

# USER EXPERIENCE ON INTERNAL SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM

Case: Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa

## Abstract

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Abstract <p>This thesis was commissioned by Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa. The study aims to track user experience and feedback of Workplace by Facebook, an internal social media platform the company began using in early 2019. The purpose is to suggest solutions for improved user experience, which would eventually result in improved internal communication and employee engagement company-wide. The study attempts to answer the research question: "How have the users of Workplace by Facebook responded to the platform?"</p> <p>The theoretical part of the study comprises literary material related to internal communication in the modern work environment, and the role and advantages of social media in working life. Additionally, this part includes a general introduction of the commissioner as well as their current methods of internal communication. The theoretical part had an important role in defining survey questions and later development points.</p> <p>The empirical part was conducted as an online survey. Although the main research approach was quantitative, the study used open questions to enrich the findings with the qualitative research method. Total 87 users replied to a semi-structured questionnaire survey in October 2019.</p> <p>The results of the study show that the Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa personnel were generally happy with the improved communication. The employees valued the information and instructions published on the platform, and felt that they were more informed about their work than before. They wished that all of their team members would use the platform, to improve communication. The users had faced challenges with the application's functionalities, such as password and login. Based on the conclusions, an internal social media strategy was recommended to Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa.</p>		
Keywords Internal communication, internal social media, ISM, flow of information, overflow of information, employee engagement		

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the study as a whole in six parts. Part 1.1 presents the research background and the reasons for selecting the topic. The thesis objective, research questions and study limitations are then explained in the following parts. The process is further introduced through an overview of the theoretical framework, research and data collection methods used in this study. Finally, the structure of this thesis is presented in part 1.6.

### 1.1 Research Background

Traditionally, internal communication has been one-way. However in 2019, it is widely recognized that employee engagement begins with functioning internal communication and transparency (Karanges, Johnston, Beatson & Lings 2015; Richter & Knisely 2019). In the digital era, the business world has seen an ever-changing communicational world with one innovation after another. The overflow of information has businesses desperately calling out for simple solutions to replace the excessive numbers of different communication tools. As a result, implementing different social networking solutions within the workforce has been on the rise over the past decade (Hajj 2015). A well-functioning *internal social media* platform could be the perfect solution for the communication chaos. Two-way communication, sharing and content creation are not only familiar to most employees' private lives already, but their benefits to working life are proven: an informed employee makes a happy one (Haddud, Dugger & Gill 2016). The expectations for this growing type of organizational communication are high, and therefore it is important to study the effects of this culture shift early on (Davies 2018). How does a business utilize an internal social media tool to gain its maximum profit? How do we get employees to become active on the platform? The simplest way is to ask the existing users about their experience, their preferences and dislikes.

Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa's launch of the internal social media platform *Workplace by Facebook* in early 2019 was a significant change in the company's daily interaction. It aimed for new, more engaging and efficient ways of internal communication than ever before in the company (Tenhunen 2018). As the majority of the company's employees work in silos - on "the field", multi-industrially, it is easy to become secluded and lose touch. Workplace provides a better means of knowing and interacting with the employer. The platform was launched to improve daily communication by increasing transparency and decreasing hierarchy. This thesis was commissioned to learn how Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa employees have responded to the implementation of Workplace. To further develop the company's communication on the platform, it is important to listen to the users and

their experiences. Improvements generated by the findings are likely to result in a more engaged workforce. (Järvenselkä 2019.)

Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa commissions several theses annually, and some have studied the company's internal communication in the past. For this thesis, past commissions helped create an image of the company's shifting communication culture over the last decade. Ojava's 2014 thesis studies their previous form of internal information sharing, the intranet *Sintra*. Hammert, on the other hand, researches the overall impact of the company's internal communication as a part of job satisfaction in their thesis in 2010.

While in their 2019 thesis Enqvist studies the platform's possibilities, there is no prior research conducted regarding the user experience of Workplace in Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa. Since the tool is still new to most, and adaptations to communication changes tend to take time (Helsilä 2009, 88), it was the perfect time to track user opinions. During the adaptation period, practices could still be changed with minimum resistance.

## 1.2 Thesis Objectives and Research Questions

This study aims to find out Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa employees' experiences of Workplace by Facebook. The purpose of the study is to provide development suggestions from the findings, to allow the company to refine their internal communication to a manner that the users feel would improve their experience on the platform.

The main research question is:

- **How have the users of Workplace by Facebook responded to the platform?**

The research question aims to determine the user experience of Workplace by Facebook, as perceived by Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa's employees.

The sub-questions further define the user's experiences through examples

- *What are the most valued content types of Workplace according to users?*
- *What type of content do the users wish to see on Workplace?*
- *What type of challenges did the users face?*

The study is commissioned by Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa's communications department. The subject is relevant because the user activity of Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa personnel is not yet on the desired level defined by the service provider. Reaching a satisfactory user activity level improves flow of information, connectivity, resulting in an improved employee engagement and sense of community. User activity levels are further discussed in

chapter 3.5. By commissioning this thesis, Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa wishes to find out the current personnel opinions of the platform. Based on them, the commission's purpose is to acquire solutions to challenges they have faced in engaging employees on Workplace by Facebook. (Järvenselkä 2019.)

### 1.3 Limitations

2019 saw the launch of multiple new digital communication tools within Hämeenmaa. Even though the everyday use of these new tools often overlaps, their primary features differ greatly (Tenhunen 2018). This study was limited to only discuss Workplace by Facebook. Furthermore, the platform's functionality issues were excluded from the study since Hämeenmaa has little power over them. Only communication and content creation were considered relevant to this user experience research.

The focus group included all Hämeenmaa employees that had activated their account by October 2019, not depending on their individual user activity. The focus group was large enough to provide a satisfactory sample of users. The survey was published only on Workplace by Facebook, which meant only active users could reply. The online survey tool Webropol required a link from a Workplace post, and allowed replies once only for each user.

Since the platform is intended for all Hämeenmaa personnel across industries, all users regardless of their place of work, age or status were included. To further enhance the validity and reliability, the survey was conducted anonymously.

### 1.4 Research Methodology and Data Collection

The thesis is a case study for the commissioning case company, Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa, and thereby studies a single event with specific, intensive information on the subject (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 134).

Empirical study divides into two separate research methods, quantitative and qualitative. Although their methodology is different, the two are often implemented in the same research. They are considered approaches that complement each other, rather than compete with one another. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 134 - 137.)

Quantitative research means statistical study, which uses numerical data to create information. It compresses raw data into graphs, tables and charts to illustrate research outcome. To make research reliable, the quantitative method requires a sufficiently large sample of a focus group. The data is often gathered using a structured survey form with

predetermined options for answers. Using deductive methods, the results are then generalized to correspond with the whole focus group. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 134 - 137.)

One of the most typical quantitative research methods, a survey collects structured focus group data. Typically, a survey is conducted by using either a structured interview or a questionnaire form. The data gathered is used to describe and explain a phenomenon. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 134 - 137.)

Commonly, the quantitative research method clarifies a state of a situation, but is unable to define the cause. In this type of situation, the qualitative method becomes useful. The method helps to understand the study subject by exploring the reasons behind the behavior of the focus group. By determining their motives and attitudes, it is possible to begin alternative development. Efficiently used, quantitative and qualitative research methods complete and reinforce one another, improving the accuracy of the findings. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009; 134 - 137.) According to this reasoning, and generous access to data, this thesis utilizes both quantitative and qualitative research methods side by side as primary research.

The empirical part of this thesis was conducted by issuing a semi-structured questionnaire survey for Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa's internal social media platform users, i.e., their employees. A survey was chosen because the study subject is a platform with multiple users, making the data acquiring possibilities fruitful. To add informational value to the results, the survey questions were complemented using the qualitative approach, which meant open survey questions along structured ones. The qualitative method allowed deductive observations which supported the structured results. The open questions tracked examples, opinions and suggestions concerning the use of the Workplace platform.

## 1.5 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical studies on internal social media, like Workplace by Facebook, are limited in numbers. Although the organizational use of social media has been widely studied, most studies focus on marketing and the public presence of organizations on social media. The relationship between internal communication and social media remains understudied by scholars in management and organization studies.

As secondary research, this thesis uses both online and print sources that have been published over the last decade, the era of social media and modern organizational communication. The theoretical frame includes earlier research, books, online journals and articles as literary research on internal communication. They define social media, its internal use

in organizations, its benefits and risks, as well as functional internal communication and internal social media in relation to employee engagement.

S Group's and Hämeenmaa's materials, published, internal as well as unpublished, are an important resource in understanding the case company.

## 1.6 Structure

The thesis comprises introduction, theoretical part, empirical part (case study), conclusions and summary. The introduction part in the first chapter provides insight to reasons for selecting the thesis topic. It defines goals and objectives as well as limitations to the study. It then introduces the research methodology and theoretical framework for the study, and finally moves to overview the thesis structure.

In the theoretical part, the main emphasis is on literature of internal communication and employee engagement. The chapter discusses the common practices of communication in the modern working life, reflecting on their rapid change and the adaptation it requires from organizations. Finally, the chapter defines social media as well as its possibilities and benefits to working life.

The third chapter introduces the case company, Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa. It gives a general overview of the company's operations, as well as the internal communications used by their organization. After providing the overview, the chapter further moves to assess the current use of the Workplace platform in the company.

Chapter four, the empirical part, proceeds to the study implementation, from design and conducting to gathering data. The study findings are presented with graphs, and finally analyzed by reflecting on the theoretical material discussed in chapter two.

The conclusions part introduces the study results and offers recommendations to Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa. Additionally, this part discusses the overall validity of the study and suggests further research topics.

Finally, chapter six summarizes the previous chapters by discussing the research topic and the study results further, as well as reflecting on the study process. The research structure is illustrated in figure 1.



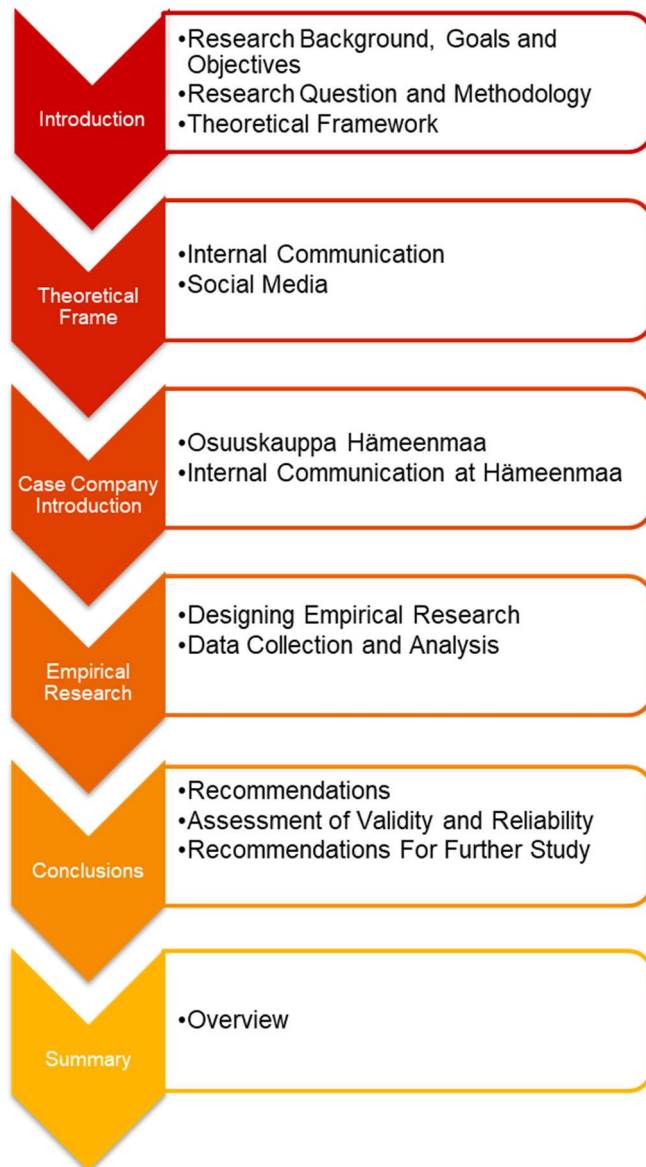


Figure 1 Structure of the thesis

## 2 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Communication is interaction. Juholin (2017, 23) states that successful communication is invisible - it only becomes visible once it fails:

*"Communication is needed so that organizations work, so that the society's wheels keep turning, and so that people know what to do"*

This chapter concentrates on internal communication of an organization as well as the goals and tools of internal communication in the modern workplace. Focusing on social media as an internal communication tool, this part introduces the term as well as analyzes the benefits and risks of organizational use. In the final part, the chapter describes the study subject, the internal social media platform Workplace by Facebook.

### 2.1 Internal Communication

Internal communication supports, plans and achieves interactions between relationships beneficial to the organization's operations. Internal communication is one of the most critical factors in a company's success - teams can only become efficient once their communication is effective. (Helsilä 2009, 88.)

The primary goal of internal communication is often perceived as ensuring fluent flow of information and providing a platform for interaction within the organization. This means engaging employees in a dialogue where top-down messages are interpreted in an understandable manner. Rather than senior executives, employees prefer immediate managers as their main source of information. They act as an important link between the company and its employees. By encouraging questions and conversation, a manager creates a two-way exchange, which allows information to move smoothly. Overall, the ultimate goal of internal communication is not as much in the actual flow of information, but in its results - increasing efficiency and profitability. (Whitworth 2011, 197.)

### 2.2 Tools of Internal Communication

Everyday communication in business means exchanging knowledge and experiences as well as participating in conversations needed for completing daily tasks. The most common tools are face-to-face workspace conversations, email, phone calls, quick or unscheduled meetings, instant messaging and video conferencing. (Juholin 2017, 128 - 129.)

Everyday face-to-face communication is still valued highly in efficiency (Helsilä 2009, 88). A functional workspace plays an important role in the effectiveness of daily communication. The need for email and meetings decreases if the form and location of the workspace is right. Coffee breaks and other type of free socializing at work are an important method for sharing information (Juholin 2009, 175). However, the information shared by face-to-face communication is often not recorded anywhere and therefore is only useful in prompt everyday situations. The need for more structured face-to-face communication, such as meetings and performance reviews, remains. Although traditional face-to-face meetings still have a strong role in official communication, web meetings have become increasingly popular. Meeting tools like Skype and Teams are online-based applications that allow multiple people to join in a real-time video conference. They make attending the meeting possible anywhere, which saves time and cost, and information is easily retrieved later. (Juholin 2013, 97.)

The most relevant information, *informing*, is still ideally distributed in multiple channels. Informing is providing information actively and making sure it reaches. It needs a communication infrastructure: channels, forum, principles and guidelines as well as people responsible for both producing content and updating information systems. It is usually one-way and neutral, and it is guided by the staff's expectations and requirements for receiving information. Informing, such as news and announcements, is often distributed by email, bulletin boards, staff magazine and intranet. (Juholin 2017, 48.)

Email is still the most important tool of written internal communication. It is still constantly used for everyday communication. Although email is convenient and important in general communication, it is particularly heavy for certain types of communication, like spontaneous questions and message chains. Emails and their attachments are sometimes a nuisance in their overload of information. For years, intranets have been important in reducing unnecessary emailing. New digital solutions like internal social media, however, have more potential as they offer instant messaging, shared workspaces and interactive informing. (Juholin 2013, 98)

Bulletin boards and their modern counter parts, digital info screens, are constantly updating channels for only the most important information. They display both company-wide and place-specific information that is intended for all personnel at the workplace. Although their role in informing is decreasing as digital solutions are taking over, they are still important, especially for employees that do not use digital tools on daily basis. However, since modern technologies allow faster methods of informing that do not require physical

presence, informing employees should never depend on bulletin boards and info screens alone. (Juholin 2009, 178.)

Staff magazine is an internal publication, regularly distributed to all personnel, in print or digital form. It usually contains articles about current company operations and events, interviews, updates and instructions. Staff magazine is never the channel for announcements, but provides in-depth information related to them. (Juholin 2009, 180 - 181.)

Intranet is an internal network that allows access from personnel only. They often include all company announcements, directions and instructions, downloadable materials and company contact information. Information letters and staff magazines are often released digitally on the intranet. The dawn of the intranet systems was in the early 2000s, when they acted as digital bulletin boards, providing simple one-way information. As the intranets became popular, they sometimes became a dump for materials old and new, which made it challenging to search for a specific piece of information. To avoid this, intranets slowly started to evolve into a more interactive form, which required predetermined rules and updating: this meant someone was responsible for constantly updating the intranet. The new intranet was, and is, the predecessor of shared workspaces. (Juholin 2013, 216 - 217)

Shared workspace is a digital work environment where, unlike the standard intranet, anyone is allowed to create content. Their nature is more social and interactive and they are usually linked to other software, like video meeting tools and internal social media, making it possible to share the same information across platforms. This eliminates repetition. As companies are striving for increasingly streamlined communication, shared workspaces are slowly taking over. Ideally, a shared workspace could reach the level of efficiency of face-to-face communication. However, as technologies are still new, the adaptation takes time and this is not yet anywhere near reality. (Juholin 2013, 215,)

Like Helsilä (2009, 88) states, all communication is interaction, and it is challenging. Especially with multiple people communicating and many channels to follow, is often not enough to simply send an email or put a poster up on the bulletin board (Juholin 2017, 216 - 217). Non-face-to-face communication can be disrupted for several reasons, such as overlooking, accidental deleting or failure to follow a specific channel. Thus, the planning process of internal communications should take time and consider the appropriate communication channels for each situation. Nowadays, companies are slowly abandoning outdated tools and replacing them with modern interactive solutions. Shared workspaces and social media are becoming the primary tools of internal communication in the 2020s. Chapter 2.4 is dedicated to social media in internal use. (Hajj 2015; Helsilä 2009, 88.)

Summarizing the previous, table 1 illustrates the different communication methods and their typical use. It showcases how different tools are needed for different purposes, and even though some tools are more important than others, each one has a role in communication.

Table 1 Tools of internal communication and their typical use

	Face-to-face	Digital	Other
Scheduled	Meeting Performance review	Video conference Intranet	Staff magazine Bulletin board Info screen
Mix	Coffee break	Email <b>Internal social media</b> Shared workspace	Phone call
Spontaneous	Workspace chat Quick meeting	Instant messaging	

### 2.3 Social Media

The term *social media* is often used to describe online communication environments that allow their users and user groups to communicate and actively participate in content creation. The nature of social media is communal, often featuring tools for commenting, sharing and liking content (Forsgård & Frey 2010, 55). The term became common in 2009, when it replaced *Web 2.0* in public language. Although similar, the two are not completely synonymous: Web 2.0 is perceived as a technical term for a more functional and interactive website, while social media focuses on the interaction between users, creating and sharing content (Pönkä 2014, 2.1).

Social media constitutes of content, interaction between communities, and Web 2.0 technology. Moreover, the applications and services of social media are based almost entirely on user-created content, or the users have another separate, significant role in their functions. Equally importantly, it is a platform to create and maintain relationships between people. If the primary purpose of an app or a website is based on chatting, content creation and sharing, or networking, it is characterized as social media. However, other websites often carry social media qualities within them as additional value (Pönkä 2014, 2.1). The most significant difference between traditional and social media is genuine interaction. Users are interested in real individuals and unique styles of content creation (Forsgård & Frey 2010, 55). Social media appreciates sharing: it is encouraged and rewarded. It can be perceived as trade - it uses information and content as currency. (Pönkä 2014, 4.2.1.)

According to a Statista research (2019), most popular social media services in the world include Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Messenger, WeChat, Instagram, QQ, Tumblr, Qzone and Tik Tok. This top ten ranking offers a descriptive cross-section of different social media purposes. While some of these sites and apps offer a simple conversation platform, others include a variety of different features. All of them, however, share the characteristics of social media: two-way communication and content creation (Pönkä 2014, 2.1).

Social media, in its relatively short life, has been present in organizations in two ways. First, it became a method of external communication with customers and media. Nowadays, carefully planned social media strategies are an essential part of a company's marketing. Only in the recent years have organizations begun to utilize social media solutions for internal communication, and the trend appears to slowly spread from organization to another. (Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield 2013.)

## 2.4 Social Media as Part of Internal Communication

As social media becomes more popular, its shift to professional use is only natural. For years, social media channels have had a significant role in marketing and generating online communities of consumer interest (Everly 2017). While companies are increasingly shifting their marketing channels towards social media, internal communication is beginning to migrate as well (Asikainen 2017). Internal social media, or *ISM*, is gaining ground.

Today's atmosphere encourages organizations to promote an inclusive culture to maximize employee engagement. Internal social media is not merely a channel for posting information, it is a platform for interaction (Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield 2013). Accessible any place, anytime, it is the perfect vehicle for networking through creativity and collaboration. Sharing opinions and experiences creates a sense of community, social cohesion and team spirit, even when it happens digitally. (Juholin 2017, 119.)

Although it is a new innovation, it is not really news. Social media has been implemented for organizational communication years before official ISM platforms. These unofficial channels are often founded by employees outside of the company's planned internal communication. Since they usually use giants like Facebook and WhatsApp as platforms, the unofficial channels cannot be administered by the company, which makes them a security threat. Since May 2018, the European Union has prohibited companies from using public channels for internal communication under the Data Protection Act (Office of the Data Protection Ombudsman 2019). As of the act's initiation, companies have been forced to look for an ISM solution to replace the platform they had previously used unofficially. In-

vesting in an ISM platform tailored to an organization's needs, instead of using public social media channels, increases the levels of privacy significantly. (Asikainen 2017; Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield 2013.)

Since people are familiar with them already, most ISM's appear similar to their popular public counterparts like Facebook. However, they often include additional functionalities that serve professional use. At the same time, irrelevant features, such as games, are stripped out. The most popular social media interfaces intended for working life include Slack, Yammer and Workplace by Facebook. (Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield 2013; Asikainen 2017.)

In their 2013 journal Leonardi, Huysman and Steinfield define internal social media as web-based platforms that allow workers to

- *communicate messages with specific coworkers or broadcast messages to everyone in the organization;*
- *explicitly indicate or implicitly reveal particular coworkers as communication partners;*
- *post, edit, and sort text and files linked to themselves or others; and*
- *view the messages, connections, text, and files communicated, posted, edited and sorted by anyone else in the organization at any time of their choosing.* (Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield 2013.)

Besides allowing users to do all of the above, the activities are stored for future availability for any user. This makes the ISM distinct from other internal communication tools - the visibility allows social learning by just browsing coworker's discussions on the platform. For example, if the subject was discussed by email or video conference, only the participants would benefit from having the discussion. It can be compared to an open office space, where a casual conversation with useful information is heard, and learned from, by others. (Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield 2013.)

Internal social media is especially beneficial for companies with several departments, divisions and locations. These companies risk having their employees disengage from the organization simply because they are isolated. Internal social media allows them to access information and interact with colleagues from different departments. (Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield 2013.)

## **Benefits of Social Media in Working Life**

Social media flips communication culture on its head. Managed correctly, this cultural change gives freedom and allows creativity to flow in peer-to-peer support, reducing top-down communication. Especially in widely-spread organizations, narrow networks expand when branches of the organization are allowed to communicate with one another. This, too, often results in creative problem solving and sharing best practices, leading to more efficient and satisfactory methods of everyday work. Increased trust in the organization and a clear sense of what it wants to achieve can be created through conversation rather than broadcasting. Additionally, the future employee is attracted to an organization that allows them to communicate in a way that feels natural to them. A well-functioning internal social media thus becomes a recruitment advantage. (MacIntyre-Kemp 2012)

One of the main purposes of internal social media is to share information to everyone easily and as quickly as possible, especially if instant messaging is introduced. Compared to email, communicating through social media is significantly more interactive. Social media can help coordinate projects within closed groups. It can be used as a platform for idea generation as well as sharing tips and other participatory activities, which in turn increase engagement. (Asikainen 2017; Everly 2017.)

Enforcing employee engagement is one of the goals of organizational communication. Engagement is always born on free will - it is a result of informative and interactive communication, the feeling of being valued and heard by the employer. (Juholin 2017, 48 - 49.) An engaged employee has a positive emotional connection to their company and its goals. It is built on job satisfaction and significance as well as a pleasing work environment. This bond makes the employee less likely to leave their job, as they are not merely motivated by money, but a desire to work for the good of the company. It creates a positive and constructive organizational culture that supports the company even during tough times. Organizational culture is built on, and strengthened by shared values, beliefs and practices, further strengthened by interaction. (Juholin 2017, 48 - 49; Dalbec 2016.)

Engagement will lead to more productive and efficient workers - it is eventually repeated in the company's financial status as revenue growth. D'Aprix (2011, 257) agrees: highly engaged employees are performing considerably better than their competitive counterparts are. An employer can affect their employees' engagement by displaying transparency, trustworthiness and respect toward their staff. Executive communication needs to be open and honest. The company's values and management style should meet the employee's values. A functioning two-way communication is key in working toward common



goals: both parties need to feel heard. To become engaged, employees have to feel comfortable sharing discussing their own ideas. The ability for open discussion improves an employee's trust for the company - speaking up should even be encouraged by the management. Failing to establish trust in the company leaves employees disengaged. An inspiring manager and familiarity of colleagues create important relationships, answering to the humane need to belong. This way, promoting acceptance at work improves engagement significantly. (Juholin 2017, 48 - 49; Dalbec 2016, D'Aprix 2011, 257 - 258.)

Communicating using internal social media tools is an important element in building and empowering engaged employees. It boosts confidence, connectivity and engagement through creating social capital. For example, knowing the activities of a colleague increases familiarity to them. The transparent conversations on ISM are easy to join and follow. Interacting with others creates a sense of community, which is supported by more interaction. (Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield 2013.)

### **Risks**

Participating in social media has been a norm in both work and leisure for years. Already in 2010, Forsgård & Frey remarked that the workforce's younger generations considered it unnatural if managers were unapproachable on social media. As the tech-savvy generations slowly start to dominate the age structure of the labor force, the risk of disconnection becomes real. Modern technologies, like ISM, should be introduced to keep these generations engaged. (Forsgård & Frey 2010, 100.)

Since it offers a significantly different approach, internal social media almost forcibly changes the traditional organizational culture. Authoritative leadership often limits information and communications possibilities of a common field employee. It discourages inspiration and development. Often suggestions from the field never reach the top. Failing to benefit from good ideas is a problem for any company. ISM can surpass layers of hierarchy with its open information sharing and active conversation. It can accelerate the flow of information, leading to rapid resolving of problems. (Pönkä 2014, 4.5.1.)

Shifting the culture is a slow process, and understandably difficult, as it requires moving from carefully planned responsibilities to an open and communal environment. This can even cause resistance for many reasons: fear of change and new things, fear of losing power over the communal nature of the new solution, the fear of saying something wrong. Therefore, it is important to understand the new communication process and its dynamics. (Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield 2013; MacIntyre-Kemp 2012.)

## Executive Role

It is important for the people in leadership positions to encourage the shift to internal social media. If their attitude is negative, it can affect the attitudes of their employees as well as their possibilities to adopt the new culture. Therefore, it is urgent for the leadership to understand the benefits of ISM, to accept and learn using it. If conversation is divided and limited into cliques or exclusive to leadership, communication becomes the traditional one-way monopoly again. (Pönkä 2014, 4.5.1.)

It is very important the people in executive roles take active part in the ISM. The leadership has a responsibility to listen to the organization equally, to analyze and understand the messages and give circumstances for conversation. Listening to the organization is essential for managing workloads, innovation, motivation and work environment.

Therefore, if the executive suite is not attending, it makes no sense to have an internal social media platform. (Puro 2010.)

## Activity

One of the largest concerns is the fear of misuse. Although somewhat an outdated fear, many companies worry about the inappropriate discussions and time-consuming free time use rather than working. However, by not allowing conversation, the company expresses distrust for their personnel. Sharing private company information is also a legit concern. Similarly to the risk of excessive free time use, it is not advisable to forbid conversation from the fear of undisclosed information leaking. In the worst-case scenario in both situations, disgruntled employees are encouraged to anonymously spread negative comments elsewhere. After all, the ability to use social media freely only boosts efficiency, as it increases job satisfaction. In addition, information leaks can easily be managed by establishing common rules about what information can be shared. (Davies 2018; MacIntyre-Kemp 2012). Since ISM and external social media platforms are intended for different purposes, it is advisable to differentiate the ways of interacting within the two. By setting boundaries to activity on ISM, the company creates structure and controls the unnecessary or irrelevant content, like private personal details. (Hajj 2015; Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield, 2013.)

Even if the internal social media was free of unwanted content, work-related information can still create an overload. *Information overflow* is a common issue in the modern working life. ISM should not become a dumping ground for all information, but an active forum for discussion and creative idea generating. To minimize repetition, companies should agree which content is published on ISM and which sent to email and other channels. Crescenzo (2011, 221) advises companies to communicate less, but better - pictures,

video and other aesthetically pleasing material is better than walls of text. Overflow of information can cause ISM users to be overwhelmed and only search for specific information, instead of learning from the communication of others by browsing. (Hajj 2015; Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield, 2013, Crescenzo 2011, 219 - 222.)

In the first steps toward corporate social media era, a common challenge lies in user activity - employees neglecting to use and follow their internal social media channels. The interface needs to be user-friendly and carefully introduced to the daily routine, encouraging employees to participate as much as possible. It is even essential the employee access the platform from home - according to Crescenzo (2011), majority of employees want to know information about their company off-hours. Therefore, it is critical the platform be accessible from any device, including the employee's own. (Asikainen 2017; Crescenzo 2011.)

Since the most trusted source of information is the immediate manager, the companies should pay attention to managers leading by example. Some are naturals, but others may need professional coaching in their leadership skills. Once the manager becomes active on internal social media, it is more likely their employees do as well. The manager should be capable of inspiring the culture of content creation, sharing and flow of information in their employees. (Whitworth 2011, 197 - 198.)

### **Capital creation**

Although it is fair to say implementing an ISM platform will increase employee engagement, motivation and that way generate increase in revenue, it is not enough that the ISM is set and available for the employees. It has to inspire and create emotional capital before the users will respond in the desired, positive manner. (Huy 2016.)

According to Dalbec (2016), the most important aspects of ISM in creating capital are quality of content, engagement and dialogue, and optimization. 'Quality of content' means actively using good, interlinked technologies with integrated content. It means that the company is willing to take risks with strategies to enhance user experience, and has a dedicated team as ISM ambassadors. Engaged and active employees can be encouraged to act as ISM ambassadors, which means they are active in content creating and sharing. An ambassador upholds a positive image of the ISM within the community, and inspires activity through their own example. Since the role displays trust from the employer, acting as an ambassador is likely to increase the ambassador's own engagement. (Dalbec 2016; Huy 2016.)

By engagement and dialogue, Dalbec means using the ISM to invite employees to interact and give feedback. As discussed before in this chapter, interactive channels and possibility for conversation creates sense of community and engagement. The feeling of being heard increases the perceived capital and keeps the users returning to the internal social media. 'Engagement and dialogue' also calls for the executive leadership to actively participate. As concluded before, the presence of the people in executive position creates the sense of transparency and therefore increases trust to the company. (Dalbec 2016; Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield 2013.)

Finally, 'optimization' means controlling the content's reliability, relevance, accessibility, and overall appeal. This essentially means having a designated person that is responsible for updating the content. (Dalbec 2016; Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield 2013.) The aspects are adapted in figure 2 to form a guideset of effective ISM.



Figure 2 Important aspects of ISM capital creation (Dalbec 2016)

## 2.5 Workplace by Facebook

Workplace by Facebook (hereafter, Workplace) is a social media platform for organizations' internal communications, developed and owned by Facebook. Since its launch in 2016, over 30,000 companies from multiple industries worldwide are using Workplace. Although independent from Facebook, Workplace's features are essentially the same, excluding advertising and recreational content, such as games. The platform does not require the user to have or create a Facebook account. Workplace has both desktop and mobile platforms, as well as a separate instant messaging platform, WorkChat. WorkChat is a tool for private instant messaging between both teams and individuals. Accessing the information shared on WorkChat requires a membership of the specific chat group. (Facebook 2019a.)

## Groups

Content on Workplace is published in groups. A user can select a suitable group depending on the subject and intended audience. A group can be *open*, which means everyone in the organization has access to its publications. A *closed* group means a user has to request a membership, be invited or manually added by an admin. A closed group's basic information, such as members, can be searched and viewed by any user, but the published content is available for members only. A *secret* group is only available via invitation or manual addition by admin. These groups cannot be found with the search function and they will not be visible on a user's groups listed on their profile. (Facebook 2019a.)

Like many social media, Workplace activity is updated on the main page's *activity feed*. The feed displays new posts that are posted in a user's own groups, as well as posts by people they follow. Muting groups is possible. (Facebook 2019a.)

Workplace uses *directed connection*, which means that viewing a user's profile does not require a separate friend request (Pönkä 2014, 4.2.1) and any user can start following any other user. However, if the content is published on a limited-access group, viewing it requires a membership. Although a user's profile can be viewed by any user nevertheless, following them will assure their publications show on feed. Any user can see another user's followers and followees. (Facebook 2019a.)

## Profile

A Workplace profile provides information about a user's job title and location, organization department and their colleagues, their skills, groups, profile pictures as well as their followers and followees. The profile also displays a user's position in the organization's hierarchy. An individual profile shows a user's team members, their supervisor and their position compared to the organization executives. Unlike Facebook, Workplace does not use *reciprocal connection* methods, meaning specific "friends" feature where both parties have to accept the relationship (Pönkä 2014, 4.2.1). Users can start a private conversation with any member of the organization - up until the executives. (Facebook 2019a.)

A user's profile is public by default and it cannot be changed to private. The user can manage their content privacy by selecting limited-access groups to post.

### 3 CASE COMPANY: OSUUSKAUPPA HÄMEENMAA

#### 3.1 S Group

The S Group (*S-ryhmä*) is the retail market leader in Finland (Hohti 2019). It operates in the retail and service sectors in over 1,800 places of business, including supermarket trade, department and specialty stores, fuel and service stations, hotels and restaurants, hardware trade, as well as their own bank services, S-Bank (*S-Pankki*). S Group has operations in Finland, Estonia and Russia. (SOK Corporation 2019.)

The S Group is a cooperative comprising 20 independent regional co-ops as well as Suomen Osuuskauppojen Keskuskunta SOK, owned by them. In addition, S Group includes six local co-ops. The network of co-ops is nationwide with a strong regional emphasis. Each regional co-op is financially independent and responsible for their business operations. (SOK Corporation 2019.)

Like all cooperative businesses, their customers, *member-owners*, own S Group. Providing these co-op members with profitable services and benefits is at the root of the corporation's operations. S Group has some 2,4 million co-op members (2018). (SOK Corporation 2019.)

S group is the largest private employer in Finland. It employs over 40,000 people altogether and 38,300 in Finland (status on 30 November 2018). (Hohti 2019.)

## Structure of the S Group

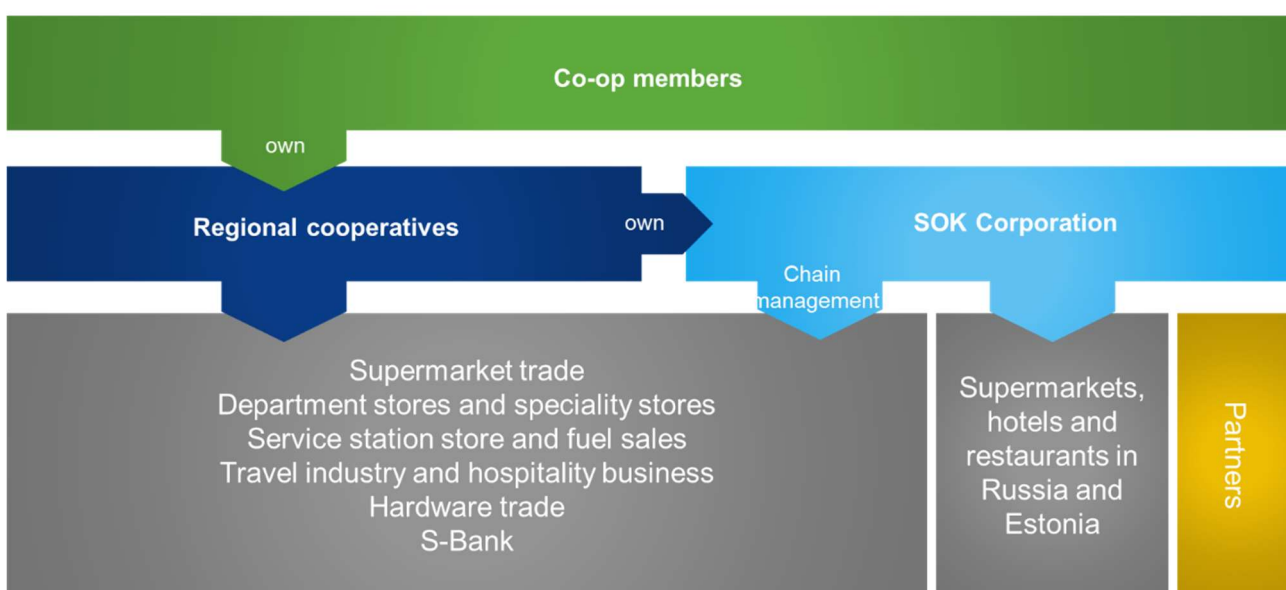


Figure 3 Structure of the S Group (Hohti 2019)

### 3.2 Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa

Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa, the Hämeenmaa Cooperative (hereafter, Hämeenmaa) is one of S Group's largest regional co-ops. It is a multi-industry company operating in Kanta-Häme and Päijät-Häme region, in 21 municipalities in southern and western Finland. Hämeenmaa is the region's largest company by revenue with over 100 places of business, including supermarket trade, hardware, department and specialty stores, car dealerships, fuel and service stores as well as hotels and restaurants. Hämeenmaa has over 165,000 co-op members (status in August 2019). (Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa 2019.)

The largest employer in the region, Hämeenmaa employs some 2,800 locals and provides some 1,000 summer jobs annually. While the average age of an employee is 35, a considerable part (28 %) are under 25 years old. Majority (61%) of the work is in retail, which, by nature, is the first job for many. According to their latest job satisfaction research, the satisfaction of Hämeenmaa personnel is on a good level. (Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa 2019.)

### 3.3 Communication Principles of Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa

A guideline for customer relations as well as personnel strategies, Hämeenmaa has an annual communication policy supporting and determining their focuses each year. These communication guidelines direct principles implemented in all of Hämeenmaa's communication and interaction. (Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa 2018.)

A positive employer image is an important competitive advantage. Hämeenmaa strives for an efficient internal communication, as it maintains work satisfaction and motivation as well as improves recruitment, resulting in an engaged and productive workforce. Additionally, a strong internal communication builds a solid base for Hämeenmaa's external reputation. (Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa 2018.)

The Hämeenmaa guidelines for internal communications include

- Communication is interpersonal interaction;
- Each employee at every organizational level takes part in Hämeenmaa's communication;
- Communication complies with Hämeenmaa's values and ethical principles, and
- A successful communication is a prerequisite for successful business (Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa 2018).

### 3.4 Internal Communication at Hämeenmaa

The most important areas of development in Hämeenmaa's personnel communication are a responsible public image and improving the sense of community within the workforce. As per S Group's communication policy, Hämeenmaa always shares announcements regarding business operations first internally (Työriinoja 2016). Internal communication methods for such announcements include e-mail distribution, info screens and Workplace. (Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa 2018.)

#### **Face-to-face interaction**

Like most companies (Juholin 2013, 220), the most common type of interaction at Hämeenmaa is the natural face-to-face conversations at work. Daily discussions should include sharing any new information and discussing practices related to work. Different types of meetings are held according to the needs of each unit and team. Performance reviews are held annually.

#### **New digital tools**

The digital communication at Hämeenmaa and the whole S Group changed with the implementation of the VDT project. *Viestinnän digitaalinen työympäristö*, the digital communication work environment, introduced new tools to replace the old intranet, Sintra. The new tools are sWorks, sPoint and Workplace by Facebook. (Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa 2018.)

sWorks is a custom-design interface of the Microsoft Office 365 platform, including the Office 365 software in cloud form. It is compatible with the rest of the digital environment. sPoint is a cloud platform for directions, materials for presentations and employment, and other type of information, departmental and company-wide. It resembles a traditional intranet: a common place for written principles and information. sPoint does not include news and announcements, but it may hold current briefs.

Workplace by Facebook is a part of the new digital tools of Hämeenmaa and S Group. The platform's use at Hämeenmaa is introduced in depth in chapter 3.5.

#### **Dooris**

Dooris is a mobile app that provides the S Group staff access to their work schedules as well as allowing influence through schedule wishes and extra work possibilities. Additionally, staff magazines and internal positions in S Group's recruiting are available on Dooris. The app is soon replaced with a more modern and convenient solution called MobiiliElli.



### **Info screens and bulletin boards**

Hämeenmaa's each place of business has an info screen displaying news, current information about the company's operations, open positions and staff benefits. The marketing department administers these screens. Traditional bulletin boards mainly display documents non-suitable for the screens, such as longer text.

### **Email and manager letter**

Besides daily face-to-face interaction at workplaces, email is currently the most important tool of communication. As a part of the managerial communication, Hämeenmaa uses a monthly email newsletter for managers, which collects important information about current news and issues.

### **Hämis**

Hämeenmaa's staff magazine Hämis provides in-depth information, staff interviews and personalized content about current news and events. Hämis issues are distributed to staff, retirees and board members four times a year.

### **Introduction manual**

Before beginning actual work at Hämeenmaa, each new employee receives an introduction manual. The manual is updated annually and contains introduction of the company as well as matters regarding employment, such as values and rules, paycheck and staff benefits.

## **3.5 Workplace at Hämeenmaa**

The S Group Workplace platform launched in March 2018. The aim of the launch was to increase the reach of all information concerning the employees' work and their employer. The company saw the open real-time communication as an opportunity for influencing and increasing the sense of community across the S Group (Hoikkanen 2017). Depending on their own schedules, regional cooperatives joined the platform during 2018 and 2019. Some of Hämeenmaa employees, mainly in administrative and manager roles, joined during 2018, but the official launch for all the employees of Hämeenmaa was in February 2019. (Järvenselkä 2019.)

Workplace has two main roles in Hämeenmaa's internal communication: a channel for interaction, and a social network. An internal social media platform is ideal for a company like Hämeenmaa, as the employees spread across over 100 locations across 21 municipalities. It inevitably leads to some level of disengagement from colleagues and the rest of

the company. Especially if the employees are involuntarily uninformed about the company's operations, their disengagement to the company can increase. This is where Workplace brings the most value. It decreases the feeling of seclusion by allowing colleagues from different locations to connect and share their experiences. (Järvenselkä 2019; Tenhunen 2018; Juholin 2017, 48 - 49; Dalbec 2016.)

Hämeenmaa advises all team communications to Workplace, and access their account at least weekly. If they wish to not have the application on their own device, the employee has to have the ability to access Workplace on a computer at their place of work. Unofficial channels like Facebook and Whatsapp groups are prohibited in all S Group operations under the 2018 Data Protection Act of the European Union. (Järvenselkä 2019; Tenhunen 2018; Office of the Data Protection Ombudsman 2019.)

According to the customer relations director of Hämeenmaa, the company's leadership is not currently as active on Workplace as they could be. Although some of them post regularly on the platform, majority of them still struggle with participation and presence on the platform. (Järvenselkä 2019).

Workplace reporting standards consider a user active by when they open one of the Workplace apps or visit the Workplace page on their computer or mobile device (Facebook 2019b). The activity metrics are helpful in tracking the user activity of an organization in Workplace. The activity of Hämeenmaa users is tracked regularly. (Järvenselkä 2019).

On 31 October 2019, 71,5 % out of all Hämeenmaa employees had claimed their accounts, which essentially means that they had started using Workplace. Out of them, 67 % were active monthly, and 64 % weekly. According to Facebook, Workplace starts bringing most value once at least 80 % of personnel have claimed their account, and the value will continue to grow all the way up to the full 100 (Facebook 2019c). This means Hämeenmaa still has to increase their claim rate to achieve maximum value from their internal social media.

Compared to other S Group co-ops that have launched Workplace, the claim rate of Hämeenmaa is dragging behind. Hämeenmaa is the only co-op in the largest five that is

yet to reach the desired 80 % claim rate. Figure 5 displays the claim rate differences between the ten largest co-ops by employees.

Claim rate by department Viewing

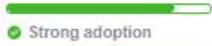
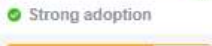
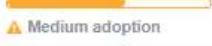

Department	People	% claimed
HOK-Eiänto Liiketoiminta	5598	82% 
Osuuskauppa Arina	2846	81% 
Pirkanmaan Osuuskauppa	2698	92% 
Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa	2591	72% 
Turun Osuuskauppa	2128	81% 
Osuuskauppa Keskimaa	1831	89% 
SOK	1759	90% 
OK PeeÄssä	1732	78% 
Osuuskauppa KPO	1571	58% 
Pohjois-Karjalan OK	1475	72% 

Figure 4 Top 10 S Group co-ops by size and their claimed account rate, 31 October 2019

Although the claim rate of Hämeenmaa has room for improvement, it is constantly growing. On 18 April 2019, the rate was at 63,3 %. Following the development graph, it can be noted that the claim rate correlates with the monthly and weekly activity rates: those who log in, begin using the platform. Therefore, the main challenge that Hämeenmaa has is making Workplace appealing for the employees that have not claimed their account. The following chapters of the thesis study ways to help improve the claim rate by tracking user experience and analyzing the user preferences.

## 4 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter explains the empirical research process for the thesis. First, it goes over the design of the study method, survey, as well as the details of the publication. Then, the survey questions are broken down separately for analysis and illustrated by graphs.

### 4.1 Designing Empirical Research

The empirical part of the thesis was conducted as a quantitative study, a semi-structured questionnaire survey with both closed and open-ended answer options. The 14 survey questions are sorted in chapters according to their respective themes. 10 questions follow the structure by predetermined options and four allow an open answer to a specific question. Additionally, some of the structured questions have an “other” option for adding a missing option. The questionnaire was created using an online survey tool, Webropol. Before publishing, the survey questions were reviewed with the director of communications and marketing at Hämeenmaa. After that, the survey was tested with mock respondents and replies.

The survey was published on Hämeenmaa’s Workplace group, *Avoin keskustelu*, which translates to open discussion. The group is mandatory for all Hämeenmaa employees: everyone automatically joins upon claiming their account. Publishing the survey on this specific group ensured the widest possible audience.

To increase the amount of the respondents, a Christmas-themed food basket was promised as a raffle prize between the respondents. A total of 87 Hämeenmaa employees filled the survey during eight days, 21st to 28th October 2019. The survey was published in Finnish and the results translated to English for analysis.

### 4.2 Survey Results and Analysis

This chapter presents the results of the survey using numerical data and graphs for illustration. Here, the data is analyzed and reflected on the theoretical discussion in part 2 of the study.

The first three questions are standard background questions, intervening variables, for allowing the data to be filtered and reviewed separately (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 86 - 87). The questions were selected to find out if certain factors affect user experience: they report age, status in the organization and the place of business. Although there could be countless other intervening variables, the three were considered most relevant for the particular study’s interests.

Questions 4 to 6 track user activity by structured questions. They determine how often the employees use the Workplace platform, and whether they use it on their work time or free time. Questions 7 to 9 discuss user preferences. They provide multiple choices and statements about the current content of Hämeenmaa Workplace. They also allow opinions of the individual respondent. Questions 10, 11 and 12 aim to find out what type of challenges, if any, the users have come across, using both closed and voluntary open-ended questions. They define possible challenges, and take specific interest in the Workplace activity of the respondents' team. Questions 13 and 14 are open questions according to the wishes of Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa's commission. They ask for examples and feedback relating to the current content on Workplace. Finally, the last question is for gathering voluntary contact information for the purposes of the food basket raffle.

### Question 1: Age

The first question divides the respondents into age groups of under 18, 18 to 24, 25 to 34 and onwards in sections of ten years, and ultimately to 65 and over. The results represent the age structure of Hämeenmaa's employees relatively well, with 25 to 34 as the largest respondent group, followed by 45 to 54 and 35 to 44 with only minor differences. The average age of Hämeenmaa employees is 35, which the results do not contradict.

However, while 28 % of Hämeenmaa employees are under 25 years old, only 18 % of the respondents were under 25. This could indicate a lack of activity in the age group that is known as digitally native. The least amount of answers were given by the age groups 55 to 64 (6 %) and under 18 (1 %), and none of the respondents were 65 or older.

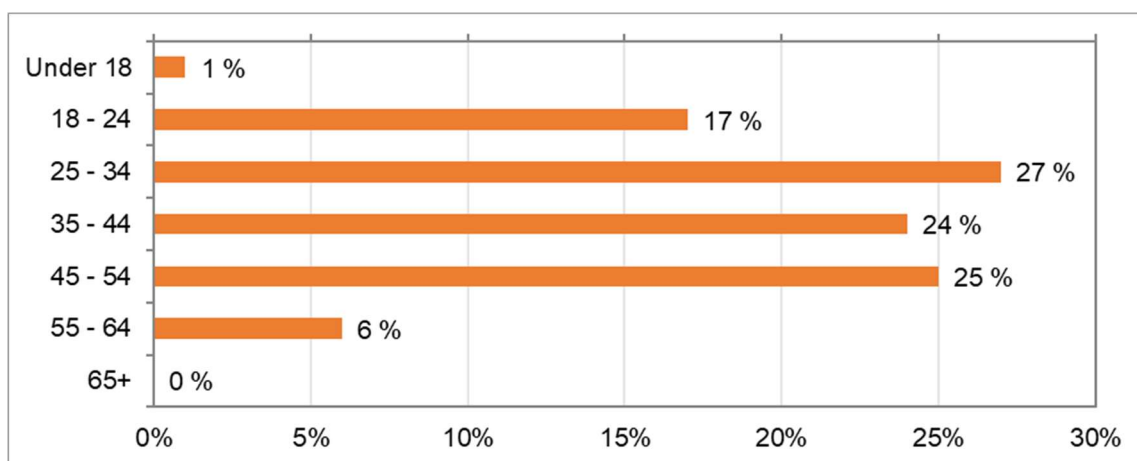


Figure 5 Age structure of the respondents

## Question 2: Status in the Organization

The second question tracks the amount of employees and managers in the respondents. The results are displayed in figure 7. It is interesting to note the amount of managers compared to the number of employees in the respondents, as the actual employee-manager rate in Hämeenmaa is significantly lower, less than 5%. This means that the managers are considerably more active than employees. While it is favorable to have active managers, the lack of employee activity is a challenge. However, the main purpose of selecting these two variables was in examining whether their opinions between one another differ. The following parts utilize this comparison upon relevance.

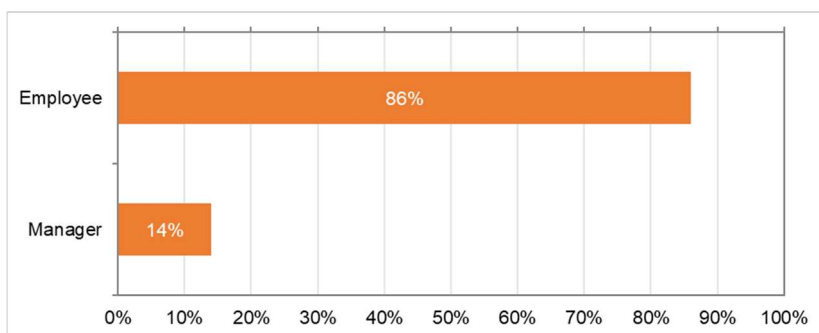


Figure 6 Respondents' status in the organization

## Question 3: Place of Business

The third question (figure 8) shows where the user, a Hämeenmaa employee, works. The question can be used to determine whether industries' answers differ from others. However, the answer distribution fails to represent the employee structure: for instance, the office and administration are overrepresented compared to their actual numbers. This can be logically explained by the information workers' opportunities to access Workplace at all times during the workday. Otherwise, the structure is somewhat truthful compared to the actual numbers, but it cannot be considered a factor in determining validity. It can be used to identify possible spikes and deviations in the replies.

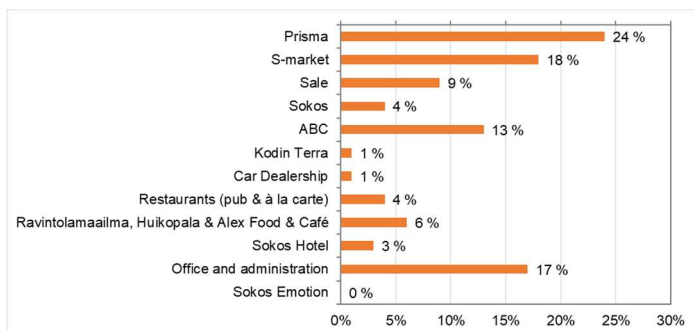


Figure 7 Respondents' place of work

#### Question 4: How often do you use Workplace?

The user activity appears to be on a good level, with 61 % of the user logging in daily, 36 % several times a week and 3 % at least weekly. As figure 9 shows, none of the respondents used Workplace less than weekly.

The user activity questions 4 and 5 were put in to measure the validity of the study against the reporting of Workplace statistics. It is noteworthy that the survey was only open for eight days, and that the users that are less active therefore missed it. However, the graph correlates almost perfectly with the general user activity of Hämeenmaa users according to Workplace reporting. Currently, out of approximately 2,600 launched accounts, 1,900 are claimed, and 1,700 are displayed as both monthly and weekly active, which means that the users that have been active after claiming their account are using Workplace on weekly basis. The remaining 200 accounts are active less than monthly. Out of all users, 1,100 are using the platform daily.

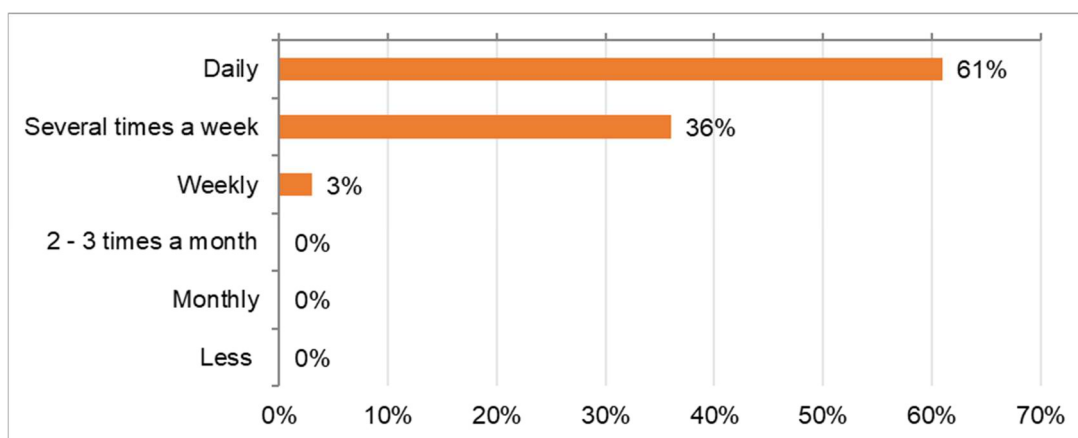


Figure 8 User activity on Workplace

#### Question 5: How often do you use Workplace Chat?

Unlike the Workplace platform, the chat application has more variation in terms of user activity. Figure 10 illustrates the variation. Only 13 % used the chat daily, 30 % several times a week, 18 % weekly, 10 % two or three times a month and 2 % once a month. A total 27 % responded to using Workplace Chat less than monthly.

The use of the chat feature can correlate with the general culture at the workplace. In the replies, there was a significant difference between managers and employees. Out of the managers, 42 % replied that they use the chat daily, while only 8 % of employees said the same. Meanwhile, 30 % of employees said that they use the chat less than monthly. All of the managers were more active. This could be explained by either the managers' activity

with each other, within their own community, or that they send more chat messages to their team than the employees.

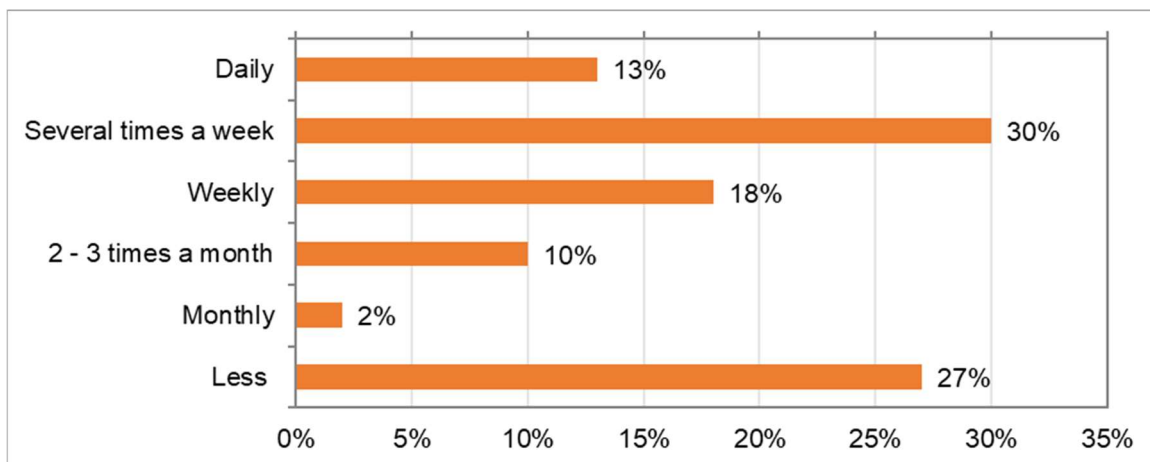


Figure 9 User activity on Workplace Chat

### When do you use Workplace?

As figure 11 shows, the users seem to use the platform evenly between work and free time, with both options at 82 % response rate. The question was mandatory and respondents had the possibility to answer one or both. This means some answered only work and some only free time, but majority answered both. Closer inspection shows slight difference between employees and managers: 83 % of employees and 75 % of managers use Workplace at work, and 80 % of employees and 92 % of managers on free time.

Meanwhile, the open answers to any of the survey questions show no problem with using Workplace during either. Like Crescenzo (2011, 224) states, it is beneficial to have the opportunity of using the ISM from home. Although the user is free to decide when they use the platform, Hämeenmaa allows, and even encourages the use of Workplace at work. Therefore, the results are satisfactory, but could be higher.

Almost all managers use the platform on free time, some even more than at work.

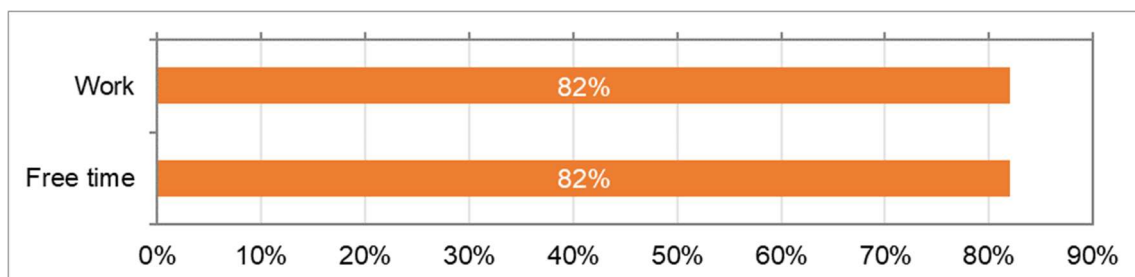


Figure 10 When the respondents use Workplace



### Question 7: What type of content do you consider most useful?

This question tracks preferences by allowing the user to select whatever type of Workplace content they found most useful. The question allowed multiple selections from one respondent. The options are listed by popularity in table 2.

Hämeenmaa's information and instructions were considered by far the most useful content with 83 % of the respondents thinking that it was useful. Similarly, the second most important were the information and instructions of the employee's own place of work (69 %), and third the users' own industry information and instructions (67 %).

Information about temporary malfunctions, and current Hämeenmaa offers, campaigns and events were both important according to 64 % of the respondents.

Competitions, raffles and giveaways, leadership teams' posts, corporate responsibility, polls and information about the organization of Hämeenmaa all were considered important by less than 30 %. Less than 20 % thought that free time conversations and posts by other than colleagues about their jobs were important.

The open selection for added choices included the updates about product clearance sales and offers. Hämeenmaa has a specific Workplace group for this purpose. Only 1 % found none of the choices useful.

Table 2 The most useful Workplace content according to users

Hämeenmaa information and instructions	83 %
Own place of business information and instructions	69 %
Own industry information and instructions	67 %
Information of temporary malfunctions in systems	64 %
Information about Hämeenmaa offers, campaigns and events	64 %
Pleasant posts from everyday work	54 %
S Group information and instructions	52 %
Posts by colleagues concerning their job	52 %
Personnel news	45 %
Information about open positions	41 %
Competitions	29 %
Raffles/giveaways	26 %
Posts from the leadership of Hämeenmaa	24 %
Information about corporate responsibility	22 %
Polls	22 %
Information about the Hämeenmaa organization	20 %
Free time conversation	18 %
Posts by other than colleagues concerning their job	17 %
Other	2 %
Nothing of the above	1 %

**Question 8: What type of content would you like to see less?**

Comparing to question 7, the eighth question tracks content the users wish to see less on Workplace. The results are ranked by popularity in table 3.

Most (44 %) replied that none of the choices were content that they wish to see less, indicating that the users are generally happy with the current content. The answers correlated with the percentages of what the users found least important in question 7. This indicates that there are only few things that the users find unnecessary, irrelevant or annoying.

Most significantly, 28 % wished to see less free time conversation. As discussed in the Activity part in chapter 2.4, this is common in the implementation of an internal social media. Even though the company allows free time conversation and should continue that way, too much of it can cause the free communication on the platform turn on itself. It can cause information overflow and disengagement, and that way return the employee to the same state of disinformation that they were in before the ISM launch.

Posts by other than colleagues concerning their job and information about open positions gathered relatively high percentages, 16 and 10 respectively, comparing to the other options. Other than colleagues' posts could annoy the users because they are irrelevant to their own work, and thus create overflow of information. The user could wish for less posts about open positions for the same reasons: many the positions could simply not be interesting or even available for them.

The rest had a less than a 10 % answer rate, suggesting the current content status is satisfactory to the majority of respondents. Information about Hämeenmaa organization had a 9 % rate, and information about corporate responsibility as well as personnel news 8 %.

Only 7 % wanted to see less of the leadership's posts. The current amount of leadership posts is on a low level already. The employees do not seem to be particularly interested in leadership presence. In question 7, 24 % of the respondents thought that posts by leadership were useful. Compared to the other options, this one was among the least popular. It seems that while they do not mind the type, they do not feel passionately about it either.

Pleasant posts from everyday were also only answered by 7 % of the users. This group's sole purpose is to inspire and share positive examples to others, to create sense of community. Five percent wanted to see less posts by colleagues concerning their job, polls, competitions, raffles and giveaways.

Types of informing were at the bottom of the list of what the users wish to see less. Like the results of question 7 implied, all types of instructions are held in high value by the employees.

The types included information of temporary malfunctions in systems, own industry information and instructions, Hämeenmaa information and instructions, S Group information and instructions, own place of business information and instructions and information about Hämeenmaa offers, campaigns and events.

Overall, the numbers were quite small, indicating that there are a few annoyances regarding content, but nothing very serious. The open question for other choices included the other co-op's promotions and appointments of personnel unrelated to Hämeenmaa.

Table 3 Content users wish to see less on Workplace

Nothing of the above	44 %
Free time conversation	28 %
Posts by other than colleagues concerning their job	16 %
Information about open positions	10 %
Information about the Hämeenmaa organization	9 %
Information about responsibility	8 %
Personnel news	8 %
Posts from the C suite of Hämeenmaa	7 %
Pleasant posts from everyday work	7 %
Posts by colleagues concerning their job	5 %
Polls	5 %
Competitions	5 %
Raffles/giveaways	5 %
Information of temporary malfunctions in systems	3 %
Own industry information and instructions	3 %
Hämeenmaa information and instructions	2 %
S Group information and instructions	1 %
Own place of business information and instructions	1 %
Information about Hämeenmaa offers, campaigns and events	1 %
Other	1 %

#### **Question 9: Select following statements that you consider accurate**

Question 9 aims to find out the users' opinions by statements, where the user selects the options that they regard true for themselves. The question was mandatory and the user could select as many options as they wished. The options are again listed by popularity in table 4.

A clear majority of the respondents, 86 %, found Workplace easy to use. Over half agreed that they had more information about Hämeenmaa's operations (56 %), keeping in touch had gotten easier (52 %) and that they followed the conversations on Workplace (51 %). Total 56 % found that after the launch of Workplace, they have more information about Hämeenmaa's operations; the answers comprised 59 % of employees and 42 % of managers.

The most significant difference between employees and managers was how they perceived Workplace had changed communication. Managers especially found that communication has improved since the launch of workplace. 47 % of employees and 83 % of managers found that keeping in touch had gotten easier. At an even more varying rate, 20 % of employees and 58 % of managers thought that the communication within their own workplace has improved significantly.

Some 16 % thought there were too many posts, and only 5 % said too little. While 33 % of the respondents reported that they could easily find interesting posts, 21 % said that it was difficult to find them. Total 23 % thought the posts have too much repetition.

Table 4 Statements users consider accurate

Workplace is easy to use	86 %
I have more information about Hämeenmaa operations	56 %
Keeping in touch has gotten easier	52 %
I follow conversations	51 %
I can easily find posts that interest me	33 %
It is easy to participate in conversatons	31 %
The conversations are interesting	26 %
The communication of my work community has changed significantly after the launch of Workplace	25 %
There are too many repetitive posts in different groups	23 %
It is difficult to find interesting posts	21 %
There are too many posts	16 %
I have had challenges with the platform	14 %
The posts have nothing to do with my job	13 %
I participate in converations	9 %
There are too many free time conversations	7 %
There are too little posts	5 %
Nothing of the above	0 %

#### **Question 10: If you have had challenges with Workplace, please describe them**

Question 10 was an open-ended question that asked the user to describe possible problems or challenges they had faced using Workplace. 14 % reported that they had had challenges with the platform. Although the thesis does not aim to solve problems with

functionalities, it aims to find out what kind of challenges the users have faced and whether they have an effect on user activity.

It was interesting to find out whether anything besides functionality issues would come up. One user found a challenge in the busy work environment: even though information about temporary malfunctions is highly useful, it fails reach the users in time because of the hectic nature of their work.

The rest out of 17 open answers, 16 highlighted problems with login, password and similar application functionalities. The challenges could be a factor in the high rate of unclaimed and inactive accounts. Although Hämeenmaa has little control over the functionalities, the findings are important to present to the company among the other study findings.

### Question 11: Do all of your team members use Workplace?

Question 11 examined the Workplace activity in teams. The question was included to support the earlier statements about increased activity and flow of information. As figure 12 illustrates, only 41 % of the respondents replied that all of their team members were using Workplace, and up to 35 % answered no. In the first two options, yes and no, the answers were similar between employees and managers, but the third option, *I don't know*, highlighted the manager's activity again. Only 8 % of the managers did not know whether all of their team members were using Workplace, while the rate of the employees' answers was at 27 %. The general rate of the two was a high 24 %.

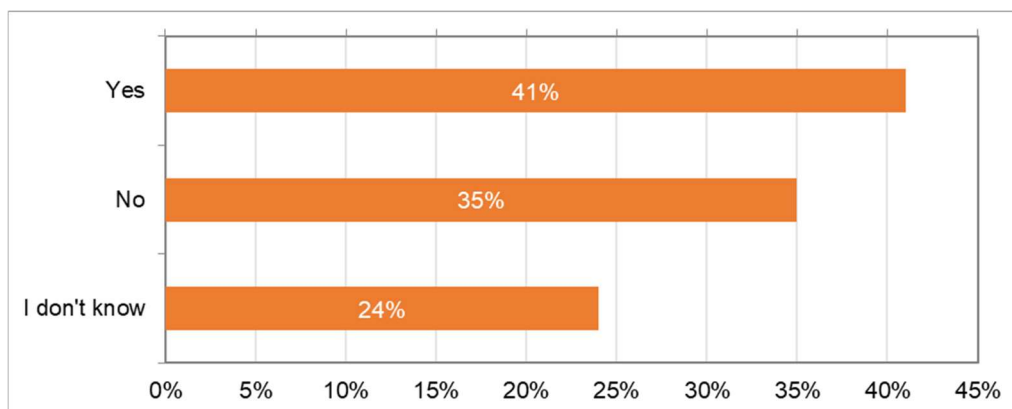


Figure 11 The respondents' perception of their team members' activity on Workplace

### Question 12: If all of your team members do not use Workplace, do you think that it affects communication? How does it show?

Question 12 is an open-ended follow-up to question 11. It attempted to define how the lack of user activity in teams affects the overall communication. Out of all respondents, 24 % answered the voluntary question. The user opinions divided between ones that thought

inactivity has significant effect on communication, those who thought it affected a little, and those who thought it had no effect.

The general opinion was that the lack of activity affected the flow of information, which manifested in lack of information about important things in the community. The members of the same team could therefore have very different and outdated information. According to one respondent, this has serious time-consuming consequences.

*“For instance, an instruction is given and some people still do the task wrong because they have not read it.”*

The respondents had several other examples:

*“The people that do not use Workplace simply do not receive the information.”*

*“Some are not using this app [Workplace], so they miss a significant amount of info and instructions, because nowadays majority of that information is only here.”*

*“Some claim that they haven’t received the information, even though it was on Workplace, and they can feel left out.”*

*“They have to be informed about things.”*

Users wished for everyone in their team to be active, so that they could always assume every team member has up-to-date information.

Some said that if majority of their team were active, it made no difference if one or two were not using Workplace, and that the most important things could be communicated face-to-face. Some thought that inactivity had no effect, as information travels through other channels anyway. The suitable channels that the respondents mentioned included face-to-face communication, leaving notes and communicating via manager.

*“It does not affect, since the team is so small that important things can be taken care of orally”*

*“I do not think [it affects communication], a message can be left at work. Or via the manager”*

Overall, the respondents seemed to hope that all of their team members would join Workplace. They also hoped for multiple channels for informing, and remarked that Workplace alone is not enough.

### **Question 13: Which aspects of your work has Workplace improved?**

In their commission, Hämeenmaa wished for user experiences in an open question format. Question 13 asks the users whether Workplace has improved their work, and how. The question was voluntary, and 37 % of all respondents replied.

Almost all the answers noted the improved communications and increased amount of information and informing. Overall, the respondents felt that the flow of information is now quicker and receiving and sharing information is easier, and that the reach of information has improved. Moreover, the users felt that the information is now more easily obtainable than before.

*“Previously, some information was only sent to the manager’s email, but now the information is available for everyone instantly.”*

*“Easier to confirm that everyone has read, when the post displays “seen”. Makes the flow of information considerably easier, compared to a bulletin board where information is easily lost.”*

Some respondents acclaimed the quick updates about system malfunctions, special situations and other urgent issues. The users were satisfied that Workplace Chat offered a quick means of communicating in daily matters. The results emphasized the improved response time to urgent questions from team members, without always having to call a manager. Similarly, the right people could be reached without having to go through managers.

Sharing information was considered easier since it could be done anywhere and whenever. The users felt that pictures and video were an important addition that makes understanding easier. Many felt that they were now more informed about what is happening at S Group and Hämeenmaa.

*“Glancing at the email inbox has decreased.”*

One significant improvement was the increased awareness of how other places of work operate. The respondents agreed that the posts from their colleagues inspired them, and that their tips were practical. Workplace also helped to understand other people’s work and perspective.

### **Question 14: Open feedback**

As per Hämeenmaa’s wishes, the survey included an open question for general feedback and wishes regarding the use of Workplace in the company’s communications. Only 8 % responded. The results are presented to the company in their original form.

The results vary from detailed wishes to overall notes. It was suggested that one group for current information would be enough. While some criticized the overflow of content, another found that it was not a problem as every user is free to filter and block irrelevant posts. Some thought that Workplace could be used for informing more in both teams and their place of work. It was also brought up that information about all relevant groups was poorly available.

Some users were annoyed with other users. They criticized their way of communicating on Workplace: some comments were perceived to be too personal and unprofessional, and some found that users are asking the same things repeatedly.



## 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides conclusions based on the survey findings and analysis presented in chapter 4, and the theoretical literature discussed in chapter 3. After the conclusions, the thesis offers development recommendations to Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa's current communication. The validity and reliability of the study are then reviewed and finally, suggestions for possible future studies are defined.

### 5.1 Conclusions

Based on the reflection of the literature and data analysis, this part provides conclusions and answers the research question. The main research question aimed to answer the question: "How have the users of Workplace by Facebook responded to the platform?" The other research questions attempted to further define the user experiences by determining the most valued content types and the wishes for types of content, and by exposing challenges that the users had faced.

The results show that the users were generally happy with the improved communication. Out of all Workplace content, they valued information and instructions the most, and wish to see that type of content in the future. The users generally felt that they were more informed about their work than before the launch of Workplace. The most challenging aspects about using Workplace were functionality issues, such as troubles with password and login.

The open-ended questions highlighted the employees' increased knowledge of the company. It was also apparent from the comments that the internal communication has improved, and 25 % of the respondents even said that the change has been significant. Especially managers were happy with the improved communication. The users were pleased with how quickly information is shared now, and hoped that all of their team members would join Workplace, to make the team communication even more streamlined. Despite this, some users thought that it would make no difference if their team members joined.

User activity is another indicator of a positive user experience. Like results from question 4 show, all of the respondents were active users, and most of them used Workplace several times a week. The comparison to Workplace statistics showed that only 200 out 1,900 claimed accounts were active less than once a month, which adds up to roughly 10 %.

The activity divided evenly between work and free time, which suggests that users do not perceive the tool as a must-use for only work, but they voluntarily log in from home. The results show no indication that the users did not like to access the platform from home.

The study showed that managers were significantly more active on Workplace than employees. Overall, they generally expressed positive feelings towards the platform's features and possibilities and seemed satisfied with it. They expressed more concern over their teams' activity than the employees.

Out of the focus group, 1,900 claimed accounts, only 87 users responded. It is interesting to speculate why the response rate was as little as that, under 5 %. Compared to the activity statistics, the sample could have been much larger. It could be speculated that the users missed the survey as a result of information overflow. Some, of course, are not interested in replying to surveys. According to comments, some were pleased and entered because of the raffle.

### **Preferred content**

The supporting research questions aimed to answer the questions "what are the most valued content types on Workplace according to users?" and "what type of content do the users wish to see on Workplace?".

Generally, the users perceived all types of information and instructions as most useful Workplace content. The most popular survey option was "Hämeenmaa information and instructions", followed by information and instructions of the employees' own place of work and own industry. This suggests that Hämeenmaa employees are interested in learning more about their work and employer, which in turn increases employee engagement (Juholin 2017, 48 - 49).

### **Challenges**

The study also aimed to answer the question "what type of challenges did the users face?". The results indicate that there are little, but some annoyances on Workplace currently. Almost a third of the users, 28 % of the users wished to see less free time conversation. The third popular opinion had a remarkably smaller response rate: 16 % wanted to see less irrelevant posts that were created by other than their colleagues. These issues, however, were not represented in the open-ended questions that tracked challenges and feedback.

Total 14 % of the respondents reported that they had faced challenges with Workplace. A considerable majority of them concerned the application's functionalities, like password and login problems. One reply mentioned their busy work environment, where even though the user would like to receive urgent updates, they simply have no way of accessing it on time.

Overall, challenges with content creation and sharing were not apparent. A vast majority, 86 % of the respondents, thought that Workplace was easy use. The users reported that it was easy to follow conversations and participate in them.

According to the findings, the overflow of information in Workplace is present, but controllable. Some thought that there was repetition and too many posts, but the issue was not highlighted in the results. Some of the open comments mentioned that the same posts were blocking their feed.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Although the experience of Workplace users at Hämeenmaa is in a relatively good place, there are some notes for consideration for Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa. It would be wise to create a specific internal social media strategy that would answer to these issues and possible future one (Hajj 2015). This articulated ISM strategy could be included in the company's communications policy under internal communication.

The most important feature of the strategy is informing. As the Workplace platform is still relatively new, it is not utilized in its full potential. The users are unaware of all Workplace features and functionalities, which is why they are experiencing many issues. Therefore, the strategy could include a Workplace manual for Hämeenmaa employees, where all of the instructions and information concerning the use of Workplace would be available in the same file. This manual would need to have a person in charge of updating it regularly.

The most significant challenge that arose from the study findings were the Workplace functionalities. It would be wise for the suggested manual to give instructions concerning issues like login and password. It seems that currently, many users are annoyed because they are uninformed.

The results also indicate that almost third of the users would like to see less free time conversation on the platform intended for work-related purposes. It would be unwise to prohibit the free time discussions as that would express distrust in the employees. The ability for free discussion is a perk and could boost efficiency and job satisfaction, and that way affect employee engagement. However, the ISM strategy could include a set of etiquette recommendations and how-to instructions for managers for communicating the recommendations to their team. This could reduce the amount of public conversation about private issues. (Hajj 2015; Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield, 2013.)

Some wished to see less irrelevant posts created by people other than the users' colleagues. The users may not know about the possibility to filter and hide content from users or groups, so they could be informed and instructed to do this in the manual. It would reduce the information overflow and generally improve the user experience.

The strategy should include the promotion of Workplace user activity to get unclaimed accounts to become active users. As the results show, managers have a particularly influential role in inspiring their employees to communicate more effectively. A communications professional could coach the managers to find suitable ways to encourage their employees. The managers could also regularly share good practices with one another. To be able to advise employees, all managers should have the knowledge and skills to use the internal social media. Active and influential individuals could act as Workplace ambassadors.

The study findings the users of Workplace did not note the importance, or expect leadership participation. However, the ISM strategy could discuss this relevant issue. Currently, the leadership at Hämeenmaa is not particularly active on Workplace. As discussed in chapter 4.2, the executive people's presence in internal social media increases the transparency and employee engagement through the ability to be heard. (Pönkä 2014, 4.5.1; Puro 2010.) The leadership of Hämeenmaa should take measures to increase their presence and interaction on Workplace.

The strategy should to find the ideal balance for social engagement, in posting frequency, content and driving conversation. Although convenient, the findings indicate that Workplace alone is not enough. It is advisable to have multiple, interlinked channels to ensure effective flow of information. Overflow issues are controllable by planning the amount of posts and concentrating on aesthetically pleasing material like videos and pictures. However, the interests vary even within internal audiences, and since the company is large and spread out widely, it is remarkably difficult to cover different expectations and reactions. Adapting from Dalbec (2016), table 5 below illustrates desirable qualities for internal social media for Hämeenmaa to consider in the ISM strategy.

Table 5 Qualities of a functioning internal social media

Engagement	Quality of Content	Optimization
Employees are engaged in open dialogue and feedback system	Integrated content within communication tools	Content is accurate and updated regularly
Leadership is active	Build strategies to improve user experience	Content is visually appealing, with video, pictures, and less text
Employees interact with one another	Ambassadors	Content is relevant, interesting and easy to find

### 5.3 Validity and Reliability

Like all research, the thesis aims to evaluate the validity and reliability of the study. They can vary even though studies are determined to avoid errors. The validity of the study means reviewing whether the research method has the ability to measure the exact phenomenon it is intended to measure. However, the measurements and methods are sometimes not in line with the desired study subject. The results of a valid study can be transferred to other, similar types of research situations. A well-defined focus group, suitable sample group and a high response rate help to validate the study and thus receive reliable results. (Heikkilä 2014, 27; Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 231 - 232.)

A questionnaire, for instance, can be easily misinterpreted, leading to answers different from the desired. The researcher can also analyze the findings according to their own mindset, leading to conclusions that cannot be considered valid. The survey questions need to cover the entire research problem by measuring the right things in a simple manner, which can only be understood a certain way. (Heikkilä 2014, 27- 28; Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 231 - 232.)

The reliability of a study measures the consistency and accuracy, and thus repeatability of the study. A reliable study can be repeated with similar or same results, independent from research time or conductor. If the sample group is very small, the results can be random. To ensure reliable results, the sample group has to be large enough and represent the focus group well without bias. Therefore, the focus group has to be defined carefully. It is useful to have previous information about the focus group to use for the study's purposes. (Heikkilä 2014, 28; Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 231 - 233.)

The validity of the thesis study was ensured by careful design of the survey questions and their themes, to achieve desired results. To make sure that the questions would generate

suitable replies, they were compared and reflected with the research problem. The questions were designed in an understandable, unbiased format, and then evaluated for relevance with the commissioner. After the evaluation, the questions were edited slightly to meet the commissioner's wishes, and to receive more accurate and repeatable information. Before publishing, the survey was tested using mock replies.

Except the open-ended questions, all questions were mandatory to answer to complete the survey, and to qualify for entering the raffle. Forcing the respondents to answer ensured a maximum amount of data. The survey covered the entire research problem with 14 questions.

The focus group included all Hämeenmaa employees that had activated their Workplace account by October 2019. The only requirement for the respondents was having a Hämeenmaa Workplace account. In addition, the survey was public for only eight days, which meant majority of the respondents would have to be monthly active users. However, individual user activity was not a limiting factor, as the research question did not weigh user activity. The survey was not limited by gender, age, place of work or the employee's status in the organization. To further ensure the reliability of the replies, the survey was conducted anonymously. Contact information was gathered for the purposes of the raffle, but not recorded or used in any other way.

The survey link was non-shareable and published only on Workplace, which requires an account. In addition, the survey was only published in a closed Workplace group for Hämeenmaa employees. Therefore, it can be confirmed that only Hämeenmaa Workplace users filled the survey, which made the sample group reliable.

At the time of the link publication, the focus group included approximately 1,900 individuals. Out of all, 87 users, 4,6 % answered. Although the response rate is small, the focus group was large enough to provide a satisfactory sample of users. The sample group was compared against Workplace reporting tools which measured user activity, and the two correlated, which indicates that the sample group represents the focus group relatively well. However, compared to the age structure of Hämeenmaa employees and the sample group, there was a significant difference regarding under 25-year-old users. This could not be confirmed either as bias or a study result, which could slightly weaken the reliability.

Specific individual activity level was not a requirement for partaking. However, comparing Workplace's own reporting statistic and the survey findings, it is clear that majority of Workplace users that have claimed their account are active weekly. Therefore, it can be deducted that only users that are actually active responded. This way, the user experience of active users could be recorded, and the sample group is reliable.

After completing data analysis, the results were again reflected on the research problem to ensure that they matched. The literature used for secondary research was also reviewed from the research questions' perspective.

In addition, internal communication and its methods have constantly changed over the last decade. It is therefore noteworthy that in this type of research, source literature could be unreliable at times. Social media in corporate use has been vastly studied, but mostly from the perspective of external use. As the internal social media research numbers are little, and are difficult to review, even publications from 2015 could be outdated. Although the relevance of the theoretical framework is carefully reviewed, the ever-changing nature of the subject and makes already scarce material it even harder to obtain. However, the theoretical material used in this research are considered to withstand time, and any unstable theory was disregarded.

#### 5.4 Further Study Suggestions

The study findings provide possibilities for further research. Since Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa commissions several theses and other research projects annually, they have the possibility to elaborate on the following remarks.

As suggested in the recommendations in chapter 5.2, Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa could design an internal social media strategy. It would be advisable to further study different aspects and possibilities for the strategy. The execution process and methods of the suggested manual are also something worth studying.

As the study results and recommendations pointed out, it is important that managers promote communicating through Workplace to increase the activity of their work community. Based on the findings, the managers at Hämeenmaa are currently more active than their employees. Hence, it could be beneficial to research effective ways of inspiring employees to use internal social media, and promoting an active culture of communication at work.

The study findings show that many Hämeenmaa employees wished that all of their team members were using Workplace. They felt that if all members of the team received the same information, it would improve communication between them. Hämeenmaa currently has 600 unclaimed Workplace accounts, which is 31 % total of the launched accounts. A research could find out the reasons behind the employees not claiming their accounts, and look into ways of activating the use. According to Facebook, a community only

reaches satisfactory activity level once the claim rate rises over 80 %. After that, the platform starts bringing true value as the communication becomes truly efficient. (Facebook 2019c.)

The results also indicate that many of the unclaimed accounts could be under 25-year-olds. With research, this speculation could be either confirmed or denied, and the reasons behind the possible underrepresentation of this age group could be studied. As 28 % of the Hämeenmaa workforce are under 25, it is an important group. It could be studied whether Workplace is appealing to this age group, and how the use could be promoted to them.



## 6 SUMMARY

The thesis was commissioned by Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa. Its aim was to track the user experiences of the internal social media platform, Workplace by Facebook, which was launched by Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa in early 2019. The purpose of the study was to provide development suggestions based on the user experiences. The main research question was:

- How have the users of Workplace by Facebook responded to the platform?

Additionally, the thesis sub-questions aimed to find out what types of content the users valued the most, and what type of content they wished to see on Workplace. The third sub-question aimed to find out what type of challenges the users had faced.

The theoretical part comprised earlier research on internal communication, social media and employee engagement. Several books, articles and journals helped to define effective internal communication and internal social media. They supported the later conclusions. The third chapter introduced the case company. It provided a general overview of the company and their internal communication methods, and explained how Workplace was used in the company at the time of the study.

The empirical part used the quantitative method as the primary research method. The study was conducted as an online survey with both closed and open-ended questions. The added qualitative features helped to analyze the findings. Total 87 Hämeenmaa employees answered the survey in October 2019.

The results and conclusions were explained in chapter four. The chapter used graphs and tables to illustrate the results. The conclusions were formed by reflecting the study results on the theoretical framework. According to the findings, the users were primarily happy with the platform. While they felt that their overall communication had improved, the users seemed to wish activity from all of their team members. Most of the challenges that the users had faced had to do with the application functionalities, such as password and login issues.

The main recommendation to the commissioner was to create a specific internal social media strategy, to act as a part of the existing communication strategy. The strategy would improve informing about issues that the users found challenging. It could also include measures to improve user activity, such as coaching managers to inspire their team communication.

The study concentrated on the user experiences of Workplace by Facebook, but the subject could be studied further. The recommended internal social media strategy could be studied to define ideal execution. Based on the other recommendations, it would be beneficial to study the user activity levels of certain groups, and explore methods to improve them.

Overall, the study succeeded to answer all of the research questions and was able to provide recommendations that Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa is able to implement. The thesis subject, limitations as well as goals and objectives were formed with the commissioner to match their wishes and needs. The study results will be used to develop the internal communication on the Workplace platform, as the company wished in their commission.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 Survey questions (in Finnish)

## Hämeenmaalaisten käyttökokemuksia Workplacessa

Tämä kysely on osa opinnäytetyötä, jossa selvitetään Hämeenmaan työntekijöiden käyttäjäkokemuksia Workplacessa. Vastaamalla tähän kyselyyn voit vaikuttaa Hämeenmaan Workplace-viestintään.

Kyselyyn vastaaminen vie vain muutaman minuutin. Jättämällä lopuksi yhteystietosi osallistut jouluisen herkkukorin arvontaan (arvo 50 €).

## Taustatiedot

## 1. Ikä \*

- Alle 18
- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65+

## 2. Olen \*

- Työntekijä
- Esimies

## 3. Toimipaikka \*

Jos useampia, valitse pääasiallinen toimipaikkasi.

- Prisma
- S-market
- Sale
- Sokos
- ABC
- Kodin Terra
- Autokauppa
- Ravintolat (pub ja à la carte)
- Ravintolamaailmat, Huikopala tai Alex Food & Café
- Sokos Hotel
- Konttori ja tukitoiminnot
- Emotion

## Käyttökokemukset

## 4. Kuinka usein käytät Workplace-sovellusta? \*

- Päivittäin
- Useita kertoja viikossa
- Kerran viikossa
- 2 - 3 kertaa kuukaudessa
- Kerran kuukaudessa
- Harvemmin

## 5. Kuinka usein käytät Workplace Chat -sovellusta? \*

- Päivittäin
- Useita kertoja viikossa
- Kerran viikossa
- 2 - 3 kertaa kuukaudessa
- Kerran kuukaudessa
- Harvemmin

## 6. Milloin käytät Workplaceta? \*

- Työssä
- Vapaa-ajalla

## 7. Minkälaiset julkaisut ovat mielestäsi kaikkein hyödyllisimpiä? \*

- Tiedot häiriöistä tai vikatiloista käyttöjärjestelmissä
- S-ryhmän tiedotteet ja ohjeet
- Hämeenmaan tiedotteet ja ohjeet
- Oman toimialan tiedotteet ja ohjeet
- Oman toimipaikan tiedotteet ja ohjeet
- Kollegoiden julkaisut omaan työhönsä liittyen
- Muiden kuin kollegoiden julkaisut omaan työhönsä liittyen
- Tiedot Hämeenmaan toimipaikkojen eduista, tarjouksista ja tapahtumista
- Tiedot avoimista työpaikoista
- Tiedot vastuullisuudesta
- Henkilöstöuutiset
- Tiedot Hämeenmaan organisaatiosta
- Julkaisut ja päivitykset Hämeenmaan johtoryhmältä
- "Hyvät jutut", työarjen positiiviset nostot
- Vapaa-ajan keskustelut
- Kyselyt
- Kilpailut
- Arvonnat
- Muu, mikä?
- Ei mikään näistä

**15. Kiitos vastauksistasi! Jätäthän tähän vielä yhteystietosi, mikäli haluat osallistua jouluisen herkkukorin arvontaan. Voittajaan otetaan yhteyttä henkilökohtaisesti. Yhteystietoja ei yhdistetä vastauksiin tai käytetä muihin tarkoituksiin.**

Etunimi   
 Sukunimi   
 Matkapuhelin   
 Sähköposti

- Julkaisut ja päivitykset Hämeenmaan johtoryhmältä
- "Hyvät jutut", työarjen positiiviset nostot
- Vapaa-ajan keskustelut
- Kyselyt
- Kilpailut
- Arvonnat
- Muu, mikä?
- Ei mikään näistä

**9. Valitse väittämät, jotka pitävät paikkansa: \***

- Workplacea on helppo käyttää
- Työyhteisöni viestintä on muuttunut merkittävästi käyttöönoton jälkeen
- Yhteydenpito on helpottunut
- Minulla on enemmän tietoa Hämeenmaan toiminnasta
- Julkaisuja on liikaa
- Julkaisuja on liian vähän
- Löydän helposti asiat, joista olen kiinnostunut
- On vaikeaa löytää asioita, joista olen kiinnostunut
- Keskusteluihin on helppo osallistua
- Osallistun keskusteluihin
- Keskustelut ovat mielenkiintoisia
- Seuraan keskusteluja
- Samoja julkaisuja on liikaa eri ryhmissä
- Julkaisut eivät liity työhöni
- Vapaa-ajan keskusteluja on liikaa
- Minulla on ollut haasteita sovelluksen käytön kanssa (esim. asennus, kirjautuminen, salasana)
- Ei mikään näistä

**10. Jos sinulla on ollut haasteita sovelluksen käytön kanssa, kuvaile niitä:**

**11. Käyttävätkö kaikki tiimisi jäsenet Workplacea? \***

- Kyllä
- Ei
- En tiedä

**12. Jos kaikki tiimisi jäsenet eivät käytä Workplacea, koetko sen vaikuttavan sisäiseen tiedonkulkuun? Kuinka se ilmenee?**

**13. Mihin asioihin Workplace on tuonut helpotusta työarjessasi? Jaa parhaat kokemukset ja vinkit!**

**14. Tähän voit kirjoittaa yleistä palautetta ja toiveita koskien Workplacen käyttöä Hämeenmaan viestinnässä:**



## APPENDIX 2 The survey publication on Workplace



Nora Siera to Hämeenmaa / Avoin keskustelu

14 October · 🌐

### ARVONTA - vaikuta ja voita herkkukori! 🍷🍪🌲

Vastaamalla oheiseen kyselyyn voit vaikuttaa Hämeenmaan Workplace-viestintään. Kyselyyn pääset tästä:

<https://www.webpolsurveys.com/S/1A2FFF3BB1E858A6.par>

Kyselyyn vastaaminen vie muutaman minuutin.

**Yhteystietonsa jättäneiden kesken arvomme jouluisen herkkukorin (arvo 50 €).** Vastausaikaa on maanantaihin 21.10. saakka. Arvonnan voittajalle ilmoitetaan henkilökohtaisesti. Yhteystietoja ei yhdistetä vastauksiin tai käytetä muihin tarkoituksiin.

Kysely on osa opinnäytetyötä, jonka avulla pyritään kartoittamaan hämeenmaalaisien kokemuksia Workplacesta. Tutkimustuloksia hyödynnetään viestinnän kehittämisessä, ja ne julkaistaan myös täällä!

PS. Kommenteissa voit jatkaa keskustelua käyttökokemuksistasi 😊

