise and continual improvement. However, the underrepresentation of 'Fun' and 'Collaboration' points to potential cultural misalignments. This can be addressed by incorporating Teece's

(2007) concept of dynamic capabilities, fostering an environment that adapts and learns continuously.

In conclusion, the Avaus survey offers valuable perspectives on strategic alignment and communication. It shows a solid understanding of strategic objectives and a logical style of communication, but also highlights areas for improvement in organizational identity, teamwork, and cultural balance. Incorporating insights from knowledge management and strategy implementation research can guide Avaus in refining its internal communications and documentation to better align with its strategic intentions and cultural values.

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Appendices

Employees questionnaire

From [Acous Handbook - Awareness exercise](#) & [Acous Strategy 2022-2023](#) [Bookix link](#)
which you have read through for this exercise, please answer the following questions.
There are no right answers, keep your mind open and answer intuitively.

emailbackmantheking@gmail.com [Switch account](#)

🔒 Not shared

* Indicates required question

The number one effect the materials have on me is (choose one) *

Describe in your own words in one sentence, what do these documents try to achieve?

Your answer

If these documents would probe one further question from you: what would it be?

Your answer

We often believe that organizational interactions are driven by logic and reason only, but even in the language we use we often use emotional terms. Do you find Acous' language in these documents emotional?

1 2 3 4 5

Driven by logic and reason mostly ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ emotional language accentuate the content mostly

By portraying a compelling vision of 'a promising there and then' (Our vision statement found in the documents) we try to give clear direction towards our targets. How do we succeed in this?

1 2 3 4 5

Our vision and mission seems distant ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Our vision and mission feels closer and attainable

By these documents, do you feel you are able to avoid using time to figure out issues related to 'ways of working' and grow your productivity sustainably?

1 2 3 4 5

I find these documents hard to see as leadership tools ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ I feel these documents streamline leading people

Which organizational driver do you find most prominently addressed in the documents?

The aim has been to translate business vision and strategy into concrete plans through the materials. Choose what you find the most overarching theme in the content.

☐ Define and communicate vision

☐ Create strategic connections that lead to competitive advantage

☐ Formulate plan alignment with the Acous' long-term strategy

☐ Other

Which of our culture cornerstones you find MOST present in the materials?

☐ Ambition & Mastery

☐ Human Touch

☐ Take Ownership

☐ Results

☐ Fun

☐ Collaboration

Which of our culture cornerstones you find LEAST present in the materials?

☐ Ambition & Mastery

☐ Human Touch

☐ Take Ownership

☐ Results

☐ Fun

☐ Collaboration

Appendix A: Employee questionnaire

Avaus teamlead & managers questionnaire

From [Avaus Handbook - Approach overview](#) & [Avaus Strategy 2020-2023: Rookie intro](#) which you have read through for this exercise, please answer the following questions. There are no right answers, keep your mind open and answer intuitively.

miabackmanhelsinki@gmail.com [Switch accounts](#)

Not shared

* Indicates required question

With the materials we as teamleads and managers find that the documents help us steer employees and projects to. (choose one)

Choose

Describe in your own words in one sentence, what do these documents try to achieve?

Your answer

If these documents would probe one further question from you - what would it be?

Your answer

We often believe that organizational interactions are driven by logic and reason only, but even in the language we use we often use emotional terms. Do you find Avaus' language in these documents emotional?

1 2 3 4 5

Driven by logic and reason mostly. emotional language accentuate the content visibly.

By portraying a compelling vision of 'a promising there and then' (Our vision statement found in the documents) we try to give clear direction towards our targets. How do we succeed in this?

1 2 3 4 5

Our vision and mission seem distant. Our vision and mission feels linear and attainable.

Can you communicate the content of these materials in your own word so, that it bridges our vision & mission to everyday work of your team?

1 2 3 4 5

I find these documents hard to deploy as leadership tools. I feel these documents streamline leading people.

Which organizational driver do you find most prominently addressed in the documents?

Choose

The aim has been to translate business vision and strategy into concrete plans through the materials. Choose what you find the most overarching theme in the content.

☐ Define and communicate vision.
 ☐ Create strategic connections that lead to competitive advantage.
 ☐ Formulate plan alignment with the Avaus' long-term strategy.
 ☐ Other:

Which of our culture cornerstones you find MOST present in the materials?

☐ Ambition & Mastery
 ☐ Human Touch
 ☐ Take Ownership
 ☐ Results
 ☐ Fun
 ☐ Collaboration

Which of our culture cornerstones you find LEAST present in the materials?

☐ Ambition & Mastery
 ☐ Human Touch
 ☐ Take Ownership
 ☐ Results
 ☐ Fun
 ☐ Collaboration

Submit Clear form

Appendix B: Teamlead & managers questionnaire

Email *

Your email address

With the materials we as exec team members aim to (Choose one) *

Choose

Describe in your own words in one sentence, what do these documents try to achieve?

Your answer

If these documents would pose one further question from you- what would it be?

Your answer

We often believe that organizational interpositions are driven by logic and reason only, but even in the language we use we often use emotional terms. Do you find Avasut language in these documents emotional?

12345

Driven by logic and reason mostly

emotional language accentuates the content visibly

By portraying a compelling vision of 'a promising there and then' (Our vision statement found in the documents) we try to give clear direction towards our targets. How do we succeed in this?

12345

Our vision and mission seem distant

Our vision and mission feels linear and attainable

Do these materials help you make management or leadership decisions, to prioritize and plan for the future?

12345

I find these documents hard to deploy as leadership tools

I find these documents persuasive leading people

As a senior leader at Avasut, are you lacking any documents or content to fulfil the long term strategic leadership needs? Explain shortly what you feel you are in need of.

Your answer

Which organizational driver do you find most prominently addressed in the documents?

Choose

The aim has been to translate business vision and strategy into concrete plans through the materials. Choose what you find the most overarching theme in the content.

☐ Define and communicate vision
 ☐ Create strategic connections that lead to competitive advantage
 ☐ Formulate plan alignment with the Avasut long-term strategy
 ☐ Other:

Which of our culture cornerstones you find MOST present in the materials?

☐ Ambition & Mastery
 ☐ Human Touch
 ☐ Take Ownership
 ☐ Results
 ☐ Fun
 ☐ Collaboration

Which of our culture cornerstones you find LEAST present in the materials?

☐ Ambition & Mastery
 ☐ Human Touch
 ☐ Take Ownership
 ☐ Results
 ☐ Fun
 ☐ Collaboration

Submit

Clear form

Appendix C: Avas Exec questionnaire

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