# Communication Strategy Plan for German Gym Chain

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**ABSTRACT**

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Master's degree in Business Administration
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BERNAD, EMILIA:
Communication Strategy Plan for German Gym Chain

Master 's thesis 59 pages, appendices 1 pages
December 2018
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The objective of this work was to create a communication plan to German Gym Chain. Company has no previous communication plan so there was a need for clarified communication. The communication plan is focused on operative communication. The aim of this thesis was to create clear and exclusive plan but also abbreviate the communication chain.

Thesis is consisting a communication plan made for the gym chain and theoretical report part. Theoretical information for the plan was gathered from literature and professional articles. The part explored the outcomes and channels of internal communication. In addition it explains how external communication can affect for company's brand, image and stakeholders. For the material were also conducted semi-structured interviews with eight key personnel of the company.

The thesis was delivered to the company in digital format. In a digital format the communication plan can be used as a concrete tool and can be updated regularly. One of the most important aspects of the plan is that it is easy to keep updated. Company's intension is to update the communication plan regularly.

**CONTENT**

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of my thesis is to create a communication plan for FITSEVENELEVEN GmbH (FIT711). The communication plan focuses, at the request of the company's management for internal communication. FITSEVENELEVEN GmbH is German Gym Chain which operates at the moment in Rhein-Main region.

Company's communication plan aims to improve internal communication and communication between external stakeholders. The goal is also to ease the heavy communication chain so that messages can go fast and reach the right recipients. Company's right type of stakeholder communication creates more trust and a reputation in the areas of businesses and communities. This is also important since the main business is a good service.

The thesis is divided into a theoretical and functional parts. The theoretical part of the thesis deals with internal and external communication communication. The theory section deals with internal communication strategy, objectives and channels. External communication theory part deals in addition brand, image and stakeholder communication. The themes of the theoretical part will be discussed in particular from company's perspective.

At the end in the functional part of the thesis I created a communication plan for the company. This part is based on the theoretical part and the material collected from the interview. The aim is to create an easy-to-read, comprehensive and pragmatic communication plan to guide the employees dealing with company's communications. The communication plan has been fully allocated to the end of the thesis so that it can easily be separated from the report section. It is also easier for the company to use the plan as a communication tool when it is a coherent package.

## 2 THESIS PLAN

Second chapter is about the thesis plan. This chapter introduces presently topic, objective, purpose and process of this thesis. This chapter will also explain shortly some of the main concepts, special areas of the communication and working methods & data ending with thesis process.

### 2.1 Thesis topic

FITSEVENELEVEN GmbH does not have a written communication strategy or a communications manager, which makes it difficult for the company to develop in this area. The CEO and the supervisors to their own subordinates manage internal communications. External communications are managed by the marketing, which, if necessary, delegates the cases to their subordinates. In the company's offices everyone are close to each other so communicating is easy. However, the management believes that it is necessary to develop, especially the communication between departments. FITSEVENELEVEN has tried to create a quality and customer-oriented image. It has, to a certain extent, been successful even though there is something to be developed.

The aim of my Thesis is to establish communication orientations and to create a communication plan for the FITSEVENELEVEN. FITSEVENELEVEN GmbH is a German company founded in year 2008. In 10 years the company has been growing from one club to fifteen and is currently most successful fitness club brand in Rhein-Main region. Company owns all of its trademarks, 711 web shop and also has its own fragrances for men and women.

Communication, in addition to the company's practical actions, has a substantial impact on the company's reputation. Well-designed and implemented communications can also support other activities of the company and achieve a competitive advantage over other operators in the same sector. As a fast growing company it is worth paying attention to improving the communication of the organization.

## 2.2 Thesis objective, purpose and research questions

Communication affects to the success of the company. There is need of setting more specific goals, for the company' s communication. Communication is expected to make results in the same way as company's marketing and sales. To be succesfull, company's communication requires good support and a plan. A well-designed and consistently implemented communication increases a company's awareness, creates a positive company image and works as a strong competitive factor. (Conaway & Laasch 2012, 1.) The purpose of this thesis is to create communication guidelines and a communication plan for FITSEVENELEVEN GmbH.

In the theoretical part, there has been handled company communication; it's importance generally and the basics of designing communication. With implementing the theory there is been made a communication plan. In which there's been graphed the current status of communication of FITSEVENELEVEN, established communications goals, target stakeholders, key messages and the ways for practical implementation. Strategic policies of the communication plan are based on the overall strategy of the company. The purpose of the communication plan is to function as an indicative guidance for the company's communications. The plan will create the basis for an annual operational communication planning. The communication plan contains also evaluation and monitoring measures. This is to ensure that communication can be continuously developed but also that the means of implementation meets practical needs. The intention of the plan is also ensure that communication and implementation ways are going to go on when operators change.

Main research questions are as follows
**"Why communication needs to be planned"**
**"What is the importance of a company strategy?"**
**"Why the company communicates"**
**"What is the meaning of business communication?"**
**"How to plan a communication strategy for FITSEVENELEVEN GmbH?"**
Sub-questions that will help to frame the theory of this work:
**"What types of communication are unique for the company?"**

**"Which tools and channels should the case company use in order to be successful in communication?"**

Communication plan is made especially for FITSEVENELEVEN GmbH and not Fritz Foundation since FIT711 takes care of all the communications.

## 2.3  Main areas of communication

This part will explain and open little bit of two different main areas of communication. These main areas are working as a theoretical frame for this thesis.

By introducing these areas the readers will also have a better understanding of the topic. Gathered information of these areas is based on different literature of the communication.

### 2.3.1  Internal Communication

Internal communication plays a major role today and needs to be refined: what internal communication is and what belongs to it. Companies will be associated with the bigger organizations and will cooperate with different cultures and languages both domestically and globally. (Juholin 2006,140.) Case company will enter in future other country and will face the difficulty of communication. This strategy will be build the way that company can use it in domestic and abroad.

In general, the target audience of internal communication has been a mass of personnel, but as the work communities expand and globalized, staffing needs to start approaching smaller groups. This is also so that the messages are better delivered and understood. Communication and information are no longer the same as before, because companies were able to control them before. Nowadays if the company is not willing to provide information, it will be acquired from the other source. In this way, information may even become a threat. Internal communication can be looked from many perspectives. (Juholin 2006, 141.) Company gets bigger and will face in future more difficulties without written rules of communication. Nowadays it is easy to search and give comments anonymous which makes that companies need to act fast with their communication.

At the moment company's only internal communication principle is that communication should be polite and not offensive. According to Men & Bowen (2017,16) each compa-

ny should have some principles for internal communication. These principles can be said or written. Principles may vary depending on the things or situation. The agreed rules help the company to prevent unnecessary rumors, resulting in frustration and confusion. This is something that will be discussed in the internal communication channels part.

One of the cornerstones of business success is the sharing and managing of real-time information. The internal communication channels can be divided into two, the local and remote channels. Through these, information can be shared directly or through mediation. Direct communication channels include, for example, the nearest supervisor, other superiors, attendance and co-workers. This is also called face-to-face communication as interaction is between people here and now. For example, facelift communication is superior communication, feedback, and development discussions. Forwarded communications include, for example, your own unit's bulletin board, bulletins, magazines, web communications, and intranets. (Ruck 2015,112-114.) Company has been planning to have new media to communicate faster and more efficient with its employees. This will be discussed more in internal communication channels part.

### 2.3.2   External Communication

According to Juholin (2006,186) in external communications, the image is built and the brand is edited. People's talk is a large part of external communication. People have some kind of image on a product and their feelings are unconsciously and consciously influenced. The company strives to create a certain kind of image for the environment, that is, the company is the sender of the image. The environment, on the other hand, receives certain images and things from the companies, so they are the recipients of these images. The concepts of external communication include the image, brand, and social responsibility (Lohtaja-Ahonen & Kaihovirta-Rapo 2012, 14).
External communication is really important to the case company since it could not do its main business without customers. Right image is necessary to the company since it has been using lot of resources for good branding.

### 2.4   Working methods and data

Functional thesis in a professional environment aims at guiding, organizing or rationalizing practical activities. For example, it may be a tutorial or guidance for practice. It can also be the case for organizing an event. The work can be done as a book, a folder, a booklet, a portfolio or a home page depending on the degree program. (Vilkka & Airaksinen 2003, 9.) This is a functional thesis because the result of the work is report and a product, "communication strategy plan for the FITSEVENELEVEN GmbH".

In my thesis I used qualitative research method. In qualitative the study aims to produce results without statistics and quantitative methods. In the method phrases are used instead of numbers. The purpose of qualitative research is describing, understanding and giving interpretation of the phenomenon. (Kananen 2008, 24). Form of the interviews will be semi-structured.

As a primary source of data for this thesis theory I used literature books, specialist articles, Internet and existing communication plans in a fitness branch. Literature will be found from libraries and authors own bookshelf.

According to Freebody (2003, 133) semi-structured interviews are beginning with a predetermined set of questions, which allow some latitude of relevance. This means that the interviewer will follow chosen lines of talk with follow-through questions. The talk is normally then tabulated and the interviewer may decide what to analyze. For the secondary source for the thesis author will have face- to- face interviews with eight key personnel of the company. For theme interviews, I will have the body of the interview that is intended to guide the discussion with the interviewees. The themes of the interviews are internal communication and communication channels. The questions were created by the author, with the objective to receive other aspects about the problems of the internal communication. To have discussion about the subject qestions were open ones. The summary of the answers is shown in chapter 3.3 and further usage and analysis of these results are in communication plan (chapter 6).

All the interviews started with presentation of the thesis subject and explanation of the process. After, it was turn of the interviewees to explain their thoughts and opinion about the subject. The questions were there to guide the conversation so that it stayed on correct course. The interview questions are as attached in appendix 1.

Face-to-face interviews include eight sessions. Interviewees were selected by their role in the company. Interview was voluntary and all of the interviweers agreed of doing it. The selected group included CEO, four department managers and three club managers. To have anonymity following table use interviewees names as P 1, P 2 and so on. To be able to work well with the data all the interviews were recorded and labeled with basic information.

## INTERVIEWS

| P1 | P2 | P3 | P4 | P5 | P6 | P7 | P8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Date: 06.11.17 | Date: 08.11.17 | Date: 09.11.17 | Date: 13.11.17 | Date: 14.11.17 | Date: 16.11.17 | Date: 20.11.17 | Date: 23.11.17 |
| Duration: 75 min | Duration: 51 min | Duration: 34 min | Duration: 44 min | Duration: 61 min | Duration: 49 min | Duration: 27 min | Duration: 32 min |

Figure 1. Organised interviews in 2017.

The collected data from the interviews were analysed by the approach of Fellows et al. (2015, 190-191). First the data was transcribed from the recorder to have clarity and consistence for the analysis. Answers were put in groups and similar responses were calculated. After this step the results were ready for use and these are linked to the theory presented in chapters four and five. The final result will be presented in chapter six whch is the communication plan for the company.

## 2.5 Thesis Process

The aim of the theoretical part is to find answers to questions about why the company communicates and what is the meaning of business communication. The theoretical part will also explain why communication needs to be planned, what is the importance of a company strategy and how it is connected to a communication plan. Important part of the work is also to find out what is meant by the corporate image, reputation of the

company and how these can be influenced through communication. At the end of the thesis, FITSEVENELEVEN will be involved through theory. Based on the strategy of FITSEVENELEVEN, a communication plan and communication practices are developed to manage the internal and external communication of the company. The communication plan for the company includes the strategic lines of communication, the current status, the various areas of communication, their goals and core messages, communication resources, also monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the plan includes an annual schedule of communication recording all the affairs or events (for example open doors) that require communication actions during the year.

The final chapter of the thesis presents the work conclusions and discusses why it is worth investing in communication and it's planning. In addition, various development suggestions are presented to help the FITSEVENELEVEN reach effective communication.

# 3   CASE COMPANY FITSEVENELEVEN GmbH

The following chapter three introduces more thoroughly the case company and the Communication situation in a company. It is important to present the case company so that one have a understanding the type of communication might be needed.

## 3.1   Company presentation

"FITSEVENELEVEN connects people who want to be part of a special community. Regardless of training status, age and sex, THE BODYCLUB offers every health-oriented member an individual unique fitness experience in a community of like-minded people. These include an exceptional atmosphere, challenging courses, award-winning brand equipment, high-quality services and qualified support". (FITSEVENELEVEN GmbH, Website: http://fitseveneleven.de/explore/)

FITSEVENELEVEN GmbH is a German company founded in 2008. In 10 years the company has been growing from one club to fifteen (see figure 2.) and is currently most successful fitness club brand in Rhein-Main region (5.550.619 inhabitants from three different states) with about 55.000 members. This year company will open only one new club in Bornheim, Frankfurt. Plan for 2019 is three new clubs with one new label Black label+ (See figure 3.). Company own all of its trademarks, 711 webshop, FITSEVENELEVEN Magazine and also have its own fragrances for men and women. "Free of role models, investors or faceless franchise partners" (FITSEVENELEVEN GmbH, website: http://fitseveneleven.de/explore/) The Company has been able to grow in few years without any investors or another outside of company founding.
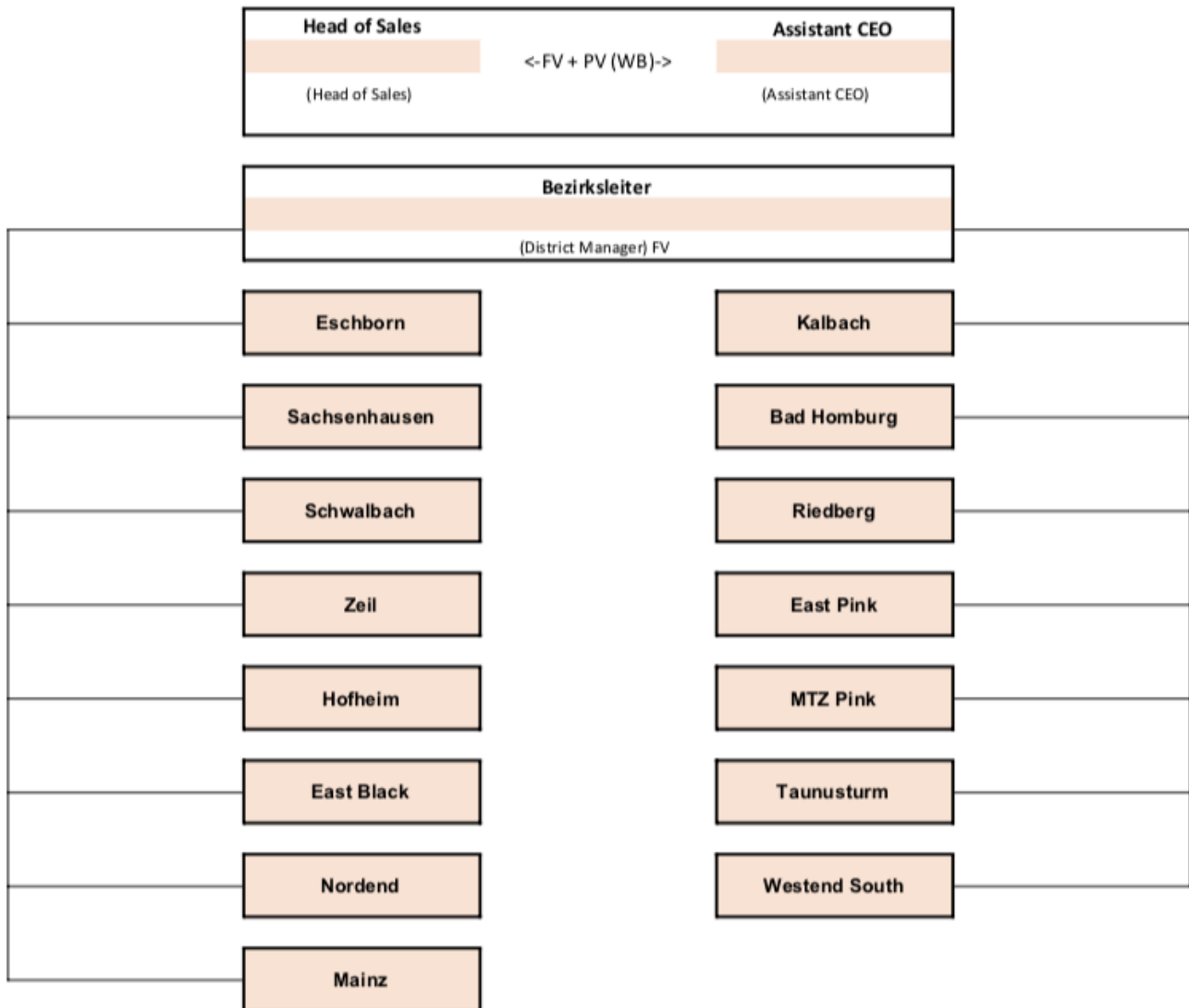
Figure 2. Organizational structure (Fitness Clubs (Black, Red, White and Pink))

Figure 3. Labels of FITSEVENELEVEN

## 3.2 Organizational structure

The structure of the company changed from beginning of year 2018. FITSEVENELEVEN Franchise GmbH changed the name to Fritz Foundation GmbH and company form to AG. This way new-formed company took the three FITSEVENELEVEN GmbH's under its wings (See figure 4.). All the operations are still handled through the FITSEVENELEVEN GmbH. This is the reason why the communication plan is for the FITSEVENELEVEN GmbH and not Fritz Foundation GmbH.
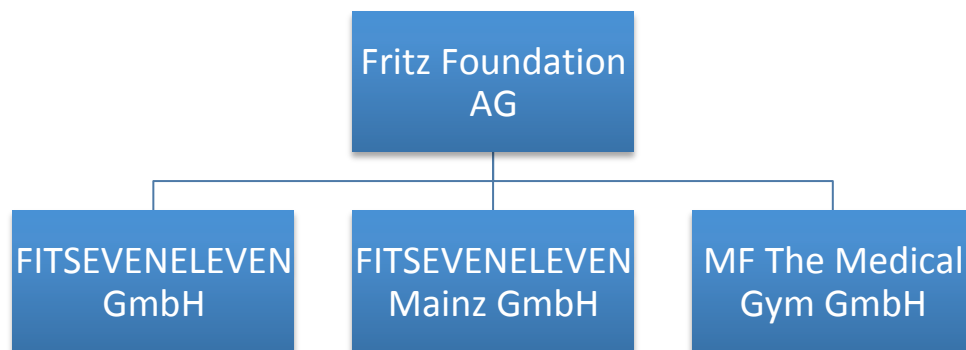
Figure 4. Organizational structure (FITSEVENELEVEN companies)

Growth has been the fastest in years 2016 and 2017 when the amount of the personnel almost doubled. The personnel in the company are very international and represent at least eight different nationalities. New departments were established and others grow with the new stuff. This made the company to create an organigramm (see Figure 5.) of the departments and their head offs so that structure would be clear to everyone and it would ease the everyday work. Organigramm was made for the departments and the communication between the office and the fitness clubs (see Figure 2.).

**Organisation: FITSEVENELEVEN GmbH**

| CEO | Assistant CEO |
|---|---|
| (CEO) | (Assistant CEO)  FV + PV (WB) - Prokuristin |

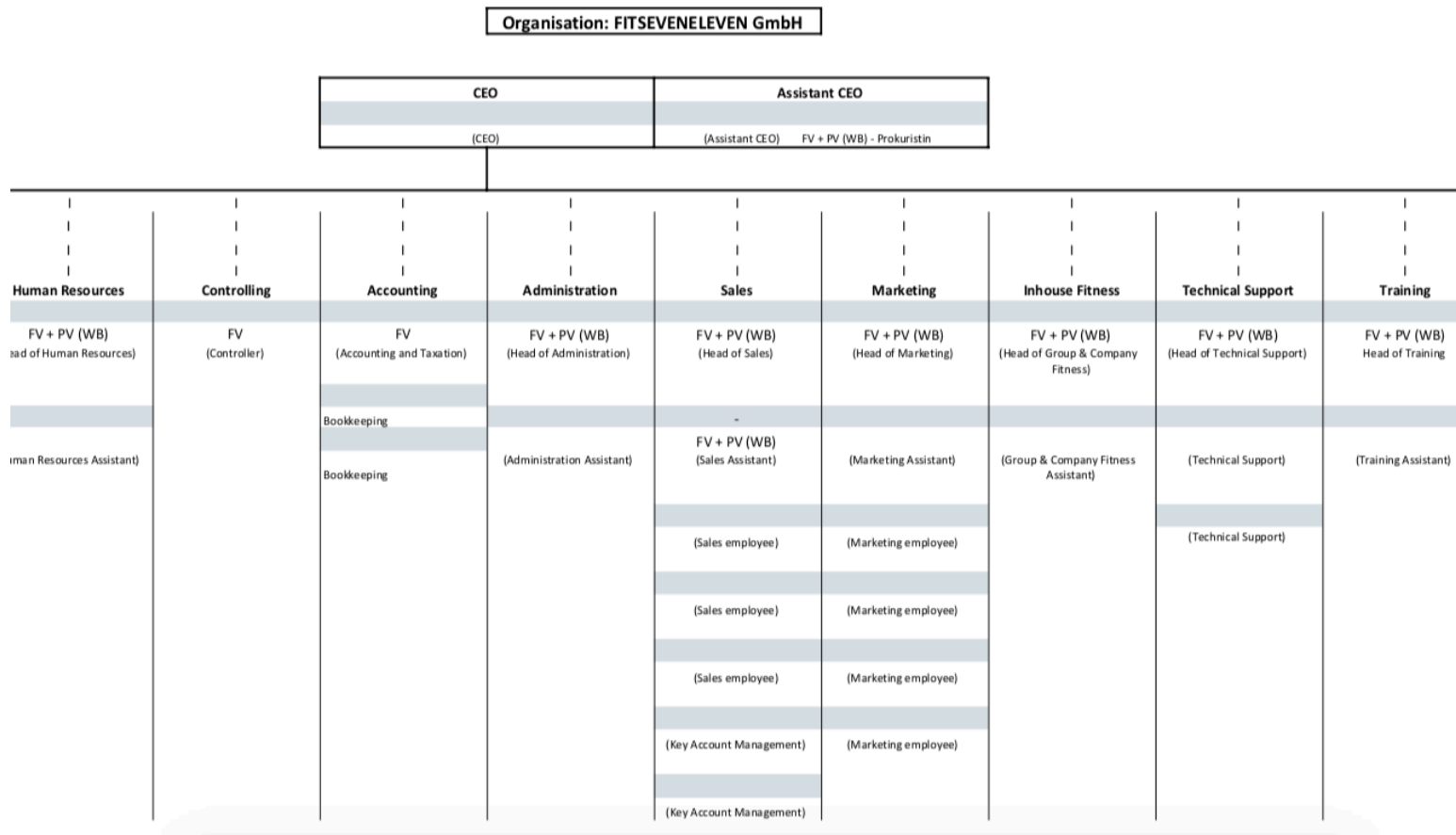| Human Resources | Controlling | Accounting | Administration | Sales | Marketing | Inhouse Fitness | Technical Support | Training |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FV + PV (WB) (Head of Human Resources) | FV (Controller) | FV (Accounting and Taxation) | FV + PV (WB) (Head of Administration) | FV + PV (WB) (Head of Sales) | FV + PV (WB) (Head of Marketing) | FV + PV (WB) (Head of Group & Company Fitness) | FV + PV (WB) (Head of Technical Support) | FV + PV (WB) Head of Training |
| | | Bookkeeping | | | | | | |
| (Human Resources Assistant) | | Bookkeeping | (Administration Assistant) | FV + PV (WB) (Sales Assistant) | (Marketing Assistant) | (Group & Company Fitness Assistant) | (Technical Support) | (Training Assistant) |
| | | | | (Sales employee) | (Marketing employee) | | (Technical Support) | |
| | | | | (Sales employee) | (Marketing employee) | | | |
| | | | | (Sales employee) | (Marketing employee) | | | |
| | | | | (Key Account Management) | (Marketing employee) | | | |
| | | | | (Key Account Management) | | | | |

Figure 5. Organizational structure (Personnel. Status: Februar 2018)

FITSEVENELEVEN have four labels and in 2019 will come fifth new label. Labels are determining the clubs type (price, interior and sex). Pink label clubs are only for women. These clubs normally have interior with bright colours, marbel-gold counters, ghd hairdryer/hair straightener etc. price per month is two to three euros more than Black label clubs. Black label clubs the company have most. These are for both men and women and the interior has dark wood floors, material like metal and tiles and colors white and dark gray. The price per month is about 37 euros. Red label is also for men and women with cheapest price 24 euros per month. Interior colors are dark grey and red. White label is premium label for both men and women. Prices are higher than other labels but it also includes more services (for example towel service and spa area) that any other label. Price per month is 80 euros. Interior colors are beige and the style is calming Japanese garden (See picture 1.).

Picture 1. Interior examples of company's different clubs

## 3.3 Communication situation in a company

To get to know well the situation for the communication in a company, writer inter-viewed eight persons. To get good overview person chosen were from different depart-ments and clubs. In this part is summarized the answers writer got from the interview-ees. Summary of the answers from this chapter with theory knowledge (chapter four and five) will be used as a first and secondary source for the communication plan (chapter 6). This information will be used for example when creating long- and short- term ob-jectives for the company (see pages 39-41 and 47) and when choosing the best internal communication channel (see pages 42-43). Blanco questionaire can be found from the appendices of this thesis (See appendices 1.).

Q1. Is the current internal communication comprehensible to you? Do you need infor-mation about company's situation and events? If yes, what would you like to know more about?

Q2. What do you think of the current communication channels and their efficiency? Do you consider something ineffective?

Q3. What kind of communication channel would you like to set up in the Company's internal messaging? Do you feel that whatsapp or some social media (like Facebook) is in need of internal communication?

Q4. Are all the necessary messages transmitted from one level to another fast? Which would speed up information flow?

Q5. Free word: pluses, minuses, comments and suggestions for improvement in internal communication.

Here is the summary of all the answers:

A1. Opinion of all the persons that are located in the office is that they are getting enough information via email or via face-to-face communication. Club managers get enough information but they would like to have it little bit earlier so that they have time to forward everything to their subordinates. All the respondents wished that the emails would be better focused on the group that needs the information and not that everyone is in the copy of the email. All the clubs have their own email address, managers have own addresses and different departments have theirs. This brings the issue that some people gets the same email more than ones.

A2. For internal communication according the respondents the most effective channel is email. The second is whatsapp. Both channels you have all the information written and can go back to it anytime.

A3. Whatsapp works well. Almost everyone have nowadays mobile phone with them. Other good channel for internal and external communication is instagram. There company can inform with pictures, private messages and short videos of everything. Minus side is that when internal profile is "private" and locked it is time to time difficult to give permission to all employees. Give rights to new ones and delete the old ones. Facebook as an internal communication channel seem old and not efficient.

A4. Company has quite complicated way of giving announcements or information. When higher management decides something it goes through three to four persons before it is going to department managers and after through regional director to club managers. Sometimes things change before the message chain is completed and this can bring issues. If company would have one to two persons who takes care of the communication from management directly to everyone without all the middleman messages would be clearer and faster to the receiver.
Idea of someone to take care of the more direct internal communication was very welcome.

A5. Some of the respondents commented about the organization's heavy communication chain and hoped for transparency in all communication. The unnecessary intermediaries of the communications chain should be removed and the messages should be sent directly to the final recipient.

# 4   INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

This chapter explain internal communication and it's areas more widely. Areas are chosen to respond the ones that are best for the case company.

## 4.1   Internal communications objectives

Planned communications creates cost saving and security for the company but also provides predictability for the communication. Expansion in the company also creates needs for well-planned communication. This helps also internally to raise awareness of the company and build the brand. (Men & Bowen 2016, 1)

The role of communications in the company is primarily to support the company's operations in accordance with its objectives (Kortetjärvi-Nurmi, Kuronen & Ollikainen 2002, 9). Communication affects the company's success just like it does to the company's products and service. Communication must be seen as a resource worth investing in. Communication is also a one of the key areas of leadership and a tool for managing business in all its dimensions and areas. (Salin 2002, 18.)

Communication is a key factor in any organization's activities. It is often seen as indispensable, but it is not something company invests enough like for example it's marketing. The focus is everytime on external communication. Creating communications however there are many things to do but at best it will be the driving force of the company. (Malmelin & Hakala 2005, p. 155.)

Most companies have a separate communication and marketing department, but its effect for the business and for the entire company is not necessarily understood. In the worst case, communication and marketing have been separated into their own separate functions even though this should not be the case. Integrating communications across the all business functions have great importance. Communication should be understood as a long-term investment, which increases the company's value. (Men & Bowen 2016, 23.)

Case company does not have appointed communication employee. All the communication is handled through marketing department as a side job. This is one of the main is-

sues in the company. Management and marketing are confused about what should be done in the field of communication. Finding 1-2 new employees specialised in communication will be one of the first objectives company have.

### 4.1.1 Long-term objectives

The communication strategy should be discussed broadly in the organization since it is touching the each member of the organization. Setting goals starts at a strategic level, formulating what goals of communication would be the ones to serve the whole organization. (Pilkington 2013, 40-41.)

The strategic goals of communications should be detailed enough in order to be well evaluated and monitored. The goals should be realistic and achievable. If the goals are continually too high, they are not credible or binding. (Pilkington 2013, 42-43.)

The long-term goals are usually to influence information, ideas, beliefs, and attitudes of organization. The goals could be for example enhancing & improving internal communications, occupational well-being, lifting me-spirit and also knowledge & understanding of the organization's strategy (Juholin 2009, 103.)

Long-term objectives in a case company will be as follows:
1. Functional and effective internal communication.
2. Simplifying the company's communication structure.
3. Effective usage of Whatsapp and closed instagram account
(Interviews results 2017.)

### 4.1.2 Short-term objectives

Setting the goals will continue at the operational level so that in each project or action it can be shown how they serve the overall goals (Pilkington 2013, 49.)

Annual goals can be based on obligations and laws, organization own annual dates and known events. Annual goals can be singular tasks or longer-term processes. The level targeted is that certain things are done. (Juholin 2010, 64.)

The perfect thing would be if the annual planning of company's communications was part of the overall operation plan. This would ensure the commitment of the entire organization and that everyone known company's communications milestones for the coming year. (Korhonen & Rajala 2011, 28.)

Goals can be monitored throughout the year different ways. The most common way is in accounting when accountant states, is the objective realistic and was it fulfilled. Once the strategic goals are set, the annual objectives can be published. If the set goals are not met, one has to ask whether the annual objectives were really realistic. (Juholin 2010, 65)

Short-term objectives in a case company are:

1. Better targeting of emails.
2. Effective introduction of Instagram to communicate with whole staff
3. Improving internal communication

## 4.2    Internal communication channels

All companies and organizations have to function. For that they have to communicate among themselves and the way in which they communicate varies from organization to organization. In bigger companies communication gets more complex and difficult as the size of the company expand. When there are hundreds of employees spread across the country or globe good channels have to be set up so that proper communication results. (Gopal 2009,35.)

### 4.2.1    Internal network communication

Network communication is effective when you need versatile channels independent of time and location. (Juholin 2009, 265.) Nowadays internal network communication is starting to go direction social media and other communication apps (e.g. whatsapp).
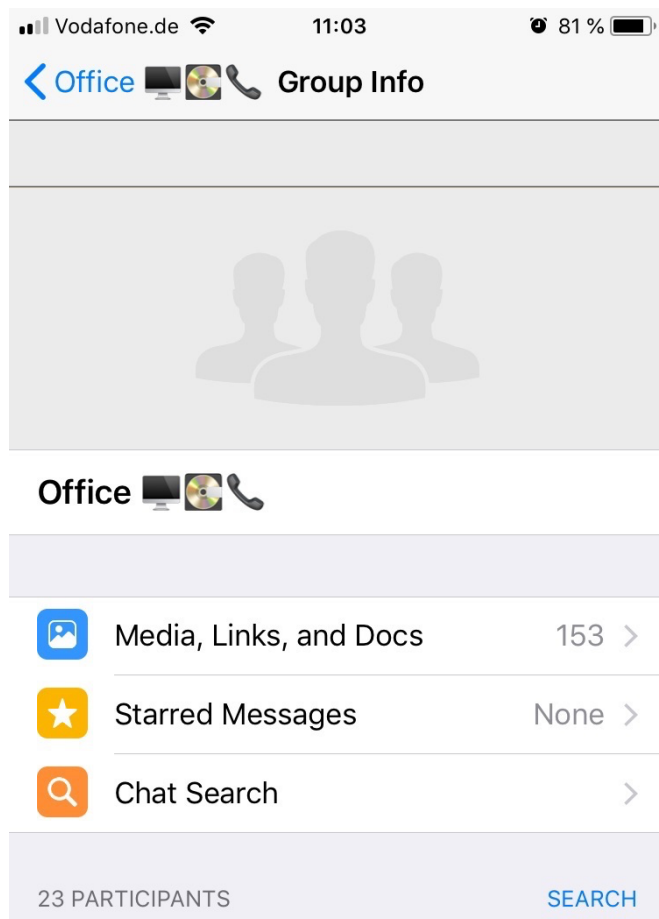
Picture 2. Intenal communication: Office Whatsapp group.

Internal network information keeps the personel well aware of community news, developments, current affairs and goals. Changes and problems in a company as well as plans for the future must be communicated. Internal information through internal network reveals more about the present and the near-term. (Siukosaari 2002, 79.)

The net is a straight communication way from one human to another. Best of it, is that it can guarantee peace of working while allowing still the possibility of real-time communication. Most of the cases the bottleneck of internal network communication is when technical system are made too difficult and this prevents the persons with the information to publish those by themselves. In addition, according to Juholin (2009, 265-266) decentralization of the internal communication organization is a prerequisite for success.

### 4.2.2 Email

Email is still in year 2018 the most used communication form in companies. Advantages of e-mails are that you do not have additional charges. This is even if you need to send e-mails to long distances. In e-mail you can share text, pictures and this can be sent almost immediately to many people simultaneously. With e-mail you can get approvals. Also with e-mail you can share recipes, confirm minutes of meetings and fix agendas. (Gopal 2009, 63-64.)

For e-mails and for example newsletters are applying the same key principles. Those are shortness and friendliness. E-mail is a powerful tool and everyone has acces to it and is also able to use it. E-mails are used as a communication channel by management, internal information but also many other work community communication. (Ikävalko 1999, 66.)

At the moment case company uses e-mail for its internal communications. The problem with the usage of e-mail is an information flood. From this daily flood it is very difficult for people to find the needed important information. All the important information should be targeted more carefully. On the other hand, email is an easy and fast way to share information with the employees. The sender would need to think more carefully who needs this information and not just send it to the large group of people. All in all, getting unnecessary information can start to irritate the message receivers and they may not notice the important information from the middle of the message flood.

### 4.2.3 Social media

Social media is new type of communication channel which enable organizations to reach young and active adults inside the organization. Social media is an interactive channel where everyone can share new ideas, fresh information and opinions. (Ruck 2015, 33-34.)

The most common social media tools are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Youtube and blogs. For the case company the possibilities using social media as one of the internal communication channel:
- better reachability. Company has mostly young employees.

- networking

- the opportunity to collect feedback (e.g. events)

- share knowledge and ideas within the organization easily (Kortesuo 2018, ch.5.)

There are not only advantages but also lot of disadvantages that comes with social media and finding the right media for the company can be difficult. Challenges that company can have while choosing the right channel for the community:

- not everyone has their own profile (difficult for the company to have open internal profile)

- uncontrolled publicity  (need to have locked profile)

- possible data leaks  (Sachetti & Zuppinger 2018, 132-133.)

The good thing is that many of company's employees are on Facebook but there are still many who do not have a profile. Facebook is working well for external communication but company has been noticed that for internal purposes it is not the best channel. Company does not currently use social media in internal communications. One social media channel came up more than once during the interviews. Author did research of this channel and included it to the plan (chapter 6). This channel is Instagram, through it the messages are quickly transmitted to all employees and they receive information direct to their phones via app. Messages stays in the application and information is available to the employees whenever they have time to look their phones.

# 5    EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

External communication desires to create a company's image and corporate image. Corporate image means what other companies and individuelles experience and see (Salin 2002, 48). External communication is a large set which is separated in companies into even smaller administrative areas such as marketing communications, information and pr-measures. (Salin 2002, 23.) Altough external communication has all the different areas and definitions it is basically everything that the enterprise shows about itself to a non-business world. Visible actions of external communication include e.g. company websites, advertisements, brochures, bulletins, and various events. (Wrigley & Straker 2018, 9-11.)

## 5.1    Brand

A brand is a name, symbol, form or a combination of all of them which identify the company. The brand is the added value that the recipient feels to receive. The brand's added value adds visibility to the company. The brand is also a promise to the recipient. (Vuokko 2003, 119-122.)

The brand and brand value are not merely symbolic. There are other distinctive features that are important to the recipient like the meaning which the symbol contains or brings to mind. The brand also make decision-making easier, reduces the risk involved in decision-making and adds value to its user. (Wringley & Straker 2018, 132-133.)

When a visual element is added to a product, such as a logo, a trademark is created. When a brand is introduced to the market and there is added to the desired elements, a brand is built. Branding is a long-term strategic process. The brand's construction has following steps:

1. Examination. First need to clarify the attitudes and values of the target group and possible competitors. It is also important to find out the premises, goals, resources and the existing ideas of own community.

2. Planning branding personality: Which type of target group would like to see and try this product or service.

3. Brand positioning and marketing planning: Company will make a logo, plan availability, visibility and marketing communications so that the images built will match the target images.

4. Implementation and follow-up: Company must constantly monitor brand evolution. how to succesfull was positioning, what kind of imagery the brand is generating, and how committed the target audience is. (Bergström 2007, 184-185.)

The company's target is to offer modern well equipped studios and sport as a lifestyle vibe. Clubs have also skilled instructors and coaches to support members goals (e.g. better movement, more muscles or losing weight). Company wants to be one of best gym chains in Germany. The communication plan introduces actions which company can use to keep its brand interesting to its stakeholders.

## 5.2    Image and impression

Image refers to a certain image or image in a matter of fact. Image is a subject-sensitive picture of what people have perceived about this matter, object, or event based on available information. (Lipe 2006, 152.) Profiling is closely related to the image, since profiling seeks to create or reinforce the desired image. Profiling involves defining the company's goal image, which uses basic strategic messages. So profiling is pretty close to building the image. (Juholin 2009, 187.)

Imagining is also sometimes referred to as a business. However, this is very small, because it is impossible for a company to maintain a spontaneous image of itself. The profiling differs from the construction of the image so that profiling includes the goal and the aspiration, but it recognizes that the outcome is also influenced by a number of other factors. Profiling has become a crypt for both concept and idea. Profiling is often perceived as a scratch that covers the truth. (Juholin 2006, 188.)

Image is important to the company since this is one of the criterias for person when choosing sport club or employer. It is easy for the company to systematically create an image and try to influence people's minds as it is relativ well-known in Rhein-Main region. Each member of the organization should be aware that all its activities affect the image. When everyone acquires and understands the company's operational goals, the

image can begin to be built. Company's image goals are to be a positive, high- quality, trendy and attractive place to work out.

### 5.2.1   Advantages of Image

Image creates some benefits for the company. Image affects what is spoken, written and thought of. This includes thinking about whether to act as a speaker or as a speaker, whether to cooperate or to deal with, to become committed to the organization and to understand the actions, requirements and needs of the subject. (Vuokko 2003, 123-125.) Image is also a competitive advantage. Mind-factors of the subject greatly affect the customer's choices even if the physical products are the same. Consequently, people with mental images largely guide people in decision-making. (Lipe 2006, 10-11.)

### 5.2.2   Affecting the image

Image is influenced both unconsciously and consciously. The more competition there is, the more it is needed to influence image building, reputation management, brand editing, or profiling. Although these theoretical starting points are a little different, their goal is the same, that is, the desire to influence people's imagery. Consumers make decisions based on imagery as much as they are based on factual information. Hence, a good image or reputation is an added value to an enterprise that will make it more likely to succeed even with equal competing competitors. Essentially, images involve sending and receiving. The company is a sender because it seeks to create a certain image of its surroundings. The environment is the recipient because it receives information and impressions from the business. The basic set consists of two parties: a) the one from which the view or image is formed and b) the one on whom the image is formed. (Juholin 2009, 186.)

The company should think about what kind of image it creates for its environment. This is because of the fact that the company creates itself in any case, it describes all the time with its actions, speech, and existence alone. It would therefore be sensible to define what this can and can't achieve. (Juholin 2009, 186.)

The company should define its goals and work in a systematic way to achieve it both in its speeches and in its actions. The power of acting is based primarily on consistency and continuity. After the basic definition, the current status is evaluated, the goals are defined and the tasks are selected. They then evaluate their effectiveness and keep a close eye on the company's strategy and vision. Essential here is stakeholder orientation. It's important to know how people are feeling the business and what their imagination is based on. Up-to-date maintenance of this information requires continuous or regular auditing and research. Based on this, the plan can be refined and set new goals. (Isohookana 2007, 20-21.)

### 5.2.3 Creating an image

The resulting image is affected both by the information obtained from the object and by the recipient's tendency to interpret the information received. The overall impression is therefore the sum of different data and influences. Hence, the image or reputation of a company is born of everything it does, what it tells about its activities and what others are saying about it. For example, employees and other stakeholders share their behavior and speeches about both the company's values and the way businesses operate. Thus, the messages are transmitted to the recipients as well as deliberately chosen, targeted and unconsciously forwarded. (Juholin 2009, 192.)

Influencing your minds is a continuous process. The imagery management proceeds as a continuum: first you need to identify your identity and personality, then define the target mode and the type of image recipient. (Juholin 2009, 196.)

### 5.3 Stakeholders

Stakeholders' positive feelings and trust in the community are growing when it has a good reputation. The reputation of the community is made up of its actions and words. The reputation building process should be continuous. This keeps pace with the times in a changing competitive situation. (Pilkington 2013, 71-72.)

Company should have a clear view of who it needs to be communicating with, and why. This is a one of the starting points when planning external communication. To develop a list of stakeholders, company needs to ask the questions, 'With whom should I be communicating?' "Who are stakeholders of this company?"

E.g. External communication it may include:

1.Customers

– Large ones

– Smaller ones

– Buyer's users

– Their customers

– Distributors, retailers and agents

2. Suppliers

– Sales and key account managers

– Delivery people

3.Partners and alliances

– Strategic partners and alliances

– Tactical partners and alliances

4. Investors

– Large shareholders

– Smaller shareholders

– Angel investors

– Banks and other lenders

5. Government agencies

– Central government agencies

– Local government agencies

6.regulators in regulated industries

7. Media:

– National papers

– Local papers

– Trade news. (Jones 2008, 26-27.)

Second is the task of the analysis to find out what the different groups think and know about the company and what they are expecting from it. The third step is to assess the status, loyalty and commitment of the stakeholder groups. (Juholin 2009, 88.)

The company's operating environment has to be monitored from time to time and evaluated whether new potential stakeholders are to emerge. Sometimes it is also possible to remove stakeholders from the operating environment. (Siukosaari 2002, 135.)

In a communication plan (chapter 6) stakeholder analysis is limited to defining who are the stakeholders and which channels should company use to communicate with them.

## 5.4 Outcomes of external communication

When setting external communication goals, it is basically getting back to the stakeholders. The more detailed infromation available for the stakeholder, the more meaningful and more realistic are the defined goals. (Jones 2008, 72-73.)

External communication messages should be formulated the target group in mind. If company's resources are limited must the focus of the communication be well thought off. It is a waste of company's time to spread messages around to people and organizations who are not concerned or interested. Timely communication and the correct relevance of content can be improved by knowing target groups and their need for information. (Pilkington 2013, 120-121.)

### 5.4.1 Long-term objectives

The aims of strategic objectives of communication are at effectiveness and focus on divers areas. These objectives can be active for many years. The long-term objectives of external communication can include, for example following: Community awareness, community image, brand or image and stakeholder engagement. (Rogala & Bialowas 2016, 207-208.)

### 5.4.2   Short-term objectives

Short-term objectives are company's targets set for next one to two years. These short-term targets should be supporting the company's long-term objectives. Short-term objectives are measured in a way that they must be realized in the short term and they are expected to result immediately or in short period of time. The measures includes, for example campaigns and projects. Short-term objectives can be, for example, carrying out events  and different projects. (Juholin 2010, 66.)

### 5.5   External communication channels

The purpose of planning stakeholder communication is to find the right ways of communication for all groups. For the closest stakeholders, the communications is generally clear and it is usually formed through cooperation. (Pilkington 2013, 65-66.)

### 5.5.1   Dialogue

According to Gutierrez-Garcia and Recalde (2016), the Community needs a wide range of dialogues. These can be divided into two categories: practice and theory. Dialogue can be done face-to-face, on online or through publications. Short dialogue can be subject-limited and short-term, like a seminar, panel, Internet surveys or bilateral discussions. Long- lasting dialogue serves parties and disseminates information. Non-strategic dialogue is for example an occasional meeting. (Simcic Brønn, Romenti & Zerfass 2016, 246-247.)

Direct dialogue communications are for example, personal contacts and meetings, small group events and meetings, big events and meetings and the day of open doors.  Indirect dialogue communications are for example, network communication in various forms (E-mail, Facebook, Internet), press releases and letters, reports and publications, advertising and direct marketing - media publicity. (Juholin 2009, 206-207)

Currently company's external communication is regular. Future events and news will be informed through Internet page, Facebook and open Instagram account. Other types of

publication are also released in company's own magazine (e.g. tips and recipes). Channels of stakeholder communication are presented later on in a communication plan.

### 5.5.2   Network communication

According to Crestani (2016) communication for stakeholder over the network can be targeted more precisely than within other communication channels. This requires careful analysis and follow-up of user target groups and continuous maintenance of updating. People get bored if the wedbsite does not constantly offer new information. (Simcic Brønn et al. 2016, 230-232.)

Company can communicate with their website following material: informing partners and stakeholders, interact externally, market their products and services and build company's profile. Network communication should  not be one-way. Interaction on the website could be for example, people able to give feedback or make a conversation (chat). (Siukosaari 2002, 208.)

Companies web pages are part of its daily activities. Website must respond to the outward appearance and function the company's brand/image. It is worth avoiding only the creation of websites containing company and product demonstrations. Success of the website requires a good maintanence. The users must always have a reason why he should visit the pages. Interests of the website can be enhanced by different competitions, games or forums. (Keränen & Lamberg 2003, 16-17.)

Company can provide its members new readings if they update news and events on their websites regularly. Although members interest in the website is lower than the social media sites. On its website company can also tell about the achievements of its employees or members.

### 5.5.3   Social media

External communication through social media is already commonplace for many companies. Its advantages are good availability and affordability as well as user data collection. The communication plan should record why and when social media is used

and who will be the one to take care of it. As well as usage, expectations about social media and its effectiveness are different depending on the company. With help of the social media companies can reach out to the target groups, raise awareness, create an image, transmit certain messages and increase visibility. (Kortesuo 2018, ch. 1.)

The challenge for social media can be to find the right media. Social media service which is easy to find and use will be part of the key to success. Company also needs to analyze if its attractiveness to social media is enough big and will it have enough material to offer everytime. (Brito 2018, 42-43.)

Facebook is one of the "oldest" (2004) social media services with many different features. Millions of people like Facebook they can connect, download photos and videos, and can communicate with each other all around the world. Users can comment on each other's publications. Every user can express their positive view of the content of another page with Facebook's liking. Content publishing and discussion are also a set of features. Company can publish for example update or video and start discussion. Facebook is good marketing tool for businesses and companies can create free user profile.   (Juslén 2011, 241-243; Kortesuo 2018, ch. 5.)

In Facebook marketing there are many opportunities. Here are listed few of them:
• Creating contacts with potential customers
• Communicating with existing customers
• Website and blog distribution of the contents of the publication
• Creating a community around a customer's interest area
• Communication on company events (Juslén 2011, 245; Kortesuo 2018, ch.5.)

Youtube is the largest video publishing service. Even in social media, it is the most popular service after Facebook. From youtube can be found videos from almost any areas of life especially some of which are so-called fun videos. Anyone can add material to the site, so quality ranges from amateur mobile video to a professionally produced video. It is also possible that the video uploaded by the amateur will give the viewers more than downloaded by a professional. In simplicity, Youtube is a service for which private person or company as a registered user can download videos and comment on other users' downloads. (Juslén 2011, 261; Kortesuo 2018, ch.5; Charlesworth 2018,178-179.)

According to Kortesuo (2018) Linkedin is like Facebook for professionals. The service is primarily a tool for professionals to make some networking. Its idea is to provide support services for job searching and other career related tasks. The service is available to all companies who need help with recruitment. It is also used by service companies and job seekers, e.g. headhunters who are looking for jobs for their parent company. (Juslén 2011, p. 269; Kortesuo 2018, ch.5.)

Nowadays visual culture has grown and photos are published, shared and commented around the clock. On of the biggest social media channels for sharing photos and short videos is Instagram. (Kortesuo 2018, ch. 5.) In this service private person or company can create a profile and share photos. There are possibilities to share short videos (few seconds) and tag people, places or brands to the photos.

In FIT711 external communications, a social media is used to share news, recipes and updates. Company uses Facebook and Instagram as a main social media channels. Company has been releasing some videos in youtube but it is not considered as fast communication channel. One other channel that company started to use end of 2017 is Whatssapp messaging app. This is not really a social media but company uses the app for offering course information to its members without need to visit Internet page or company app (company app is same than company's Internet page). Member need to write message to the given number and tell which clubs course information they want and company will send it immediately to them via Whatssapp.

## 5.6  Reporting and release

The starting point of reporting is the transmission of information. Good communication have transparency, honesty and informativeness. With openness and honesty company can create good foundation with the media. Properly timed and targeted information support well for example marketing communications. It is also best type of advertising when it is well done. (Mizrahi 2015, 36-37.)
Official release will fit in situations where information needs to be quickly available to the target groups (Juholin 2009, 208).

The matters informed in release or newsletter should be in order of priority. At the top as first is the most important thing and then the second most important and so on. Release is about one page long. Also, when the release is made, the company should think about the target group. The tone and type of information depend on the target group. (Simcic Brønn et al. 2016, 274-275.)

The basic questions when writing an release are who, what, how, where, when, why and with which consequences. The answers for these questions create a frame for the release. It is good to have more material than is needed and to think about the follow-up questions of the subject which the recipient can ask. The better you prepare, the stronger and more credible you became. (Ikävalko 1999, 14.)

Press releases are not made often in FIT711. Those are written by marketing with the management depending on the situation. Situation that would need the press release and usage of bulletin are for example big damages in the club from the fire. In the communication plan is shown the template of the bulletin (picture 5).

## 5.7 Monitoring and measurement of communication

Evaluation of communication is considered difficult because the results are usually indirect. There are different goals and results, which are not every time material or measurable. Campaigns for example can influence visibility, recognition, recruitment, or engagement. They are expected to affect the company's results, internal efficiency and motivation. Measuring communications is useless unless the results are carefully analyzed and exploited. (Meyer 2002, 42-44.)

A balanced scorecard looks at the company's achievements from different perspectives. Balancing means that the results are not only estimated from a financial point of view, but also on intangible and tangible results. Balanced scorecard has four different perspectives. (Balanced Scorecard Institute 2018.)
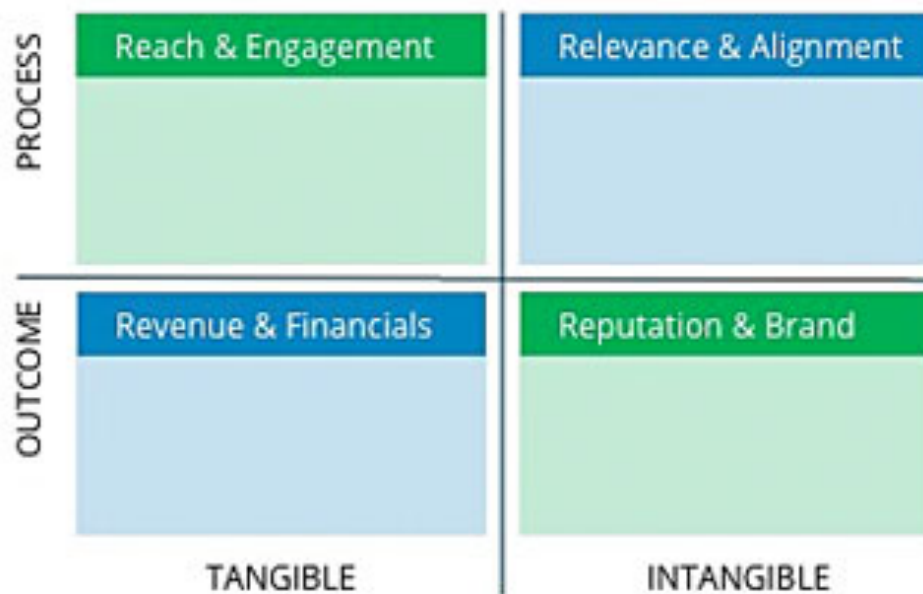
Figure 6. Balanced scorecard example
(http://www.themeasurementstandard.com/2015/11/a-new-balanced-scorecard-for-communications/, read 29.09.2018)

For each perspective company should define 5 to 10 goals. The scorecard helps the company to change its future vision and the strategy into action. The scorecard is at its best a strategic instrument that describes the results of the means to achieve the results. (Juholin 2010, 43.)

Measuring communication with a balanced scorecard fits for the company since it has concretely summarized the objectives and the ways to reach them. The Scorecard is a strategic measurement tool and its goals and means must support long-term objectives and the vision of the company (See an example in Picture 6.).

# 6  COMMUNICATION PLAN

The communication plan focuses on case company's needs, which we are considering together with the company's lead. The communication plan includes two big sections: internal communication and external communication. Communication monitoring is also discussed in the end of the plan. The internal communication section explains ways to enhance internal communication and assign the communication chain. Particular attention has been paid to sending e-mail but also targeting and goals. In the role of external communications, attention is focused on stakeholder communication which is one of the most important parts of the external plan. Attention is paid to external stakeholder communication and its importance for the case company. The section also discusses external communication goals, stakeholders, reporting, Image and external network communication. Communication monitoring gives ways to monitor and analyze communication results.

The communication plan will be read and executed by the marketing staff so the text must be understandable and can not contain a special vocabulary. Personnel can take advantage of the plan if they understand the terms and the main points. The plan also needed to be compact and cover only important subjects otherwise it would have come too extensive. (Jones 2017, 18-20.)

Attention was paid also to the titles of the communication plan so it would make it easier to find a specific subject. Headlines are kept informative. Wish is that those who are working in company's communications will seek concrete solutions for communication and will continue to develop their communications from this base.

## 6.1  Introduction

The purpose of this communication plan is to support case company's communications activities. The plan guides practical communication activities and acts as a communication manual. Communications plan consists of two sections: internal and external communications. The internal communication section focuses on enhancing communication, targeting and streamlining the communication chain. The stakeholder communication is the most important topic in the field of external communications. The section emphasizes the importance of stakeholder communication for the company. The external communication part provides also information about building the image, brand,

and also explains the objectives, stakeholders, reporting and external network communications of the company. At the end of the communication plan, is section about the monitoring tool for reporting and how it can be used concrete way.

## 6.2   Internal Communication

FITSEVENELEVEN's internal communication means communication within the entire company. The internal communication section of the communication plan includes the objectives and communication channels.

### 6.2.1   Long-term objectives

The long-term objectives of FIT711 internal communication are 2-3 years. The objectives of internal communication are concrete and easy to follow by the personnelle. Like this the evaluation of the results and the follow-ups are easier. Long-term goals must support FIT711 values and the image of number one gym chain in Rhein-Main region. The long-term goals of internal communications are focused on improving internal operations.

Long-term goals of the company:

1. Functional and effective internal communication:
 The target is that the recipients will not receive too much information everyday. The long-term goal is to learn to send the right information to the right recipients.

2. Simplifying the company's communication structure
At the moment the internal communication has many intermediates in communications chains and the information passes slowly to the final recipient or too many times. The aim is to build a functional information channel that is clear to everyone. The purpose of the chain is that it will operate smoothly in both directions (from sender to receiver and vice versa).

3. Effective usage of Whatsapp and closed Instagram account
Whatsapp serves all top persons (managers and clubmanagers) as the primary source of information and communication. Through the whatsapp assistant of the CEO can send

mesages quick to everyone. Every employee of the company have acces to closed Instagram profile where the company informs about all the campaigns and internal informations so that everyone stays up-to-date with what is going on. This also supports the previous goal, since a well-built and active service can serve as a common information channel.

The main task of internal communication is to support the whole company's operations.

### 6.2.2   Short-term objectives

The short-term objectives of internal communications are about one year long. Short-term objectives should support long-term goals. Once the strategic objectives are met the company knows that the annual goals have been right ones.

Short-term goals of internal communication:

1. Better targeting of e-mails
Who tells and what to whom. The aim is to consider whether this information is necessary for the specific recipient. Send the right information to the right recipients. This avoids information holes. Generally all news are distributed through the e-mail or Whatsapp. The goal is to reduce the use of e-mail in non-essential cases and rely more on the Instagram service.

2. Effective introduction of Instagram to communicate with whole staff
Through instagram company can quickly inform its staff about the upcoming events (before they go public) and changes in a company. In Instagram everything are send through pictures and text so it is easy to understand but also interesting way to communicate. Staff can also comment the "post" send by the company.

3. Improving internal communication
Every person in a company is committed to improving internal communication and contributing its objectives. In this way, the whole company can improve its communication.

### 6.2.3 Channels of internal communication

This communication plan focuses its internal communication part on two channels e-mail and social media. E-mail is the most widely used information channel and social media is designed to be a wider communication channel alongside e-mail. The use of e-mail and social media is for to the fact that most of the satff of the company work separate places, the company is basically scattered across the Rhein-Main region.

### 6.2.4 E-mail

Keywords of writing an e-mail is shortness and pithiness. In a FIT711, the aim is to distribute only the necessary information by e-mail and target it to the right person. These include e.g. personal matters, questions, written confirmation of different matters and information for small group of people. Via e-mail is no longer send all the information that is part of the organization like cooperation offers, events or releases. These type of messages are published in Instagram or per Whatsapp. If mesasge is send per Whatsapp them e.g. club manager need to forward the message to his/hers staff. In this way it reduces the information flow, avoids obtaining unnecessary information and enhances the use of e-mail.

### 6.2.5 Social media and internal announcements

Internal announcements are for all the staff of the company. For this company will use following social media and oral communication. These forms are used because they are easy to implement and produce, they are inexpensive and reach the entire staff. The latest posts will appear first on the instagram page and are easily accessible (with mobile phone). It is the responsibility of the staff to visit the internal instagram profile at regular intervals to read the new internal announcemnets. Instagram will also help to the problem of sharing information during personnel vacations. When head of club is on holiday no one shares the information with his/hers staff but when this information is shared through instagram it is instantly shared with everyone.

The contents of an internal announcement may include e.g. company news, current events, goals, or changes. Internal announcements are about this moments or the near

future. The content of the announcement should be informative and presented pithily (not too long).

The objectives of internal announcements are:

- The staff  is aware of the current matters at all times

- create openness to the internal communication

- more effective communication

- more effective reachability.

Internal communication and announcements have third type of sharing information it is internal marketing. This is a management tool in which management is replaced by motivating staff, encouraging all volunteer development and better performance. Company has following objectives of internal marketing: a closer organization, all have common goals and values, everyone works efficiently to make the organization work and to make the organization more efficient without a large financial contribution.

In FIT711 internal marketing is implemented through internal announcements or through company's joint theme days.

Company's common theme day is also part of internal marketing. For example playful charity football tournament among the staff creates a spirit. The theme days are organized about 2-3 in a year.  Internal marketing is also inexpensive and does not require a lot of resources. It can also show that the company is interested in its staffs wellbeing. Higher management should internalize what everything can be achieved with internal marketing. The management need to show example and internal marketing must move from top to down so that it will be credible and successful.

## 6.3    External communication

Company have lots of external communication since its main business is to offers service and products to the existing and new customers. It is important for the company to have strong brand and image to be able to keep interest on among its external stakeholders. Company is part of many events and projects all around the year. For handling all the communication well company needs clear guidelines.

### 6.3.1 Brand

Company has been building its brand now for about ten years. The logo of the company has been always similar. During the years it has been getting new colours with new created labels and changes due to issues with other brand with similar logo. Company takes good care of its brand image. Every club have renovation interval of two years and its looks get updated. Company is known from its slogans like "Gym2be", "End of Boring Gyms", "Welcome to the Bodyclub" or " We like to train you" which it has been patenting. Company has been in the past mixed to the 711 market chain and this is one of the reasons company has been doing changes to its logo. After almost ten years that company has been creating and introducing it brand as gym chain it took step forward. In 2017 company launched its own clothing collection and parfum for the both men and women. In 2018 company launched its first very own magazine and re-usable coffee-cup. Company has been committing to reduce the papercup waste which comes from its free coffee to go service.

Company should continue to evolve its brand since nowadays staying too long in one category is not recommendable. Company have plans for the expansion of the gyms and the product lines.

### 6.3.2 Image and Impression

Image is the sum of all perceptions that individuals, communities and stakeholders have about the company. It gives stakeholders an idea and impression is the company a good or bad investment or employer. Even if an individual does not have personal experiences about the company, the image is also influenced by other people's opinions. It is very important that all the external messages of the company target for a positive image. FIT711's image goal is to be a positive, quality-responsive, valued, trendy and appealing company.

Building an image and influencing others imagination is a long-term objective. They are affected by consistent messages and activities. Behind all the messages and activities of the company is the wanted image. Consistency and persistence are keys to win new stakeholders. When repeating the same core messages, the end groups will eventually receive the messages with less input.
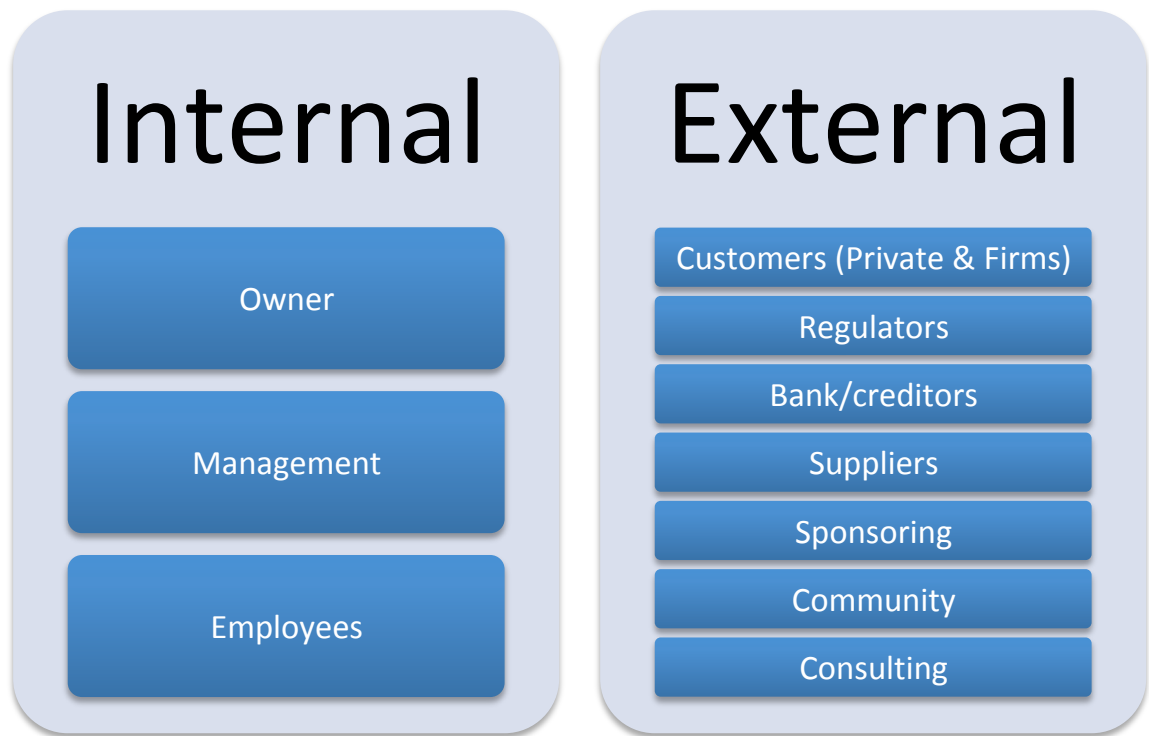
| Internal | External |
|---|---|
| Owner | Customers (Private & Firms) |
| Management | Regulators |
| Employees | Bank/creditors |
| | Suppliers |
| | Sponsoring |
| | Community |
| | Consulting |

Figure 7. Stakeholder specification 2018.

***Stakeholder impression about the company***

Company participate through out the year in many events. In these evenst company makes an survey for its current and possible new stakeholders about the company image. Every fitness studio have also its own feedback system that everyone can give their plusses and minusses about the specific studio, about the company or the courses they have been participating. All the feedback are handled and given futher to the person responsible for futher analysis.

***Image building and updating challenges***

Challenges in building a image are the lack of time and partially money. Company has been creating a good image base. Now its challenge is to keep it positive and develop it so that stakeholders won't be bored. Additionally, adopting the wanted image within the company so that everyone have correct attitude is somehow challenging.

***Define stakeholder specific objectives***

- Personnel have a good employer's image of FIT711. They have the impression that the company has a united atmosphere, a good spirit and everyone are going towards the common goals.

- Financiers and stakeholders think that FIT711 has a fair spirit and Employees are couraged to evolve. Company is also doing sponsoring and charity work which helps with positive image.

- Media presents company as a honest, positive and trendy place to do sports. They support company through their stories.

### 6.3.3    Stakeholders and communication channels

The stakeholder analysis of this communication plan focuses on stakeholder communication channels. FIT711's e.g. its employees, customers, banks, suppliers, sponsoring, media and other companies. (FITSEVENELEVEN, July 3rd, 2018.)

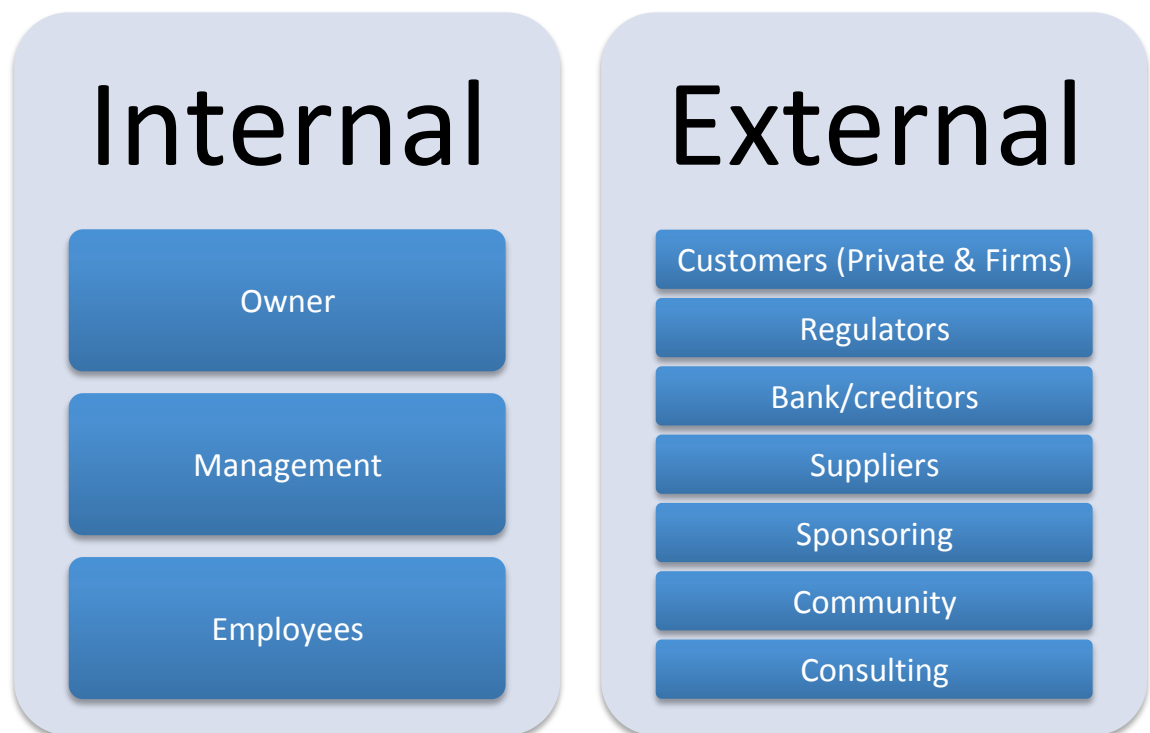Stakeholders are divided into internal and external groups.



Figure 8. Stakeholder specification 2018.

Employees and customers are communicated via Instagram (separate accounts) to reduce the use of e-mail. Facebook also reaches them effectively. When communication is focused on one channel, staff can easily find and receive information. Information for management or small distribution can be shared by e-mail, but all staff matters are published on the instagram.
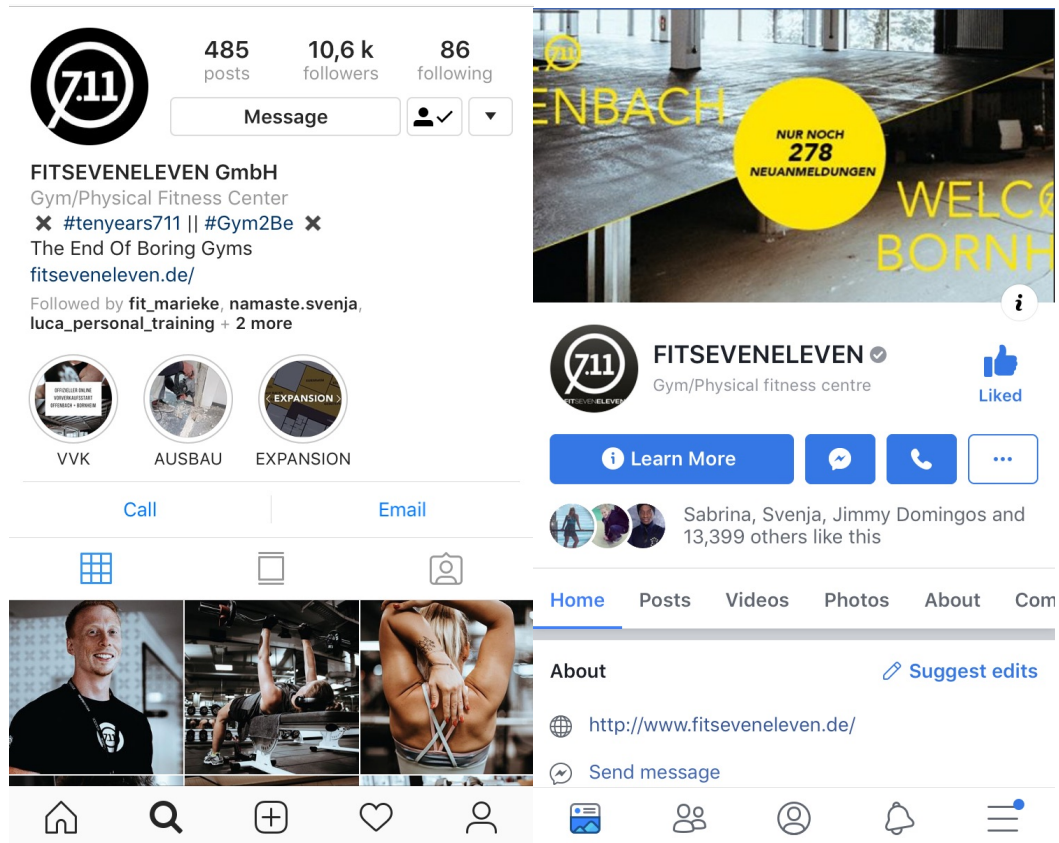
Picture 3. Screencapture of main pages of Instagram and Facebook accounts (external communication). 15.10.2018.

The various events organized by the company are a very good way of creating new contacts (see picture 4). Most of the memberships are made during biggest events of the year e.g. January-February period, open doors weekends and 711 day in November. Those times new members can have special offer about the new membership but also visit and try the courses. Visiting is of course possible anytime but during the events there are e.g. shorter trial courses. The media and influencers can also be invited to these events.

During the event there are active networking possibility. After the event, contact will be made and reminded about the company and its services. Face-to-face dialogues will play a significant role in these events.

Media visibility aims to create a positive image about the company as customers search for a positive and trendy company. Success stories are offered to the media and are also updated to the company`s website. Company have its own magazine but it also make cooperation with few magzines which are focusing Rhein-Main region. Most of the news are though about Frankfurt am Main since the published events are mostly there.

Contact with media is happening with face-to-face meeting and e-mail. Company have also extensive poster marketing.

| FITSEVENELEVEN Calendar 2018 | |
|---|---|
| | |
| 10.-11.03. | Open Doors |
| 07.04. | Change It! |
| 10.05. | Eschborn Cup-Charity football tournament |
| 07.06. | J.P. MORGAN CORPORATE CHALLENGE |
| 30.06. | Ten years of 711 party ("Birthday party") |
| 19.08. | Sommergefühle party |
| 15.-16.09. | Open Doors |
| 07.11. | 7.11 Day |

Picture 4. Company's yearly events (excl. sponsored partys)

### 6.3.4 Outcomes of external communication

It is important for the company to know its stakeholders so that set objectives would be realistic and relevant. Because company has limited resources, the focus on communication is becoming important in order to avoid the resources being lost.

External long-term objectives means objectives that lasts of more than a year (can also last many years). The long-term objectives of company are following:

**1.** *Increasing awareness of FIT711 and its activities among target groups and potential partners*
This goal can be achieved through long-term and targeted stakeholder communication.

**2.** *Increasing awareness among the bigger audience*
Company can start to target bigger audience when all members of the company have accepted and adopted the company`s values and objectives. This way, members of the company tell positive things about it, for example to their friends and in various events. Through this, the awareness and the target image of the company are beginning to form.

**3.** *Functionality of external communication*

This objective is the goal of many years. In order that external communication remains functional and up-to-date, it should be monitored and analyzed by using the scorecard but also reform time to time. Company does some bigger layout changes every year.

Short-term objectives are as the name states short maximum one-year objectives. Results are shown immediately or with small delay. Short-term objectives support long-term ones. Short-term objectives are:

**1.** *Defining and introducing the channel for external stakeholder communication*

previous was stakeholders defining and introduction of the channel, so only implementation is needed. From this activity company will get soon some results.

**2.** *Define the wanted target image and start building towards it*

Company has already defined a target image. FIT711 wants to be a positive, offer high quality, highly valued and trendy company. This objective image must be adopted by the whole company, because all the members of the company help to influence how the target image will be for the outside the company.

**3.** *Organizing events*

FIT711 annually organizes various events. These are normally open for everyone. There are some events that company participates which are specialized more for the other companies or sport specialists. Designing and sharing an annual event schedule with employees and stakeholders belongs to this objective.

### 6.3.5   Reporting and release

Company`s website is updated irregularly and the new layout makes it easy to find information about the company. Company is not updating the website with new event etc. So often. If stakeholder needs information about upcoming event, it will be found from company`s social media page (facebook or instagram).

Company should update its news website more often since not every customer have necessary social media account. Company`s app which is available for iPhone and android is the same layout than the webpage and this is other reason why it should be upda-

ted more often. Other thing that is missing from the website is concrete calendar for the upcoming events. In social media it is created automatically when event information is uploaded.

Company have a profile in Facebook where it shares information about what is happening in a company and also infroming about upcoming events. The profile is only for external communication and there is no discussion or publication of internal affairs. Outsiders can comment and ask questions through Facebook but also through the webpage (contact us part). General questions can be answered through social media and other inqueries will be answered directly via e-mail. Images and videos are uploaded to the profile of Facebook and Instagram. The good side of Facebook is its affordability, reachability, and visitor tracking. Responsibility for updating Facebook is with marketing  because the department is responsible for organizing external communications. FIT711 magazine is intended for external stakeholders and aims to unite external stakeholders. The magazine includes topics like food, sports, lifestyle and it includes also interviews. The magazine does not deal with topical issues and is not the primary source of communication. Doing the magazine requires lots of resources that is why the production is outsourced.

Company does not make generally any official bulletin. This is only special cases if something unusually happens. In two years company made bulletin about the fire in one of its gyms. This was to inform all the stakeholders about the closure of the gym and also for the press about reasons and that no one was harmed in the fire.  Company has following layout for the bulletin.

**FITSEVENELEVEN GmbH**
Düsseldorfer Str. 40, 65760 Eschborn

**EXAMPLE**

[Datum]

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren:

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit. Nulla justo. Phasellus quis justo in est hendrerit blandit. Quisque ante lorem, sagittis sagittis, vestibulum vitae, nonummy eget, turpis. Vestibulum eros urna, malesuada sit amet, vehicula dapibus, rutrum id, diam. Aliquam nonummy suscipit tellus. Proin lacinia enim in eros. Nulla facilisi. Duis commodo, tortor nec aliquam aliquam, lectus ipsum cursus enim, posuere pretium lorem ipsum sed risus.

- Maecenas faucibus. Morbi sed lectus. Curabitur aliquet posuere lectus. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent per conubia nostra, per inceptos hymenaeos. Donec magna. In at elit. Praesent est est, sagittis ac, lobortis a, tempus et, mi.
- Etiam mollis metus vitae tellus. Aliquam erat volutpat. Donec quis nunc. Sed eros eros, ultricies nec, rutrum ut, pharetra a, purus. Vivamus tincidunt aliquam nibh. Etiam faucibus imperdiet est. Phasellus eget massa eu pede lobortis pulvinar. Nunc tempus orci id nulla. Phasellus id justo. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.

Nam condimentum augue eget erat. Aenean dignissim augue vitae magna. Fusce dictum. Quisque gravida, arcu vitae luctus feugiat, urna massa sollicitudin ligula, ac vehicula nisl urna et lorem. Sed rhoncus. Duis metus elit, iaculis et, tristique vitae, commodo vitae, mi. Fusce sem. Praesent consequat, erat ut scelerisque lobortis, est purus varius sapien, ut rutrum diam dui id enim. Quisque vel ligula a odio ullamcorper fringilla.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

[Ihre Name]
[Ihre Titel]

PHONE          WEB

Picture 5.  Bulletin layout

**The title** tells the main message and it is short but informative.

**The first paragraph** is the most important part of the bulletin besides the title. Based on this, the press decides whether they will write about the happening or not. Paragraph will tell you what the bulletin is about and the most important issues. First paragraph is similar in design with the rest of the text.

**Sub-headings** make it easier to read the bulletin and they provide for the reader information about the content.

**Body** explains the news and completes headlines and the first paragraph. The body answers the questions why and how. The length of bulletin is one A4 and has also company's logo to facilitate identification.

**In the end** is a summary about the shared information. Under summary company should mention contact person with details (e.g. phonenumber or e-mail). This way anyone that have more questions know who to contact.

The above (Picture 5.) is company's bulletin template. The given information must be open, honest and informative. This builds confidence between company, stakeholder & media. Before making bulletin the issue needs to be well-studied and public's possible questions considered. A well-constructed bulletin and a well-informed spokesperson are making company more credible.

## 6.4 Monitoring

FITSEVENELEVEN needs to have concrete and simple communications monitoring methods to ensure that the results are analyzed and understood correctly. Monitoring needs to be also inexpensive and easy to implement. Team that makes monitoring in the company will use Balanced Scorecard and results of the surveys to do monitoring.

**Balanced scorecard**

As a tracking summary table is used a Balanced Scorecard. The Balanced Scorecard also takes into account non-economic, such as indirect and immediate communication results. It looks at the company's achievements (objectives) from many perspectives and collects the objectives, targets and initiatives in a same table. A Balanced Scorecard is a good tracking tool because it is inexpensive and shows the results of all tracking methods. Company's management and marketing fills out the scorecard and makes analysis based on it to see how succesfull the company's communication has been.

## Balanced Scorecard
EXAMPLE

| Company: FITSEVENELEVEN<br>Date:  15 / 01 / 2018 | Objectives | Measures | Targets | Initiatives |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Financial** | • Increase revenues<br>• Increase profitability<br>• Decrease operating costs | • Net profit<br>• Operating costs | • + 5% per annum<br>• - 3% per annum | • Simplify operations<br>• Implement new accounting system |
| **Customer** | • Improve offerings<br>• Improve market perception<br>• Improve customer experience | • Customer satisfaction index (%) | • + 5 % by last quarter | • Market study<br>• Field study<br>• Launch new concept |
| **Internal Processes** | • Improve offering choices<br>• Improve information flow<br>• Improve and clarify services | • Sales (%) of new product/service<br>• Brand awareness<br>• Customer experience | • ? % of year 2018<br>• +3 % per annum<br>• +90% of every quarter | • Build more effective offering creation process<br>• Design a better process for brand awareness<br>• New customer experience analysis perspective |
| **Learning and growth** | • Improve technology<br>• Improve knowledge<br>• Improve skills | • | • | • Technology training<br>• Sales and product training |

Picture 6. Balanced Scorecard example

Company follows and analysis its internet traffic. To see the activity on its website and its social media accounts. Based on these analysis company can decide wht type of content it shares with stakeholders. Other area to follow is media. Marketing department follows any media release about the company and makes an analysis of it. Analysis is based on following questions: Which media? Topic?  Who wrote it?  Was the story negative, positive or neutral?  And what kind of image it gave to the reader / listener about the company?

## 6.5 Responsability of communication in a case company

Responsability of the communication as a whole is management and marketing department of the company. Their job is to define communications policies, objectives and communication channels. Marketing department is responsible of communications for all personnel announcements. The management is responsible for monitoring the communication. It uses a Balanced Scorecard also for this purpose. Marketing is responsible for media tracking. The names of the correspondents for different announcements are published always after the information so that everyone knows how to contact them if needed. In 2018 company will hire one person who will be responsible of communication. Since company is growing there might be need in near future for futher personnel for this area.

# 7 CONCLUSION

Creating this communication plan for the case company was interesting but yet also challenging in different ways. Company did not have any communication plan done before and the responsible persons were not really informed that this was part of their job. First given recommendation was to hire one person to start handling the communication instead of having it as a side job of many different employees. Communication needs time and cannot be well done if a person have many other and more important posts. In my opinion, management and marketing was first confused about their role of daily communication. It has been done littlebit of the left hand and as a side job and since the company is growing fast this was a good time to take this matter to process. The different responsibilities related to communication needs to be clarified; each "communicator" must be aware of their own communication responsibilities and the use of communication channels. This was basically the starting point for my thesis process.

Since Company did not have a previous communication plan, I did the planning based on theoretical knowledge. I did research and read a large number of theory books and various expert articles which I then used to have a base for the communication plan. I found challenging to summarize the theory when writing a plan and connect it to the company. There are so much theory and information but not everything was usefull for this case or if it was the work would be too wide. In addition, the plan was very limited to focus on certain parts of the communication plan which was requested by the comppany.

The communication plan can be used to share information through diferent channels internal and external. In order for the communication plan to remain functional and as a up to date document, it needs to be updated regularly as the information contained can change. The objective of my functional thesis, the communication plan is in my opinion useful and contains practical examples that the company can use to improve and enhance its internal but also external communication. It contains the topics which are most useful for the company. Communication plan and the created documents are delivered also electronically for the company, so that in future they can be easily updated and used.

In my opinion, I succeeded in joining the functional and theoretical parts of the thesis process smoothly together into one entity. In the interview process I succeeded in keeping an objective viewpoint and my experience with the company did not significantly affect the interview's responses. Since the interview is always the interviewer's and interviewee's interaction, the outcome may vary greatly depending on the interviewee's situation. For this reason the analysis can not be considered completely reliable, as the other interviewer may not have exactly the same result. I am also pleased about the communication plan because it will serve the company.

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**APPENDICES**

## FITSEVENELEVEN GmbH

## Interview

Time:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:

Q1. Is the current internal communication comprehensible to you? Do you need information about company's situation and events? If yes, what would you like to know more about?

Q2. What do you think of the current communication channels and their efficiency? Do you consider something ineffective?

Q3. What kind of communication channel would you like to set up in the Company's internal messaging? Do you feel that Whatsapp or some social media (like Facebook) is in need of internal communication?

Q4. Are all the necessary messages transmitted from one level to another fast? Which would speed up information flow?

Q5. Free word: pluses, minuses, comments and suggestions for improvement in internal communication.