



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW

Master's Degree in Innovation and Industrial Management

# Leadership communication in a virtual environment

A case study of Microsoft Office 365 as digital communication tools  
at Volvo Construction Equipment

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**Author:** Juliane Otto-Tholen

**Supervisor:** Sven Lindmark

## Abstract

**Purpose:** Social and technological transformation are leading to a changing workplace. Companies are changing into flat structures instead of hierarchies, which facilitates a better flow of knowledge and communication. Boundaries between different departments or countries become blurred and strengthen the relationships inside a company. To do so, digital communication tools become part of the daily work and require a new way of working. One of those tools are the Microsoft Office 365 tools. Moreover, leaders are greatly affected with new challenges that urge them to acquire new skills, namely e-leadership skills. The purpose of this thesis is to understand how leaders of Volvo CE actually use the Office 365 tools and how that differs to the theory and intended use by Microsoft. A recommendation of action shall help to close this potential gap in order to use the tools to their full potential.

**Method:** A mixed method research was used involving 16 interviews, as well as an online survey. It was done within the scope of a case study with Volvo Construction Equipment as the case company.

**Results:** The results show that the tools are not fully used by Volvo CE yet. There are challenges that come up with the implementation of those tools, that need to be tackled. For this Volvo CE has planned initiatives, but it needs more time and a proper change process. The workshop at Microsoft has shown that a proper change process can help to simplify the adoption of those tools. The correlation of the theory as well as the empirical data shows clearly that there is the potential for the tools to support leaders to communicate, but that there is still room for Volvo CE to improve. According to their perception of communication, the tools are appropriate to fulfill those characteristics. However, the usage and knowledge about those tools is rather low. Moreover, even though the tools are quite useful it is necessary to mention that the leaders also need certain characteristics themselves in order to communicate efficiently in a virtual environment.

**Conclusion:** The conclusion is that the Microsoft Office 365 tools can help leaders to communicate effectively as a supporting tool, but in order to communicate efficiently leaders need to acquire different skills.

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Keywords: *Digital communication; Leadership communication; Virtual environment; Microsoft Office 365; e-leadership*

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This journey does not end as I have anticipated – both my internship, as well as my studies. Due to COVID-19 the internship ended earlier without proper goodbye and our studies end without a prom or a ceremony. After several years of studying, a proper graduation would have been nice, but the world had other plans. I am still thankful for this journey and for the people I met and will keep it in my heart.

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## List of Abbreviations

AIT .....	<i>Advanced Information Technology</i>
F2F.....	<i>face-to-face</i>
IC.....	<i>Internal communication</i>
IT.....	<i>Information technology</i>
O365 .....	<i>Office 365</i>
Volvo CE .....	<i>Volvo Construction Equipment</i>

# Contents

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgments .....	ii
List of Abbreviations .....	iii
List of Tables .....	vii
List of Figures .....	vii
Appendix.....	vii
1. Introduction .....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Purpose of the study.....	2
1.3 Delimitations.....	2
1.4 Research Questions .....	3
2. Methodology .....	3
2.1 Research Approach .....	3
2.2 Research Design.....	4
2.2.1 Case Study .....	4
2.2.2 Choosing the Case Study.....	4
2.3 Research method and data collection .....	4
2.3.1 Mixed method research .....	4
2.3.2 Systematic Literature Review .....	5
2.3.3 Survey.....	6
2.3.4 Semi-Structured Interviews .....	7
2.3.4.1 Interviews with leaders .....	7
2.3.4.2 Expert Interviews .....	8
2.3.5 Further Data .....	9
2.4 Data Analysis.....	9
2.5 Quality of thesis .....	10
2.5.1 Validity .....	10
2.5.2 Reliability .....	10
2.5.3 Trustworthiness.....	11
3. Literature Review .....	12
3.1 Digital Workplace.....	12
3.2 Changes in leadership.....	12
3.2.1 Traditional leadership.....	13
3.2.2 e-leadership.....	13
3.3 Leadership communication .....	15
3.3.1 Communication.....	15

3.3.2	Internal Communication .....	15
3.3.3	Leadership communication.....	16
3.4	Digital communication tools .....	17
3.4.1	Digital leadership communication .....	17
3.4.2	Digital tools .....	17
3.4.2.1	Challenges.....	17
3.4.2.2	Possibilities .....	18
3.4.3	Current Tools .....	19
3.4.3.1	Intranet.....	19
3.4.3.2	E-Mail.....	20
3.4.3.3	Skype .....	20
3.4.4	Office 365.....	20
3.4.4.1	SharePoint Online.....	21
3.4.4.2	Teams.....	22
3.4.4.3	Yammer .....	23
3.5	Summary.....	25
4.	Results.....	26
4.1	The case: Volvo Construction Equipment.....	26
4.1.1	Volvo Group .....	26
4.1.2	Volvo Construction Equipment .....	26
4.1.3	Volvo CE's current state .....	27
4.2	Communication.....	28
4.3	Current digital tools .....	29
4.4	Microsoft Office 365.....	30
4.4.1	SharePoint Online .....	30
4.4.2	Teams .....	31
4.4.3	Yammer .....	33
4.4.4	Challenges.....	34
4.4.4.1	Technical issues.....	34
4.4.4.2	Trust.....	35
4.4.4.3	Overload.....	35
4.4.4.4	Familiarity/Understanding .....	35
4.4.5	Overcome challenges .....	36
4.5	Adaptation process.....	37
4.6	Summary.....	37
5.	Analysis.....	39
5.1	Leadership communication .....	39
5.2	Digital communication tools .....	39

5.2.1	SharePoint.....	39
5.2.2	Teams .....	40
5.2.3	Yammer .....	40
5.2.4	Summary.....	40
5.3	Microsoft Office 365 Tools at Volvo CE and their challenges .....	41
5.4	E-leadership communication .....	42
5.5	Summary.....	43
6.	Conclusion.....	43
6.1	Main findings.....	43
6.2	Further research .....	44
6.3	Recommendation of action.....	44
6.3.1	Awareness.....	44
6.3.2	Desire.....	44
6.3.3	Knowledge.....	45
6.3.4	Ability.....	45
6.3.5	Reinforcement.....	45
6.3.6	e-leadership skills.....	45
7.	Reference list.....	46
	Appendix.....	50

## List of Tables

Table 1: Overview of systematic literature review .....	6
Table 2: Interviewees.....	8
Table 3: Overview Expert Interviews.....	9
Table 4: Description of e-competencies (van Wart et al., 2019, p. 93).....	14
Table 5: Challenges and Opportunities of Digital Tools .....	19
Table 6: Advantages of Teams (own representation based on Volvo Construction Equipment , (2019).....	23
Table 7: Traditional communication channels vs. Enterprise social networks (based on Swoop Analytics, 2019) .....	25
Table 8: Overview Results.....	38

## List of Figures

Figure 1: SharePoint Features (own representation based on Waghmare ,2019) .....	22
Figure 2: Example for employee engagement by leaders (Swoop Analytics, 2019) .....	24
Figure 3: Roadmap Office 365 (Volvo Group, 2019) .....	28
Figure 4: What is communication for you?(n=553) .....	28
Figure 5: Preferred way of communication (n=620).....	30
Figure 6: Overview SharePoint (n = 620).....	31
Figure 7: I use SharePoint often. (n=620) .....	31
Figure 8: Overview Teams (n=620) .....	32
Figure 9: Relation between the usage and the required help for Teams (n=620) .....	32
Figure 10: Overview Yammer (n=620) .....	33
Figure 11: Knowledge and required help of Yammer (n=620) .....	34

## Appendix

Appendix 1: Survey.....	50
Appendix 2: Interview guide.....	54
Appendix 3: Ideas for using Yammer to engage employees .....	55
Appendix 4: SharePoint Overview .....	56
Appendix 5: Teams Overview .....	59
Appendix 6: Yammer Overview .....	62



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Social and technological transformation are leading to a changing workplace. (Günther, 2017, p. 861) This affects how companies are building markets and relate to their stakeholders. Advanced Information Technology (AIT) is in the centre of this transformation and allows new ways of working. (Avolio, Kahai and Dodge, 2001, p. 615) Companies are changing into flat structures instead of hierarchies, which facilitates a better flow of knowledge and communication. Boundaries between different departments or countries become blurred and strengthen the relationships inside a company. As a result, leaders are greatly affected with new challenges that urge them to acquire new skills. (Snellman, 2014, p. 1252)

As a response to this global transformation, the term e-leadership arose. (Snellman, 2014, p. 1255) Due to AIT, leaders need to change their attitudes and behaviour (Avolio, Kahai and Dodge, 2001, p. 617), because virtual teams are harder to manage. (Snellman, 2014, p. 1253) Therefore, it is crucial to understand how leadership is best accomplished in a virtual setting and how virtual teams can be successful. (Snellman, 2014, p. 1253) Challenges that e-leaders are faced with are related to communication, coordination and knowledge diffusion. Thus, communication guidelines need to be developed in order to effectively lead a virtual team. (Snellman, 2014, p. 1256)

There are at least three reasons why research on e-leadership and communication is relevant.

- 1) Leaders require high quality communication skills.
- 2) Virtual communication increases daily.
- 3) People prefer virtual communication.

To be more concrete, leaders require high-quality communication skills, both in a traditional and virtual way. (Roman *et al.*, 2019, pp. 854–856) It is well known that leadership communication is a crucial part in an organization as it connects a single party to a community. Through leadership communication messages are created and delivered, which results in inspiration for others to take action. Ng and Ngai (2015) say, that good communication might not result in a good leader, but that a good leader must be able to communicate effectively. In a virtual environment, e-leaders need new communication skills. (Snellman, 2014, p. 1258)

Internal communication becomes more and more important in companies, because it enables two-way conversations with employees. The goals of internal communication are to further feedback and motivate employees to apply themselves in the strategy of the company. (Lipiäinen, Karjaluoto and Nevalainen, 2014) With the emergence of internal digital platforms, the quality with which employees can communicate has increased dramatically. Those tools include benefits that emails and other less networked forms of digital communication do not entail. A new way of communicating and collaborating means to be more interactive and bottom-up; moreover, it involves self-organization and facilitates productivity, knowledge management and efficiency. (Cardon, Huang and Power, 2019)

Additionally, the amount of virtual communication increases day by day as more tools arise (Roman *et al.*, 2019, pp. 854–856). Last but not least, people prefer more and more virtual

communication, as it simplifies certain situations in daily life (Roman *et al.*, 2019, pp. 854–856). Especially the current situation with COVID-19<sup>1</sup> is forcing leaders to work remotely and use digital technologies in order to keep the business going. Face-to-face meetings are no option for many people and even though those meetings will not disappear, the crisis gives leaders the opportunities to assert themselves in a virtual environment. (Raffoni, 2020)

Volvo Group recently implemented the Office 365 (O365) from Microsoft with the new tools, like Yammer, Teams and SharePoint. As Volvo Group is in the process of widening the range of their product spectrum and overall defining themselves as a new company altogether, they need to invest in new technology for collaboration and communication, says Wallmoberg (Volvo Group). Those tools offer necessary features to improve the internal communication while reducing the amount of emails being sent. O365 might be able to replace selected features of emails. (Krajčík, 2019, p. 290) Moreover, the Office 365 tools can help to co-edit documents, access content and unify the communication with chatting, blogging and online conferences. In general, it can be said, that these tools facilitate to communicate on team, unit and organization wide levels easier, to learn from each other and to share opportunities. (Cardon, Huang and Power, 2019)

As the Office 365 tools are quite new, there is no recent research on how those tools help to collaborate and communicate. Moreover, the focus on current research is generally more on collaboration, and less on the communication.

## 1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is twofold. On the one hand, a deeper understanding of efficient leadership communication in a virtual environment should be achieved. On the other hand, the Office 365 tools are examined to understand their intended functions and how they improve collaboration and communication. By means of Volvo CE as a case study, the theoretical part will be connected to the praxis. To be more precise, the purpose is to understand how leaders of Volvo CE actually use the Office 365 tools and how that differs to the theory. A recommendation of action shall help to close this potential gap in order to use the tools to their full potential.

## 1.3 Delimitations

As the thesis uses a single case study, the results cannot be generalized on the wider population. Also, thesis investigates the perspective of leaders and their role as communicators, the perspective of employees has not been taken into consideration. Moreover, the thesis focuses on the tools from Microsoft, therefore other digital communication tools will not be discussed. Lastly, differences in culture have not been taken into account for this thesis.

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<sup>1</sup> COVID-19 (or Coronavirus) is an infectious disease that spread globally, resulting in an ongoing pandemic.

## 1.4 Research Questions

In order to fulfil the purpose of the thesis, the research question has been formulated as followed:

*How can the O365 tools help leaders to communicate efficiently in a virtual environment?*

Two sub research questions will guide through the thesis.

1) *What is the intended use of the O365 tools by Microsoft?*

In order to answer the questions of what the intended use of the O365 tools is, a thorough literature review will be done. The chapter presents the previous research within communication, internal communication and leadership communication, as well as digital tools. This includes the current use of digital communication, but also the O365 tools. To support the literature on O365 tools, an expert interview with a Microsoft employee has been conducted and integrated into the literature part.

2) *How is Volvo CE using the O365 tools?*

To answer this sub question, the empirical material is presented, which is based on the collected data. This includes a presentation of the chosen case company as well as their current state. Moreover, the knowledge, ease and use of the tools based on the survey, as well as the perspective of chosen interviewees in regards of challenges with those tools will be presented.

The sub research questions support the main research question by understanding the two sides of the tools – namely the intended use of the tools by Microsoft and the actual use of the tools. The analysis chapter sets the empirical data in relation to the literature review, in order to identify the gap between the intended use of the tools and current use of leaders. The gap helps to answer the overall research question, which is presented in the final chapter. According to this, a recommendation of action will be presented in order to close the gap and to use the tools most efficiently for communication.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Research Approach

The research is developed by using an iterative, also called abductive, approach. This basically means that a combination of inductive and deductive research approach has been used for this thesis. (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 13) This approach has been chosen because the formulation of the thesis happened with a continuous mix of theory and empirical findings. Due to that approach it was possible to allow new information to be considered and therefore acquire the full picture with different points of view.

To be more precise, the aim of the study was to understand how digital tools can help to communicate. Therefore, a literature review was made in order to gain a better understanding within the field of communication, as well as digital communication and their included tools. Afterwards, Volvo CE was chosen as the case company, which led to data collection within the company. It was decided that the focus will be on the digital tools from Microsoft as they have

been recently implemented, as well as to focus on the leader perspective. For that reason, further literature research was done, in order to gain knowledge in the fields of leadership communication, as well as Microsoft O365 tools. This led to expert interviews with communication and digital workplace experts from Volvo Group, as well as an expert from Microsoft. The combination of the theoretical framework, as well as the expert interviews led to further data collection within Volvo CE's leaders to understand their perspective. Both interviews and surveys were used for this occasion. This was followed by an inductive approach, since the collected data was used to question the theory. The gap was closed by information and ideas from both theory and empirical findings.

## 2.2 Research Design

### 2.2.1 Case Study

When presented in the developmental stages of a field study, single-case studies have been found extremely successful. As this topic is timely and relevant, it is supporting the reasoning for a single-case research method. A case study inaugurates the possibility for particularization instead of generalization. Therefore, the goal of this analysis will be to focus on the uniqueness and develop an in-depth understanding of its environment. (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 61) Case studies can be divided into three types, namely intrinsic cases, instrumental cases and collective/multiple cases, whereof two are applicable for this study: consequently, an intrinsic case study overlaps with the instrumental case study. According to Bryman and Bell (2011) the intrinsic cases rather gain understanding of a specific situation, instead of obtaining insight into other cases. On the other hand, instrumental cases are focusing on understanding a broader picture. (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 60) With the chosen case, both types are applicable, which will be explained hereafter.

### 2.2.2 Choosing the Case Study

The requirement for a suitable case was the implementation of the digital workplace and more specifically the Office 365 tools. The selected case was Volvo Construction Equipment, which is part of Volvo Group. The whole Volvo Group recently implemented the Office 365 tools as the new digital workplace.

Moreover, Volvo Construction Equipment of late announced an organizational change, which requires a new way of working. That is why it is especially interesting to reflect upon their use of the O365 tools and discover the relevance of the tools for leadership communication.

## 2.3 Research method and data collection

### 2.3.1 Mixed method research

In order to answer the research question, a mixed method research has been conducted. The mixed methods research can be seen as an attempt to lean on the strengths and opportunities of each method. (Östlund *et al.*, 2011, p. 370) In this specific case it means, that the quantitative method, namely the survey, enables to get an overview on how the majority of leaders think

about the tools, while the interviews allow to go in-depth about certain challenges of the tools and results from the quantitative study. In that way, the two methods complement each other by giving an overall picture of the situation and to get more specific information from chosen interviewees. It combines the accuracy of quantitative data with the complex views delivered by the qualitative data. (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 633)

Three reasons led to the decision for the mixed methods research:

- 1) Due to **timing constraints**, it is not possible to conduct a lot of interviews, which would lead to a restricted view. (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 631)
- 2) Triangulation enhances the conclusions and makes them more acceptable, as the data is consisting of both qualitative and quantitative methods. (Hesse-Biber, 2010)
- 3) The different views also allow a fuller understanding of the research problem, as they **complement** each other. (Hesse-Biber, 2010)

### 2.3.2 Systematic Literature Review

For this study, a systematic literature review has been done. This will help to get a holistic overview of the current research on the topic, but also to get more theoretical insight into digital internal communication. To do so, keywords have been set up, (for the first round) namely *communication*, *internal communication*, and *digital communication*. The library database of the University of Gothenburg has been used to search for those keywords. The results were filtered by only peer-reviewed articles in order to ensure the article's quality and its scientific validation, as well as only literature with full texts available. Moreover, the literature was filtered by years. In general, it can be said that the literature should be from the 20xx's, but especially literature about digital communication or digital tools should be from the last three years, as technology is changing fast. Related key words or terms were included in the search and assessed as being of value. As explained earlier, further literature has been collected after data selection, where the key words were more specific, namely *leadership communication*, *digital tools* and *Office 365 tools*, as well as the combination of the keywords, as can be seen in Table 1. In general, it can be said, that articles that were in a specific industry, for example health, banking or education, were excluded in order to gain a general knowledge instead of a specific one. Moreover, literature that focused on specific countries was excluded in order to prevent cultural impact.

Within those articles the term "e-leadership" came up, which is why the term e-leadership has been searched in combination with communication and internal communication. As can be seen in the table, not a lot of research has been done on the subject, more specifically none in terms of e-leadership and internal communication.

After creating a list of relevant articles and books, the abstracts have been read and unsuitable literature has been removed. This led to 54 articles and books that are relevant for the research question.

<i>Keyword</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Inclusion</i>	<i>Exclusion</i>
<i>Communication</i>	4,964,298	➤ Corporate communication ➤ Engagement	➤ Different industry ➤ Specific country
<i>Internal communication</i>	1,152,787	➤ Internal corporate communication ➤ Strategic internal communication	➤ Different industry ➤ Specific country
<i>Digital communication</i>	551,205	➤ 2017-2020 ➤ Internal digital communication ➤ Digital transformation ➤ Digital workplace	➤ Different industry ➤ Specific country
<i>Leadership communication</i>	453,617	➤ Virtual leadership	➤ Different industry ➤ Specific country
<i>Digital tools “AND” Internal communication</i>	80,201	➤ 2017-2020 ➤ Intranets	➤ Different industry ➤ Specific country
<i>Office 365 tools “AND” Internal Communication</i>	9,967	➤ 2017-2020	➤ Different industry ➤ Specific country
<i>Office 365 tools “AND” Leadership Communication</i>	5,471	➤ 2017-2020	➤ Different industry
<i>e-leadership</i>	125	➤ 2018-2020 ➤ Virtual leadership ➤ Virtual teams	
<i>e-leadership “AND” communication</i>	89	➤ 2018-2020	
<i>e-leadership “AND” internal communication</i>	0	➤ 2018 - 2020	

Table 1: Overview of systematic literature review

### 2.3.3 Survey

In order to get a holistic overview, a survey has been conducted. The goal was to get an understanding of the use and knowledge of the different tools and channels. The chosen sample were the 1300<sup>2</sup> leaders of Volvo Construction Equipment to get the point of view of leaders. A self-completion questionnaire has been sent out, because leaders are usually busy and it is more convenient for them to complete a questionnaire when their time permits, instead of conducting an interview, where they are bound to a specific time. (Bryman and Bell 2011, p. 233)

Especially because the sample is geographically widely dispersed, a self-completion questionnaire was advantageous. (Bryman and Bell 2011, p. 232) Moreover, the questionnaire was designed as a web survey due to sustainability aspects and the advantages it has. While the appearance of a web survey is attractive, it is also possible to filter questions. (Bryman and Bell 2011, p. 662) Additionally, the survey has been set up with a paging design, which means that there are several pages with questions. This design was chosen since research shows that respondents are more likely to skip questions, if there are too many questions on one page. (mTab, no date) The survey has been sent by email with a covering letter and individual

<sup>2</sup> This is a prefabricated list of people by Volvo CE who have a leading position at Volvo CE.

addressing, which was highly appreciated according to the respondent's answers. As there is no one there to help the participants in case of difficulties, the questions have been designed easy to understand in order to prevent biases due to leading or unclear questions. (Bryman and Bell 2011, p. 233)

The survey approached the different tools and asked about the agreement or disagreement of statements regarding the use, the understanding and the skills for each tool. The questions have been chosen to get a general understanding of the tools. The full survey can be found in the Appendix 1.

### 2.3.4 Semi-Structured Interviews

#### 2.3.4.1 Interviews with leaders

Ten semi-structured interviews with leaders from Volvo CE have been conducted. A qualitative study grants the opportunity to get the perspective of the interviewee and how they see the significance and importance of those tools. (Bryman & Bell, 2011) Additionally, the interview process is flexible and gives the interviewee the chance to explain their point of view. The semi-structured interview covers fairly specific questions, however, it is open to pick up on statements the interviewee said and let them lead the way. The interview guide can be seen in the Appendix 2. The chosen interviewees are from the middle management level, which means the leaders that directly report to the Executive Management Team (EMT). Those leaders were chosen, because they connect the upper and lower levels of the organization and thus communicate with both levels. (Müller, 2007, p. 154) Of the 75 leaders that report directly to the EMT, 16 were chosen, 12 of them male and four of them female, based on their number of direct reports and their department. The number of direct reports was relevant in order to ensure that the leader has subordinates that he is communicating to and different departments were chosen in order to get a holistic overview of the whole company. Of those 16 leaders, ten replied to be willing to participate, all of which were male. All of the interviews were conducted via Skype due to geographical differences and conducted during February 2020 (see Table 2). The length of the interviews sprawls from 8 to 25 minutes. The reason for that is the difference in detailed answers by the interviewees. While some interviewees were elaborated in their answers, others answered straight forward and direct. The former also led to further questions, which explains the difference in length. The purpose of the interviews was to figure out in which state the leaders currently are in regards to the new tools. That means to figure out how they use the tools and if they help them to communicate, as well as taking a look at the challenges and how they can be overcome.

Interviewee <sup>3</sup>	Function	Interview conducted	Interview length
<b>Stephen Roy</b>	Sales	13.02.2020	08:14
<b>Andrew Knight</b>	Operations	18.12.2019	13:26
<b>Mats Sköldbberg</b>	Technology	14.02.2020	14:01
<b>Bart Dewit</b>	HR	14.02.2020	19:32
<b>John Matthews</b>	Purchasing	18.02.2020	08:57
<b>Per Alm</b>	Finance, Process & IT	19.02.2020	12:27
<b>Mike Humphrey</b>	Sales	21.02.2020	25:15
<b>Matthias Keller</b>	Operations	24.02.2020	24:34
<b>Paul Douglas</b>	Technology	25.02.2020	23:05
<b>Participant A</b>	Operations	24.02.2020	07:45

Table 2: Interviewees

#### 2.3.4.2 Expert Interviews

Moreover, six expert interviews have been conducted (see Table 3: Overview Expert Interviews). The interviewees were chosen based on their role at Volvo Group (and Microsoft) and their involvement in the digital workplace. In order to pick the interviewees, discussions with the internal communications team, as well as with other colleagues at Volvo CE were conducted to find the right contact person. Those interviewees were chosen because of their expertise in order to get deeper insight into the different topics.

Therefore, the communicative leadership manager was chosen, who has a deeper insight into communication in general, in digital communication and in leadership communication especially at Volvo CE.

Additionally, one expert from Volvo Group was chosen, who is the head of the project “Digital Workplace”, in order to get a deeper insight into the different tools that were implemented and their ulterior motives as to why they implemented those in particular.

To better understand the situation at Volvo Construction Equipment, three more interviews were conducted with people who are directly involved in the roll out of Office 365 at Volvo CE.

Last but not least, an interview with a Microsoft expert has been conducted in order to figure out the intended use of the tools. This will lead to an even clearer picture of the different tools. The expert from Microsoft is the direct contact person for Volvo Group and helped implementing the O365 tools. The purpose of this information is to create a comparison of the intended use and the actual use and draw attention to the possible gap. According to this gap a recommendation for action will be designed for Volvo CE, in order to close the gap.

<sup>3</sup> All interviewees, except one, agreed to be published by name.



Name	Organization	Role/Expertise	Interview conducted	Interview Length
<b>Linn Andersson</b>	Volvo Construction Equipment	Leadership communication	16.12.2019 (Skype)	18:31
<b>Patrik Wallmoberg</b>	Volvo Group	Director of Digital Workplace	18.12.2019 (F2F)	24:26
<b>Jay Parker</b>	Volvo Construction Equipment	Steering Committee for Office 365 at Volvo CE	18.03.2020 (F2F)	13:10
<b>Frank Moerman</b>	Volvo Construction Equipment	Change Lead for Office 365 at Volvo CE	09.03.2020 (Skype)	15:01
<b>Veronica Dahlén</b>	Volvo Construction Equipment	Change Lead for Office 365 at Volvo CE	11.03.2020 (Skype)	09:58
<b>Johan Rebeling</b>	Microsoft Office	Customer Success Manager for the Office 365 Tools at Volvo Group	12.02.2020 (F2F)	38:54

Table 3: Overview Expert Interviews

### 2.3.5 Further Data

Further data has been collected from the intranet of Volvo Group to get more information about the company, as well as the digital workplace. Moreover, the author joined the digital champions program<sup>4</sup> in order to get a better understanding of the tools as well as the progress and initiatives at Volvo Group. This included regular Skype-meetings with learning sessions, as well as the integration in the network.

The learning tools from Microsoft were used to get a deeper insight and understanding into the Office 365 tools. Furthermore, a workshop about the digital tools has been joined by the author to learn more about the adaptation process of the new tools.

Moreover, the author joined the internal communications team, which led to different workshops and presentations. That resulted in a better understanding of the relation between internal communication and the digital tools. Moreover, the hands-on use of the digital tools in a company context, but especially in internal communication, led to additional practical knowledge and understanding of those tools.

## 2.4 Data Analysis

The survey has been transferred into an excel sheet in order to analyse certain aspects. Therefore, different graphs and charts have been created to get a visual picture of the answers. Some of the answers were set in relation to each other, while others were not looked at further,

<sup>4</sup> The digital champions program is a community for early adopters who join additional learning sessions and act as ambassadors to spread the word about the tools in the company and to help their peers.

since the results were not relevant. To back up the answers of the survey, the responses of the interviewees were set in context.

The open questions of the survey have been categorized and visually represented. To do so, a text analyser has been used to analyse the most commonly used words in the text, which helped to identify broad categories for responses. Every answer was then connected to one category, which led to an overall picture on how many respondents were using this phrase. Some categories were grouped after, since they meant similar things.

The interviews were recorded and carefully listened to twice afterwards. Therefore, common themes could be discovered and separated into different categories. Those categories were on the one hand communication, and on the other hand the digital tools. The digital tools were subdivided into current communication tools and the new digital tools. This included which kind of tools they are currently using, and what their perception of the new tools is. Therefore, the new digital tools were further separated into Yammer, Teams and SharePoint and those divided into negative, neutral or positive opinions. Another category were the challenges and how to overcome them. Important statements of the different categories were transcribed in an excel sheet while listening to the recordings. The expert interviews have been recorded and transcribed to use the overall information and certain quotes for the thesis. The data of the interviews will be set in relation to the survey, followed by setting both data in relation to the theory.

## 2.5 Quality of thesis

In order to ensure the quality of the thesis, two aspects are considered crucial, namely validity and reliability. The latter is about whether the data of a study are repeatable, while validity is about the integrity of the results. (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 42)

### 2.5.1 Validity

In order to ensure face validity, the survey has been discussed with the internal communications team at Volvo CE. Face validity means that the chosen measure reflects the overall topic of the study. (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 160) Moreover, content validity, which means that the data is representative of all aspects of the topic, is guaranteed since all necessary tools were included in the survey, as well as the possibility for further comments. The results of the survey are also valid because the number of respondents was 620. With 1300 leaders at Volvo CE who received the survey, the respondents make almost 50% of the population and are therefore representative for the whole population.

### 2.5.2 Reliability

Reliability is concerned about whether a study is repeatable (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 41). This study is repeatable in the sense that the methods were openly communicated and therefore the same study can be repeated in another case. However, the results might differ since different companies are in a different state in regards of the tools. Moreover, even the study at Volvo CE

will probably not have the same results in a year or two, since the opinion about the tools might change. In this case the reliability can be confirmed by internal consistency. To measure this the study was split in half and it was reviewed if both halves of the study have the same tendency. (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 158) This was the case for this study and can therefore be recognized as reliable. However, since cultural aspects were disregarded in this thesis, the data could be influenced by cultural factors. The effects of cultural factors on communication can therefore be researched further.

### 2.5.3 Trustworthiness

For qualitative research trustworthiness is another criterion to measure the quality of the research. Trustworthiness is divided into four sub criteria, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. In regards of the credibility, which means how authentic the findings are, it can be said that the results of the interviews have a high credibility. One reason for that is that the answers of the respondents align with the overall opinion measured by the surveys. Another reason is that the observation within the company shows the same tendency, namely that the tools are not used much yet. (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 43)

The study can be transferred to other contexts as well, meaning that the same studies can be repeated at a different company. However, the aim of the study was not to generalise the findings, but rather in exploring a specific company and how they can use the Microsoft Office 365 tools. Although, the results can be used in another company to improve their leadership communication with digital tools. Dependability is similar to reliability, which means that the findings can change over time, but might be similar at other companies which are also in the beginning of adopting those tools. Last but not least, confirmability can be compared to objectivity, meaning that no own values are involved in the study. Even though Bryman and Bell (2011) state that it is almost impossible to be completely objective, the author acted in good faith. That means no personal values were included during the interviews or were affecting the analysis. This can be ensured since the questions were quite open and neutral to reduce the possible influence exerted by the author. Moreover, the interviews have been recorded to minimise own presumptions.

In conclusion it can be said that the study is of high quality, since the different criteria are met. Moreover, the mixed-method research provides a high quality since the combination of two methods enables the author to deliver a full picture from different angles.

### 3. Literature Review

The following chapters discuss the key concepts about digital communication in a virtual environment from prior studies. This includes an introduction about the digital workplace in companies and is followed by how this leads to changes in leadership. Subsequent, leadership communication will be discussed. Last but not least, leadership communication is set in relation with digital communication tools, which includes the challenges and possibilities, the tools currently used and the Microsoft Office 365 tools, namely SharePoint Online, *Teams* and Yammer.

#### 3.1 Digital Workplace

Technology has a major impact on our economy and it changes the way how organizations build new markets. Advanced Information Technology<sup>5</sup> is in the center of this change and enables new ways of working in the physical and virtual world. (Avolio, Kahai and Dodge, 2001, p. 615) It is certain that change is constantly recurring and the pace of change increases rapidly. (Noonan *et al.*, 2017, p. 267) Moreover, the global workforce consists of five different generations for the first time, which leads to shifting workplace dynamics and the way we think about work. (The School of Life, no date) Because we are working in a more flexible way by working from home, on the fly, when travelling and on the train (Rebeling, 2020), virtual collaborations have become part of our working lives (Darics, 2020, p. 6). Employees, who are working from different places are dependent on virtual tools that enable different types of communication, as well as collaboration. (Avolio, Kahai and Dodge, 2001, p. 617) It is no longer useful to have applications only on a PC or on a server, but rather having it in the cloud so that everyone can access the tools from anywhere and share data and information. (Rebeling, 2020) Those virtual tools provide teleworking, teleconferencing and video-conferencing in order to communicate more effectively across time and space. (Snellman, 2014, p. 1254) But because it is becoming so easy to collaborate from anywhere in real time, the usage of face-to-face (F2F) meetings changes. Therefore, it is even more important to have skills of communication, diplomacy and empathy to build long-lasting relationships. (The School of Life, no date) A digital workplace, which is necessary to foster virtual teams, needs leadership strategies that are relevant for a virtual environment. Therefore, it is crucial to identify the change in leadership.

#### 3.2 Changes in leadership

It is necessary to identify the changes in leadership which are necessary to lead virtual teams effectively. A short insight into traditional leadership will show how leadership has been so far, followed by the changes, which leads to the term e-leadership.

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<sup>5</sup> Advanced Information Technology means techniques, tools and knowledge that facilitates the collaboration, for example e-mail systems, groupware, collaborative customer relationship management systems and counting. Avolio, Kahai and Dodge (2001, p. 616).

### 3.2.1 Traditional leadership

There are different ways on how to define leadership as a concept, both from wide to narrow definitions. (Roman *et al.*, 2019, p. 854) When talking about traditional leadership, research mostly talks about the control of the behaviour of people. (Auvinen *et al.*, 2019, p. 207) However, a leader is not only controlling its team members, but rather spreads the word about the organizational strategy to people and at best creates a sense of belonging and identity. (Cardon, Huang and Power, 2019) Nevertheless, leadership theory has changed already from being a modern, static leader that focuses mainly on the embodied leader-person with specific traits to a leader that identifies himself through relationships. (Auvinen *et al.*, 2019, p. 206) Nonetheless, traditional leadership is still defined by using mainly face-to-face communication and physical presence to spread information instead of technology. (van Wart *et al.*, 2019, pp. 82–83) But in the digital age and the increase of globalization, it is necessary to also use technology to communicate and spread information. Within a virtual environment, leaders need different approaches and characteristics, which leads to the counterpart of traditional leadership, namely e-leadership.

### 3.2.2 e-leadership

E-leadership is a response to the global changes in technology (Snellman, 2014, p. 1255) and is defined as a process, that is intertwined with advanced information technology, which leads to changing attitudes, feelings, thinking and behaviour. (Avolio, Kahai and Dodge, 2001, p. 617) However, e-leadership is not only about digital tools, but about creating a virtual environment that enables effective working (Roman *et al.*, 2019, p. 854), which means to make a critical selection about the digital tools and to be responsible for their proper usage. (Liu *et al.*, 2018, p. 827) The virtual environment requires a different approach towards leadership since virtual teams are according to Snellman (2014) more difficult to manage. It is therefore necessary to understand how leaders should behave in a virtual environment and which characteristics are important. (Snellman, 2014, p. 1253) Leading people in a virtual environment requires more work in creating and keeping a group identity with shared values and goals. (Darics, 2020, p. 7) Further challenges are for example trust creation, cultural differences, distance and time-related issues, (Snellman, 2014, p. 1256), communication, coordination and knowledge diffusion (Snellman, 2014, p. 1256).

In order to overcome those challenges in an effective way, six e-competencies have been identified that are critical for e-leadership, namely e-communication skills, e-social skills, e-change management skills, e-tech savvy, e-team skills and e-trustworthiness. (Roman *et al.*, 2019, p. 857) An overview can be found in Table 4. Basic e-communication skills mean that the leader should communicate in a clear manner, avoid miscommunication and communication overload and deliver messages in a useful way. Moreover, e-leaders have to adapt to their employees' preferences in order to fulfil e-social skills. Otherwise employees might feel isolated, lonely and have a decreased sense of the vision. Even though the digital environment provides a lot of opportunities, they also raise challenges, which is why the e-leader needs e-change management skills in order to prepare their employees for the change. In this virtual environment it is even more important to keep teams together and create a sense of togetherness. The e-leader requires e-team skills in order to ensure recognition and rewards and to keep the

team together. In order to do so, the e-leader requires a basic awareness of the different technologies that will be used. Moreover, the e-leader needs to create a sense of honesty and fairness, which is more difficult in a virtual environment, but possible with the right skills. (Roman *et al.*, 2019, p. 858)

Leadership requires effective communication and for e-leaders this includes sending e-mails, texting, using social media, intranets, and more. (Liu *et al.*, 2018, p. 827) However, the ideal method is to blend different communication methods, for example by starting a project with a F2F meeting, followed by virtual communication and collaboration and concluded with another F2F in order to evaluate or celebrate the achievement. (van Wart *et al.*, 2019, p. 83)

<i>E-skills</i>	Description of good e-skills
<i>e-communication</i>	<p><b>Communication clarity:</b> communication in electronic settings is very clear, well organized, and allows for feedback to avoid errors and untested assumptions.</p> <p><b>Lack of miscommunication:</b> communication in electronic settings is especially careful not to convey unintended messages that leave the receiver feeling insulted or angry because of tone or misunderstandings.</p> <p><b>Management of communication flow:</b> ensures that the ease of communications does not invite excessive communications impeding the ability of employees/leaders to get their work done. Filters data when it may be so extensive or complex as to overwhelm employees.</p>
<i>e-social</i>	<p><b>Good leader support:</b> ensures that all employees in ICT-mediated environments are provided with customized communication from time to time. Uses richer media such as face-to-face meetings, telephone and virtual conferencing when appropriate. Ensures that teams use robust interaction methods that are inclusive.</p>
<i>e-team</i>	<p><b>Team motivation:</b> ensures that team building occurs in virtual teams. Makes sure that new teams have initial introductory activities, have a genuine sense of their purpose, and occasional encouragement. Makes sure that new virtual members are properly introduced and integrated.</p> <p><b>Team accountability:</b> ensures that individuals in virtual teams are held accountable for participating and contributing.</p> <p><b>Team and team member recognition:</b> makes sure that members of virtual teams get as much opportunity for recognition, rewards, development, and advancement as face-to-face team members.</p>
<i>e-change management</i>	<p><b>Change management:</b> provides change management techniques by pre-planning transitions, monitoring implementation, and refining technology practice with experience.</p>
<i>e-tech savvy</i>	<p><b>Currency with relevant ICTs:</b> stay abreast of new ICTs and new enhancements of ICTs. Investigates and compares ICTs to ensure that those in use are optimally effective given a cost-benefit analysis including financial and transaction costs.</p> <p><b>Blending traditional and virtual methods:</b> use of adopted ICTs is practiced in a sensible mix with other ICTs and traditional communication methods.</p> <p><b>Basic technological savvy:</b> has sufficient skills and inclination to deal with various types of technology breakdowns in both personal and enterprise settings, either directly or with the aid of technology specialists in a timely manner. Is able to support subordinates and others when there are technology breakdowns or underperformance issues.</p>
<i>e-trust</i>	<p><b>Technological security:</b> provides assurance of safe storage of information for privacy. Is vigilant against hacking and system breaches.</p> <p><b>Trustworthiness in a virtual environment:</b> creates a sense of trust in the leader with regard to honesty, consistency, follow-through, fairness, and general integrity.</p> <p><b>Work-life balance:</b> does not allow virtual technologies to intrude into employees' lives excessively. Ensures demands for client responsiveness to not overwhelm employees.</p> <p><b>Diversity management:</b> ensures that support of diversity is as well monitored in virtual settings as it is in face-to-face settings.</p>

Table 4: Description of e-competencies (van Wart *et al.*, 2019, p. 93)

### 3.3 Leadership communication

Because there is a strong link between communication and effective leadership (Darics, 2020, p. 6), the thesis focuses on leadership communication. For this purpose, communication in general will be a subject of discussion, as well as sub items like internal communication and leadership communication.

#### 3.3.1 Communication

In the broadest sense communication involves a sender and a recipient (Johnston and Taylor, 2018), which transmit their ideas, information and questions. The recipient is then able to respond, which requires for example a language that is clear for both parties. (Waghmare, 2019, p. 22) Back in the days, there were no channels for communicating information, so communication was mostly mouth-to-mouth. With the development of telephones and printing press, communication changed. However, the bigger change was the evolution of mobile technology, internet and computers. (Waghmare, 2019, pp. 138–139) This evolution led to new communication tools and the simplicity of communication, but also to the challenge of information overload and the constant contact. (van Wart *et al.*, 2019, p. 81) Even though new communication tools enable people to communicate from anywhere with anyone (Waghmare, 2019, pp. 138–139), Lipiäinen *et al.* (2014) state that the traditional communication is still the favourite way to communicate. However, different information seems to fit different media. For example, quick updates and announcements are preferred via e-mail, while other information fit best on the intranet. (Lipiäinen, Karjaluoto and Nevalainen, 2014) One specialization in communication is internal communication (Verčič, Verčič and Sriramesh, 2012, p. 223), which will be discussed next.

#### 3.3.2 Internal Communication

Internal communication is especially important, because earning people's trust and engaging them is important for a company, which can be attained by communicating internally. (Ng and Ngai, 2015, p. 204) Internal communication is seen as an important part of corporate communication. (Friedrichsen and Kamalipour, 2017, p. 494) According to Verčič *et al.* (2012), internal communication is the aim to distribute information in a most efficient way starting from mission and vision to policies and strategies. Moreover, it should increase employee motivation and lead to value creation for the organization. (Verčič, Verčič and Sriramesh, 2012, p. 225) The goal is to create a sense of belonging and build a common corporate identity. (Friedrichsen and Kamalipour, 2017, p. 494) To use internal communication strategically, messages need to be tailored to meet employees' needs. It requires a dynamic and multifaceted approach to foster the relationship between employees and organization. (Omilion-Hodges and Baker, 2014, p. 436) Responsible for that is the internal communication (IC) team that spreads information, news and announcements from different departments and locations and supports leaders with their communication. (Waghmare, 2019, p. 29)

Provided that the internal communication is of high quality, it could lead to an improved reputation of the company. As employees are also part of the brand image, it is important that they feel involved in the company (Krajčík, 2019, p. 277), and talk about the company in- and

outside of the organization in a positive way. (Omilion-Hodges and Baker, 2014, p. 435) Therefore, it is necessary to provide transparent internal communication in order to generate trust and credibility. (Jiang and Men, 2017, p. 228) Thus, IC is a crucial factor for the success of a company. (Friedrichsen and Kamalipour, 2017, p. 493)

In research you can find different levels of IC. Johnston and Taylor (2018) distinguish internal communication in internal organizational communication and internal supervisor communication. While the first one is the communication from the top management team to employees, the second one is the communication between managers and their subordinates. (Johnston and Taylor, 2018) However, this distinction of internal communication focuses only on the dialogue between a managerial position and employees. Kalla (2005) identifies four levels, namely business communication, management communication, corporate communication and organizational communication, while Welch and Jackson (2007) differentiate internal communication regarding their stakeholders. (Verčič, Verčič and Sriramesh, 2012, p. 224) Whatever the division of internal communication is, it becomes clear that a managerial perspective is crucial (Johnston and Taylor, 2018), which is why the thesis will take a closer look at leadership communication.

### 3.3.3 Leadership communication

Leadership communication is crucial to affect employees, because the top management defines the tone of voice of the internal communication, which in turn sets the reputation of the company. Moreover, the managers have accurate and useful information, which is why they are the most reliable source for information. (Men and Yue, 2019, p. 3) Therefore, communication is a necessary tool for leadership or as Müller (2007) states: Leadership is all about communication. It functions as orientation and motivation for employees and as a controlling function. Leadership communication is supposed to reconcile the economic interests of the company with the personal interests of the employees. The determination of the interests and goals is mostly done by the top management, while the execution is done by the middle managers. The middle managers connect the upper and lower level of the organization and are therefore responsible to transfer information about goals and interests to the employees. (Müller, 2007, p. 154)

Several researchers explain that communication skills are essential for leaders. For example, Mickahail and Aquino (2019) state that it is challenging to lead without having exceptional communication skills, while Ng and Ngai (2015) are even more specific by saying that “good communication does not guarantee a good leader, but a good leader must have a high competence in communication.” (Ng and Ngai, 2015, p. 210). Moreover, communication skills are also relevant for further management tasks like problem-solving, trust building and sharing visions (Roman *et al.*, 2019, p. 855). Good leadership communication requires transparency, honesty and truthfulness and must be spoken open, calm and encouraging. It is especially important to align words with action and to be truthful in order to be trusted. (Mickahail and Aquino, 2019, p. 76)

Nowadays, the information flow is stretched through a company-wide network, usually even globally. A digital network helps to spread information to everyone and everywhere



(Friedrichsen and Kamalipour, 2017, p. 497) with a speed that seemed impossible a few years ago (Liu *et al.*, 2018, p. 830). Leaders are starting to use digital communication to stay competitive (Auvinen *et al.*, 2019, p. 206), which leads to another type of communication.

### 3.4 Digital communication tools

Employees can communicate and connect with each other dramatically quicker since internal digital platforms arose. Those platforms present new possibilities to communicate and collaborate. (Cardon, Huang and Power, 2019) Moreover, they contribute to the competitive advantage, economic growth and innovations. (Snellman, 2014, p. 1254) Therefore, the next chapters will focus on digital communication and the possibilities and challenges, the most common used tools, as well as the new arising tools from Microsoft.

#### 3.4.1 Digital leadership communication

Most of the daily communication happens online, because we get our information in a virtual environment for example online newspapers. People can share information wherever they want through social media, blogs and web forums. (Johnston and Taylor, 2018) The digital communication also changed the organizational environment, where leaders do not necessarily need to be in a specific place to lead their teams. (Krajčik, 2019, p. 277) However, digital communication differs from F2F communication, because it is based on digital tools, which enables several topics to occur simultaneously from different people. In contrast, the face-to-face communication takes turns and one person talks at a time. (Snellman, 2014, p. 1257)

The digital communication makes it possible for companies to communicate effectively and fast to their employees around the world. Intranets can be used to spread organizational news, guidelines and other important information cost-effectively. (Lehmuskallio, 2006, p. 288) When talking about the daily business communication, digital teleconferencing tools are necessary to reduce costs for travelling and to increase the speed of processes. Additional tools can support projects and teams, which will be discussed next. (Friedrichsen and Kamalipour, 2017, p. 498)

#### 3.4.2 Digital tools

Internal digital tools have been implemented in most organizations as communication hubs. Before diving deeper into the current tools, the possibilities and challenges of digital internal tools will be discussed.

##### 3.4.2.1 Challenges

Often, companies struggle with new digital tools and do not use their full potential. (Willis, 2019) This could be, for example, that employees do not use the tools, which leads to inefficient use of the tools. (Cardon, Huang and Power, 2019) Moreover, functionalities of tools are rolled out faster than ever before and not only IT (Information technology) but also regular employees struggle to keep up with the change. (Willis, 2019) Another challenge is the security aspect, because as information and documents are being digitized, companies are more at risk of being

hacked or having their data being leaked. (Hicks, 2019, p. 35) This requires to establish higher standards for business security without building barriers that could reduce productivity. (Willis, 2019)

Moreover, communication overload is another issue that has existed before, but has dramatically increased since digital tools arose. (van Wart *et al.*, 2019, p. 89) Information are continuously created and published on multiple channels. People need to filter their information in order to find the information most relevant to them and the life span of information decreases. (Noonan *et al.*, 2017, pp. 267–268) This can lead to productivity loss, as people need time to find their files and information. (Hicks, 2019, p. 34)

This new environment changes leadership, as they need new strategies to lead virtual teams and make them succeed. In contrast to F2F communication, virtual teams are harder to manage and therefore digital tools are necessary for an effective communication. (Snellman, 2014, p. 1253) The reason for that is that F2F communication has more explicit nonverbal (e.g. visual) indicators, as well as that F2F communication increases the feeling of social and conversational involvement. (Snellman, 2014, pp. 1257–1258) The leaders' new skills include the ability to create a sense of belonging for each team member, no matter the geographical distance. They have to inspire and motivate their team in a mutual, active and continuous way, so that no one feels excluded because they are located in another country or in another time zone. (Snellman, 2014, p. 1258)

#### 3.4.2.2 Possibilities

Even though digital tools cannot replace F2F-communication, it enables a large group of individuals to communicate anyhow. In a growing business environment, it is not always possible to meet F2F and then digital tools are the best alternative. Any member from anywhere in the world can share images, files and videos. Moreover, digital tools enable more flexibility for communication and information can be stored and restored more easily than email or traditional documents. (Young and Hinesly, 2014, p. 428) Furthermore, a digital environment facilitates cross-functional relationships within and between different networks (Avolio, Kahai and Dodge, 2001, p. 625), which leads to cross-company communication and collaboration, as well as the possibility to share knowledge. Moreover, the workflow speed is increased (Hicks, 2019, p. 34), which in turn leads to increased efficiency and a reduction in redundancy. (Young and Hinesly, 2014, p. 429) Easier communication and collaboration is also allowed by tools like instant messaging, chat and blogging functions (Cardon, Huang and Power, 2019), where people are able to provide status updates in a quick way. (Young and Hinesly, 2014, p. 429) An overview of the challenges and possibilities can be found in Table 5, before discussing the current tools used for communication.

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Possibilities</b>	<b>Reference</b>
<b>Information overload</b>	(Noonan <i>et al.</i> , 2017, pp. 267–268) (van Wart <i>et al.</i> , 2019, p. 89)	<b>Networking / cross-functional communication</b>	(Cardon, Huang and Power, 2019) (Young and Hinesly, 2014, p. 428) (Hicks, 2019, p. 34)
<b>Productivity loss</b>	(Hicks, 2019, p. 34)	<b>Co-editing and storing</b>	(Cardon, Huang and Power, 2019) (Young and Hinesly, 2014, p. 428)
<b>Security</b>	(Hicks, 2019, p. 35) (Willis, 2019)	<b>Accessibility</b>	(Cardon, Huang and Power, 2019) (Avolio, Kahai and Dodge, 2001, p. 625)
<b>Quick change</b>	(Willis, 2019)	<b>Easy and quick communication</b>	(Cardon, Huang and Power, 2019) (Young and Hinesly, 2014, p. 428)
<b>Sense of belonging</b>	(Avolio, Kahai and Dodge, 2001, p. 652) (Snellman, 2014, pp. 1257–1258)	<b>Knowledge sharing</b>	(Cardon, Huang and Power, 2019) (Avolio, Kahai and Dodge, 2001, p. 625)
<b>Adoption process</b>	(Cardon, Huang and Power, 2019)	<b>Increased efficiency</b>	(Young and Hinesly, 2014, p. 429) (Hicks, 2019, p. 34)
		<b>Employer attractiveness</b>	(Günther, 2017, p. 862)
		<b>Flexibility in location</b>	(Günther, 2017, p. 862)

Table 5: Challenges and Opportunities of Digital Tools

### 3.4.3 Current Tools

Ng and Ngai (2015) mention several commonly used tools and platforms for internal communication. This thesis will focus on the digital platforms that are commonly used now, namely the intranet, e-mails and Skype.

#### 3.4.3.1 Intranet

One of the most useful and effective tools is the intranet. It allows to distribute news, latest guidelines and newest tools for a low cost while offering simultaneous access despite the differences of location. (Lehmuskallio, 2006, p. 288) An intranet is similar to the internet, but it is operated by a company for exclusive access for employees. Therefore, the intranet is a network that allows increased information flow and communication within the organization. (Lehmuskallio, 2006, p. 291) Companies use the intranet to spread information about the company, link different departments, publish organizational charts, inform about processes, refer to other platforms and make services easily available. (Waghmare, 2019, p. 65)

The functions of intranets are multifarious. It can serve as a communication tool, where the company keeps their employees informed about events, meetings and everyday tasks. (Krajčák, 2019, p. 284; Waghmare, 2019, p. 71) The communication can happen as many-to-many communication, for example when people discuss certain aspects, as some-to-many communication, for example when the management team publishes new information, but also for one-to-one communication, for example when someone reacts on specific information. (Lehmuskallio, 2006, p. 292) It can also serve as a collaboration tool, where people can store and share their documents and create information channels. (Krajčák, 2019, p. 284; Waghmare, 2019, p. 71) The reason for that is to share knowledge and expertise (Tredinnick, 2006, p. 232) Moreover, the intranet improves the employees efficiency by decreasing the number of emails. (Krajčák, 2019, p. 306) To conclude, the intranet is the foundation for information and communication. (Waghmare, 2019, p. 65)

#### 3.4.3.2 E-Mail

Despite the digital tools, e-mails are still commonly used in companies as a communication medium. It is a quick way to communicate as well as popular and cheap. (Krajčák, 2019, p. 275; Lipiäinen, Karjaluoto and Nevalainen, 2014) Especially when sending confidential information and documents, like a hiring contract, e-mail is still useful. (Rebeling, 2020) However, e-mails are the second biggest time consumer for an employee and they disturb the concentration and the wellbeing. (Krajčák, 2019, p. 282) In addition, e-mails are time limited. That means, only the recipient of the e-mail will get the information and they will read it and archive it somewhere. A new employee is not able to access the information nor can they search for it. E-mails can no longer be used as a mass medium, but rather for personal one-to-one communication. Mass communication should be spread somewhere, where information can be archived, for example the intranet. (Friedrichsen and Kamalipour, 2017, p. 498)

#### 3.4.3.3 Skype

For instant one-to-one communication chats are more applicable than e-mails. This function is for example part of Skype, where you can use instant messaging in order to contact someone right away and save time. (Krajčák, 2019, p. 286) The instant messages should be kept simple, but still used with proper grammar and spelling without jargon, slang and abbreviations. (Darics, 2020, p. 4) But with Skype it is also possible to stay connected with your colleagues and business partners via online meetings, call and video conferences, which is necessary for especially global companies, where teams are spread globally. (Krajčák, 2019, p. 295)

#### 3.4.4 Office 365

Microsoft Corporation group developed the Office 365 (O365) tools as services and software, which includes for example Microsoft Word, Excel or PowerPoint. (Krajčák, 2019, p. 276) It is based on the cloud, which ensures a version that is always up to date and it enables co-editing and accessibility from any device. (Volvo Construction Equipment, 2019) With the cloud based

service, new tools came along as well, namely SharePoint Online, OneDrive, Yammer, *Teams*<sup>6</sup> and many more. (Waghmare, 2019, p. 85) The Office 365 tools include features and services that can boost internal communication. (Krajčík, 2019, p. 306) The thesis will focus on SharePoint Online, *Teams* and Yammer as those are the tools that are most promising for internal communications. However, other tools might be mentioned in relation and explained further in a footnote or the appendix.

#### 3.4.4.1 SharePoint Online

SharePoint Online is one service that is part of the O365 tools. (Waghmare, 2019, p. 1) It can be used as a document library, where documents can be stored and shared. In contrast to OneDrive, which is for your personal document storing, SharePoint is for sharing. (Rebeling, 2020) The documents can be co-edited from anywhere in the world and information can be easily accessed. This empowers global teams, who can easily work together and connect to each other. (Waghmare, 2019, p. 2) However, it is not company restricted, as you are able to also share documents with external partners, suppliers and clients. Moreover, it can be used as a communication site, where content can be created and news can be shared. (Waghmare, 2019, pp. 3–5) The SharePoint communication site can be adjusted and connected to other services like Yammer, Microsoft Stream<sup>7</sup> and other content from Microsoft O365. It can be used to communicate different news about the company, for example upcoming events, product launches or success stories. In that way employees are connected and can stay informed and engaged. (Microsoft, 2020) Moreover, hub sites enable to create a shared experience for related sites. They can help to organize the intranet and therefore simplifies the search experience. (Microsoft, 2020) In Figure 1 more features of SharePoint can be seen.

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<sup>6</sup> In order to differentiate between the tool Teams and the physical team, the tool is outlined in italic.

<sup>7</sup> Microsoft Stream is a company restricted video platform, comparable with YouTube.

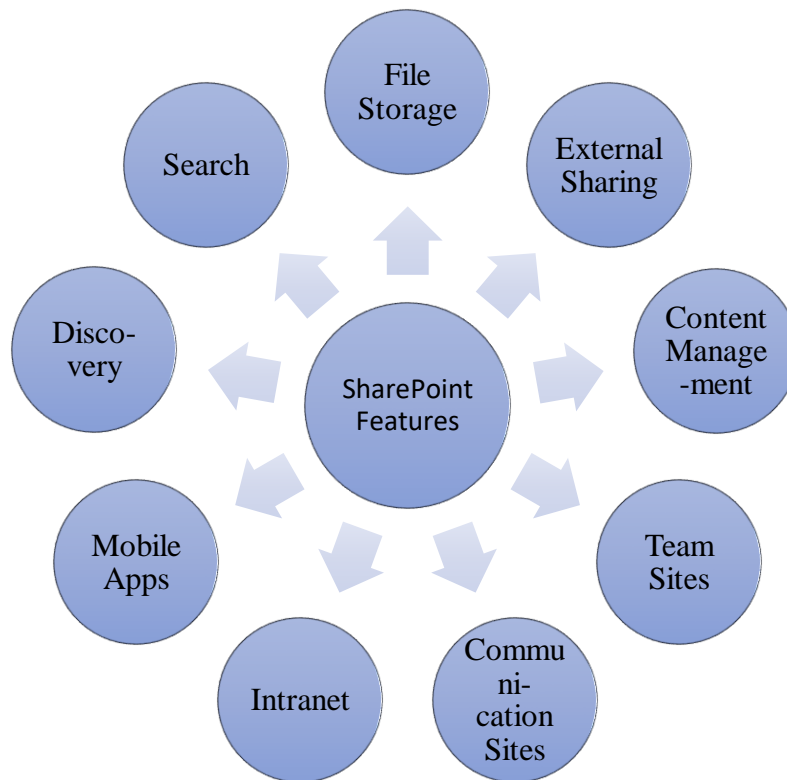


Figure 1: SharePoint Features (own representation based on Waghmare ,2019)

#### 3.4.4.2 Teams

*Teams* can be seen as a hub for the different functions, where SharePoint lies underneath. (Rebeling, 2020) This in turn means that every team site in Microsoft *Teams*, a SharePoint exists which includes a default document library to store and co-edit documents. Documents that are uploaded or updated on *Teams* are automatically updated in SharePoint. (Waghmare, 2019, p. 99) *Teams* connects everything, for example: *Teams* can have different applications, so that everything can be done within *Teams*. Documents can be uploaded in the specific channel and comments and conversations can be conducted there as well. Moreover, you can chat in *Teams*, which can replace the instant messaging in Skype and there is even a function for video and meeting calls in order to replace Skype calls. (Rebeling, 2020) In comparison to the chat in Skype, the chat history in *Teams* will be saved and can be seen any time. Different channels can be created to keep a good structure within the team and the workspace can be tailored according to the team's needs. (Volvo Construction Equipment, 2019)

Within *Teams* everything is team based, which means that each team created in the virtual environment is representing a physical team. Different applications like OneNote<sup>8</sup>, Planner<sup>9</sup>, Wikis or others, can be added in order to ensure efficient teamwork. (Rebeling, 2020) The reason why *Teams* is relevant is because the amount of collaboration has increased dramatically in the last few years. Moreover, internal and external members need to work together efficiently, especially if they are located in different places. (Volvo Construction Equipment,

<sup>8</sup> OneNote is a virtual notebook, where you can keep notes and information, for example from meetings.

<sup>9</sup> Planner is a planning tool, where tasks can be divided within the team members.

2019) Further advantages can be seen in Table 6 below.

<b>Advantages of Teams</b>	Employees can see chat history and content all the time
	Chats and activities in Teams are visible to the entire team
	Team workspace: Chat, content, people and tools are all in one place
	Voice and video meetings
	Built-in access to OneNote, SharePoint, Planner, etc.
	Audio calling on mobile
	Customizable for each team
	Different channels for different work streams
	Notifications for important information

Table 6: Advantages of Teams (own representation based on Volvo Construction Equipment , (2019)

#### 3.4.4.3 Yammer

Yammer is a social networking platform that is used in an organizational context, where employees can collaborate, connect and share activities that are related to the business. It enables social collaboration and cross-functional networking. It is useful to share events, content, news and other information. (Waghmare, 2019, p. 42) Yammer is especially suited for communication, as it allows for a two-way communication in which people can directly comment, like and share the information they read, which also increases employee engagement in the process. (Waghmare, 2019, pp. 140–141) This was also Microsoft’s intention, as Rebeling (2020) explains in the interview that Microsoft is using Yammer as a leadership communication tool. Every month they connect the executive leadership team and their CEO Satya Nadella with the 120.000 employees at Microsoft by organizing a virtual Q&A. Therefore, Yammer is a good tool to communicate cross-functional. (Rebeling, 2020) Participation can be increased and information can flow more openly and freely, which leads to an open culture with flatter hierarchies. (Waghmare, 2019, pp. 45–46) Employees can choose what they are interested in and Yammer keeps them updated. Moreover, employees from different locations, but also from different departments can connect to each other and long e-mail chains can be reduced. (Waghmare, 2019, p. 44)

Leaders are especially important for promoting engagement. Data shows a direct correlation between leaders and employees being active on Yammer, so if their leaders are active, employees will be active too. (Dawson, 2019) Especially the transformation process is more effective when the management team supports it. (Microsoft, 2020) But leaders need to be aware that Yammer is not a megaphone but rather a hearing aid. In order for employees to trust the company, leaders need to show that they are listening. This can be done by commenting on people’s post or just “liking” a message. (Swoop Analytics, 2019) Dawson (2019) states that engaging employees happens through authentic posts, which can be for example personal updates, asking questions or sharing photos. As an example, the ex-CEO of NBN Co Bill Morrow posts in their company network:



Figure 2: Example for employee engagement by leaders (Swoop Analytics, 2019)

Another way to engage employees is to originate different campaigns on a specific topic. For example, on the World Photography Day employees can share a photo of their offices, desks or views from the desk combined with a hashtag. It creates a sense of belonging and is an easy way to engage people throughout the world. (Dawson, 2020) Further ideas on how to engage employees can be found in the Appendix 3.

In comparison to e-mails, Yammer is especially useful since information is not stored any longer in people's inboxes, but rather in a central feed. Particularly when people do not know who to ask, Yammer is a great tool to reach out to a certain group of people, instead of forwarding a request until it reaches the right person. Moreover, unlike e-mails, information on Yammer cannot be forwarded. In comparison to instant messaging, Yammer conversations are archived and can be easily searched to find the needed information. Last but not least, you can receive Yammer messages any time and get them as soon as you are online. (Waghmare, 2019, pp. 42–43)

With Yammer one can communicate regardless of being part of a specific team. For example, if employees are taking the bike to commute to and from the office, they themselves could ask if there are any other people who do that. If so, they could maybe share information on the best route or about the best bike store. In that case, one can create areas of interests at Yammer. Another example is, if there is an event at the office, there might be some leftovers from that event and then it can be communicated to everyone in the office that there are leftovers from that event for anyone to take some with them. In that case, Yammer can be used to spread news and information across the company. (Rebeling, 2020) By nature, Yammer creates and encourages communities that share content, information and interests. It encourages open dialogue, connections across the company, as well as idea generation. Everyone gets a voice and two-way executive forums or live meetings can modernize the organization-wide communication. (Microsoft, 2020) In the below table a comparison of traditional communication channels and enterprise social networks like Yammer can be found.



<b>Traditional communication channels</b>	<b>Yammer</b>
<b>Email/Intranet updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ One-way, often crafted by Corporate communications</li> <li>○ Lacks authenticity</li> <li>○ Scales easily</li> </ul>	<b>Very impactful</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enterprise-wide reach</li> <li>○ Two-way conversations</li> <li>○ Transparent</li> <li>○ Direct communication paths from shop floor to top</li> <li>○ Scales well for large organisations</li> </ul>
<b>Townhall/Roadshows</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Very time-consuming</li> <li>○ Not very interactive</li> <li>○ Too irregular</li> <li>○ Does not scale for large organisations</li> </ul>	<b>Low execution cost</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Participate anywhere and anytime</li> <li>○ Can be done on mobile app</li> <li>○ 5 minutes per day</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement by ‘walking around’</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Two way and authentic</li> <li>○ Limited reach</li> <li>○ Does not scale for large organisations</li> </ul>	

*Table 7: Traditional communication channels vs. Enterprise social networks (based on Swoop Analytics, 2019)*

### 3.5 Summary

The literature shows the need and relevance of the digital workplace in a company. Especially global companies benefit from digital tools that enable communication and collaboration. Digital tools like e-mails, Skype and the intranet are already valuable tools. However, since technologies are changing fast, so do digital tools. The Microsoft Office 365 tools allow even more effective collaboration and communication. With the emergence of those tools, the leadership style changes and requires further skills.

## 4. Results

In order to get a better understanding of the case, the results start with a short introduction into Volvo Construction Equipment and their current state in the digital workplace. The involvement in the company, as well as some of the expert interviews were used for that. It is then followed by the results from the survey and the interviews, which are intertwined in the different subchapters since the two methods complement each other. The results will start with the perception about communication, followed by the digital tools that are currently used. Furthermore, the different results about the Microsoft Office 365 tools are presented, as well as the upcoming challenges and how to overcome those challenges. Last but not least, a short summary about the results of the workshop performed by Microsoft will be presented.

### 4.1 The case: Volvo Construction Equipment<sup>10</sup>

#### 4.1.1 Volvo Group

Volvo Group is the world's leading manufacturer of trucks, buses, construction equipment and marine and industrial engines. Moreover, they provide solutions for financing and services. With almost 100.000 employees, Volvo Group is represented in 18 countries and sell their products in more than 190 markets. Volvo Group is involved in many functions that most people rely on every day. For example, Volvo buses are taking people to work. The Volvo Group consists of different brands, like Volvo Penta, UD Trucks, UD Buses, Terex Trucks, Renault Trucks, and many more. Furthermore, it consists of ten business areas, namely Volvo Trucks, UD Trucks & JVs, Renault Trucks, Mack Trucks, Volvo Buses, Volvo Penta, Volvo Financial Services, Volvo Autonomous Solutions, Arqus and Volvo Construction Equipment. (Volvo Group, 2020) The latter will be discussed in this thesis.

#### 4.1.2 Volvo Construction Equipment

Volvo Construction Equipment (Volvo CE) develops, manufactures and markets equipment for construction and related industries. They have a broad range of products and services, as well as financing solutions and used equipment. With almost 15.000 employees all over the world, a higher level of collaboration is required. (Volvo Construction Equipment, 2020b) Moreover, to stay competitive it is inevitable to build new products, do new offerings, become a new company and therefore it is necessary to invest in basic technology. It is more than just this will of progression, however. In order to stay competitive, Volvo CE will have no other choice than to follow along with the technology changes, because many of the older programs will not be supported any longer, says the Director of the Digital Workplace Wallmoberg.

Part of the transformation of Volvo CE is also an organizational change - where different departments are combined or separated, a new and flatter structure results from that. Volvo CE will move closer to the markets and strengthen its customer focus further to be able to meet the needs of customers. The changes are designed to empower the organization to self-manage and self-drive the day-to-day business, as well as to establish a new way of working and move to a

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<sup>10</sup> Most of the information is derived from the Intranet and is therefore not publicly accessible. However, some information might also be available through their website.

culture of trust, empowerment and cooperation. (Volvo Construction Equipment, 2020a) This change in the organization, as well as the transformation to a new way of working, makes new tools crucial for better collaboration and communication.

#### 4.1.3 Volvo CE's current state

In order to better understand the following results, the current situation of Volvo CE will be shortly described.

The digital workplace was rolled out by Volvo Group during the last year. The Office 365 journey started with the approach of moving from on premise to the cloud, which included for example SharePoint Online, Exchange Online and more. Step by step more tools have been enabled to allow a modern way of working. (Volvo Group, 2019) However, not all tools are enabled yet (see Figure 3), and some functions of *Teams* are still missing as well, namely video conferencing, meeting capabilities and calling capabilities, explains the customer success manager Rebeling from Microsoft. Parker (Volvo CE) says that it is a question of bandwidth and that the infrastructural organization is preparing everything, so that those functions can be enabled without causing any problems. In order to implement the digital workplace in a proper way, a community of Digital Champions was created. This community is for early adopters who are eager to learn and willing to share their knowledge with peers. Moreover, change leads have been assigned in each business area to align everyone with the impending changes, explains Dahlén, who is one of the change leads at Volvo CE. Further intro sessions which will be held via Skype are the first step of the future initiatives (Dahlén, Volvo CE), followed by demo sessions. Additionally, the digital champions network will be further developed by the change team by including them in the different sessions and initiatives. (Parker, Volvo CE) One of the target groups will also be the administrative assistants' network, as they are "instrumental in helping increased adoption in the leadership", says Parker (Volvo CE). When the assistants are using the tool suite effectively by scheduling meetings in *Teams* and sending links to documents that are stored on SharePoint, then leaders are "forced" to use it as well. (Parker, Volvo CE)



Figure 3: Roadmap Office 365 (Volvo Group, 2019)

## 4.2 Communication

As communication is quite individualistic, the respondents from the survey as well as the interviewees have been asked what communication is for them. In the survey this has been asked as an open question. In

Figure 4 **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.** it can be seen that five different characteristics were mentioned most, namely interaction, sense of belonging, engagement, sharing and information. Communication used for spreading information was mentioned most, followed by sharing news, engaging employees and creating a sense of belonging. Moreover, communication was mentioned as a way to interact with their peers and team members.

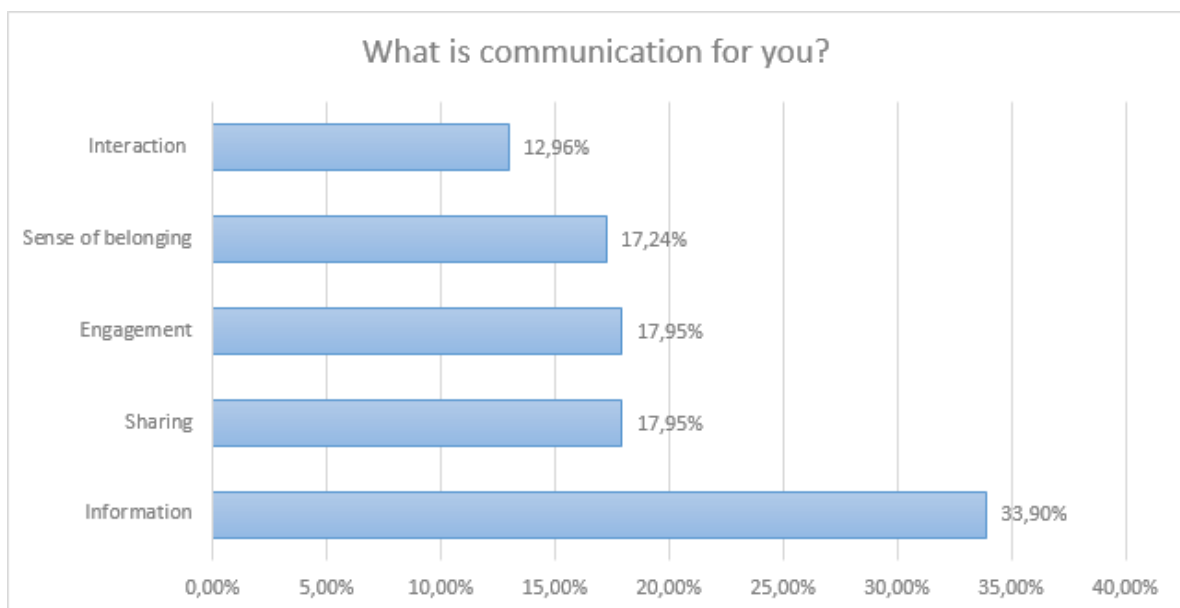


Figure 4: What is communication for you?(n=553)

The interviewees especially highlighted the engagement with employees, as communication helps “to be on the same page” (Roy, Volvo CE), “to know in what direction we are moving” (Sköldberg, Volvo CE) and to be aligned (Matthews, Volvo CE). Communication is especially important in a connected world (Keller, Volvo CE) as well as in a big company as Volvo CE (Matthews, 2020). As Knight (Volvo CE) states:

*“We all need to work together - just as individuals we are not getting anything done. We need to work as teams. We need to work together to achieve common objectives and if we can't communicate with each other, I think it's obvious that we are not going to get a good result.”*

The interviewees were especially aligned in the statement that communication is crucial. Statements like

*“communication is the most important thing”* (Sköldberg, Volvo CE),

*“communication is vitally important”* (Matthews, Volvo CE) and

*“communication is crucially important”* (Douglas, Volvo CE)

make clear that communication is highly valued by the leaders at Volvo CE. As Keller (Volvo CE) summarizes: “communication is success factor number one”.

Additionally, Knight (Volvo CE) draws the connection to leadership:

*“You cannot be a good leader if you cannot communicate. It is that fundamental.”*

#### 4.3 Current digital tools

When talking about the current communication tools, it can be clearly seen in Figure 5 that e-mail, Face-to-Face and Skype are mentioned most. This is also aligned with the answers the interviewees gave. Skype is especially important and often used, as leaders have a global role and need to travel. Moreover, not everyone is sitting in the same office or in the same location, which is why Skype meetings are necessary. (Knight, Volvo CE) E-Mails are a good tool when it comes to information that does not need to be answered right away and in order to spread information. Keller (Volvo CE) further says that e-mails are a necessary communication tool and cannot be replaced. However, he also mentions that e-mails are inconvenient when situations become conflicts.

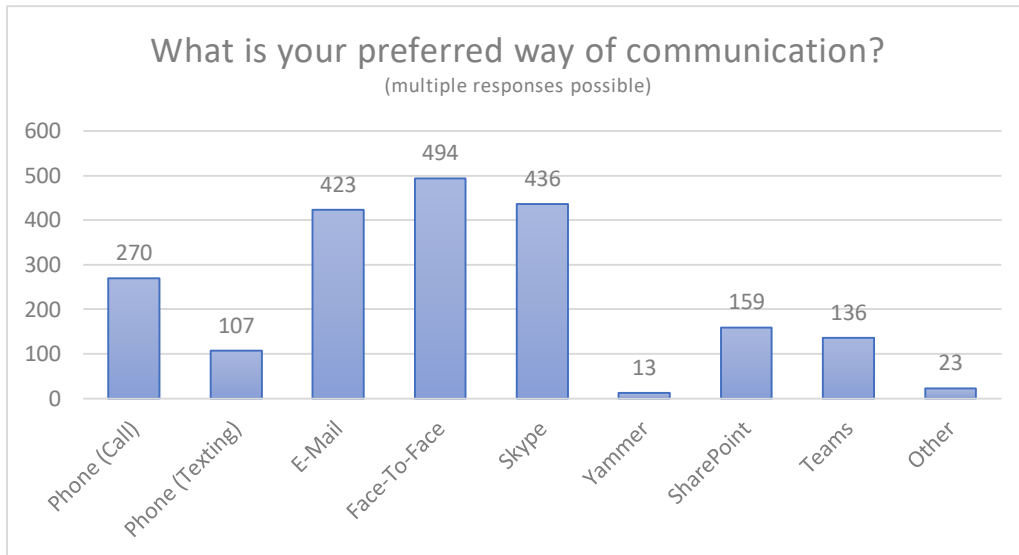


Figure 5: Preferred way of communication (n=620)

All interviewees mention to have regular face-to-face meetings and to do so as often as possible. Knight (Volvo CE) states that it is crucial to have face-to-face meetings and highlights to keep a balance between the different communication tools. Moreover, he emphasizes that it is not only about communicating, but also about listening:

*“One of the critical areas that you should always have on your mind is to listen more than you speak. Ask the right questions. Understand what's going on. Listen to what people are saying to you. That's the best way of learning. And I think also engages people better in what you want.” - Knight, Volvo CE*

#### 4.4 Microsoft Office 365

For each tool different statements about the usage, the communication, the skills, the ease and the required help were asked. By the means of a Likert scale the statements were ranked by their approval or disapproval. An overview for each tool will be presented, as well as interesting aspects within the responses. A comprehensive presentation of all questions and answers can be found in the Appendix 1.

##### 4.4.1 SharePoint Online

SharePoint Online scored well, as can be seen in the Figure 6. The use of SharePoint is quite high with more than 70% agreeing to use SharePoint often. The high comprehensibility as well as the function for communication was agreed by the majority, even more if one adds the respondents which are indifferent. While around 25% disagree with having good skills for SharePoint, around 45% agree that they need help with using SharePoint.

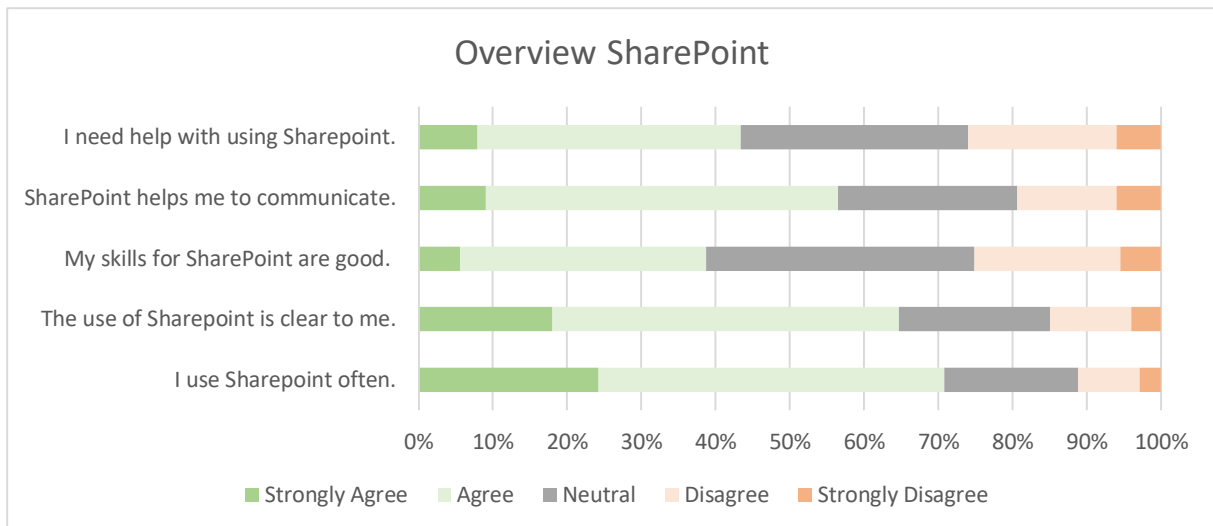


Figure 6: Overview SharePoint (n = 620)

SharePoint is a natural progression from TeamPlace, the document library that was used by Volvo Group beforehand, say the interviewees. While Roy (Volvo CE) states that it is a much better tool than TeamPlace, other interviewees also find some negative points, for example that it is slow and not clear where to find certain documents. However, most of them agree that it is clearly useful to not send documents around and recognize the value of it.

As it is a natural progression from a tool they used before, it is understandable that most of the respondents in the survey use SharePoint often.

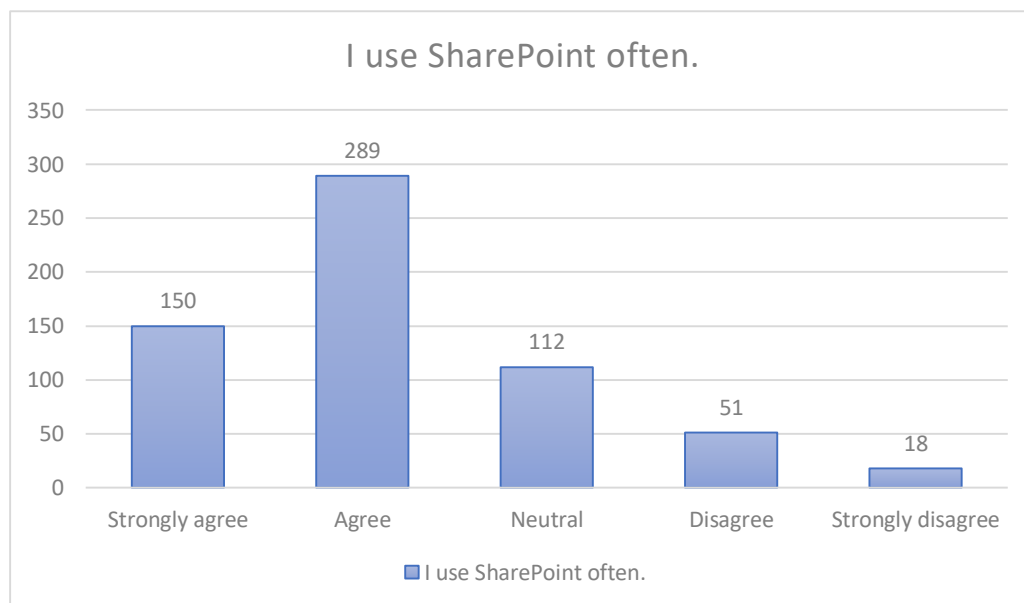


Figure 7: I use SharePoint often. (n=620)

#### 4.4.2 Teams

The overall opinion of *Teams* looks a bit different compared to SharePoint Online (see Figure 8). Even though about 32 % agree that the use of *Teams* is clear to them, only 25% use it often.

Reason for that could be the lack of skills, since more than 50% disagree that their skills for Teams are good.

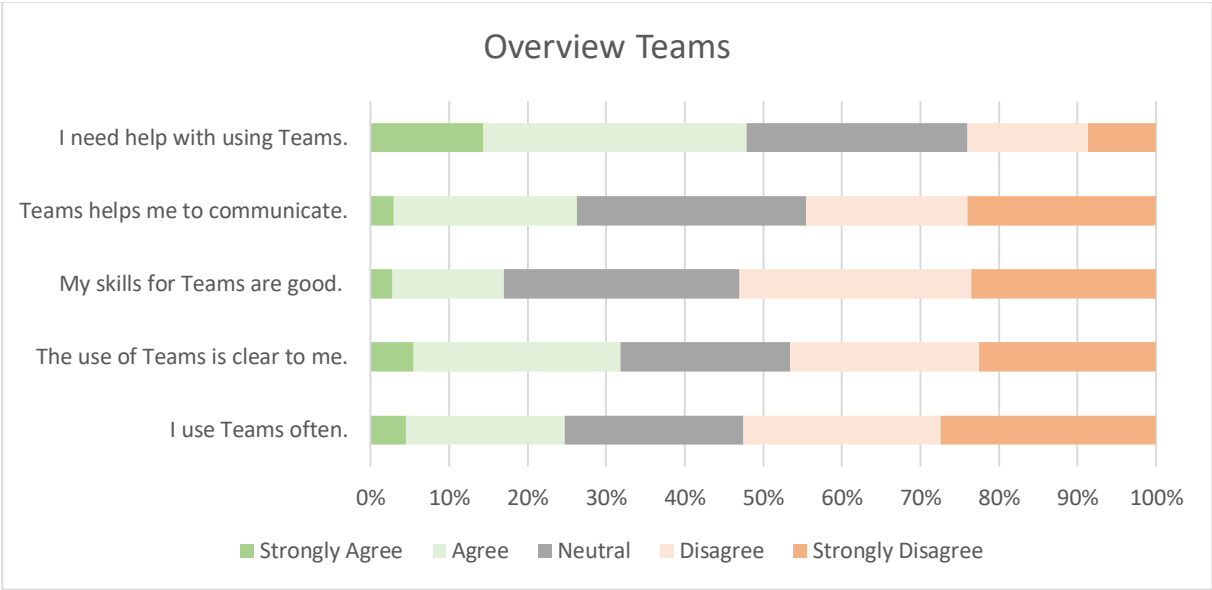


Figure 8: Overview Teams (n=620)

However, the lack of skills does not coincide with the required help for Teams. Only 63% who (strongly) disagree with having good skills at Teams, agree with needing help (see Figure 9). Keller (Volvo CE) argues:

*“It [Teams] still has an inhibition threshold and I am not using it with excitement.”<sup>11</sup>*

Furthermore, Dewit (Volvo CE) states that Volvo CE is still in a learning process. Nevertheless, Figure 9 clearly shows that there is a lack of commitment to actually have a learning process with those tools.

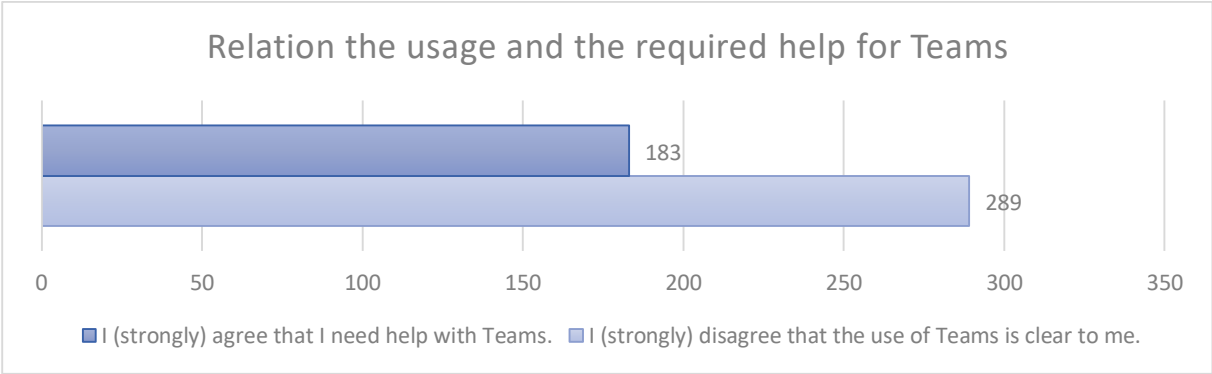


Figure 9: Relation between the usage and the required help for Teams (n=620)

Teams is still showing potential, since more than half of the respondents agree or are at least indifferent regarding Teams as a communication tool and also the interviewees mention some

<sup>11</sup> Translated from German



of the positive sides of *Teams*, for example that you are able to be always connected and have everything in one place. (Dewit, Volvo CE)

### 4.4.3 Yammer

Yammer has by far come off worst. Not only is the number of people using Yammer only 88 from 620, also the interviewees were quite negative about the tool. About 65% of the people do not even know what Yammer is for, as can be seen in Figure 10, which was also confirmed by the interviewees who asked, what Yammer is actually for and how it links to anything. (Knight, Volvo CE) The interviewees mentioned for example, that Yammer sends too many e-mails with daily updates (Dewit, Volvo CE), and those daily updates are not even appropriate, since it sends updates about photography and cycling, even though the interviewee in question does not even follow these groups. (Humphrey, Volvo CE) It is seen as a Facebook for Volvo Group and therefore a waste of time. (Keller, Volvo CE)

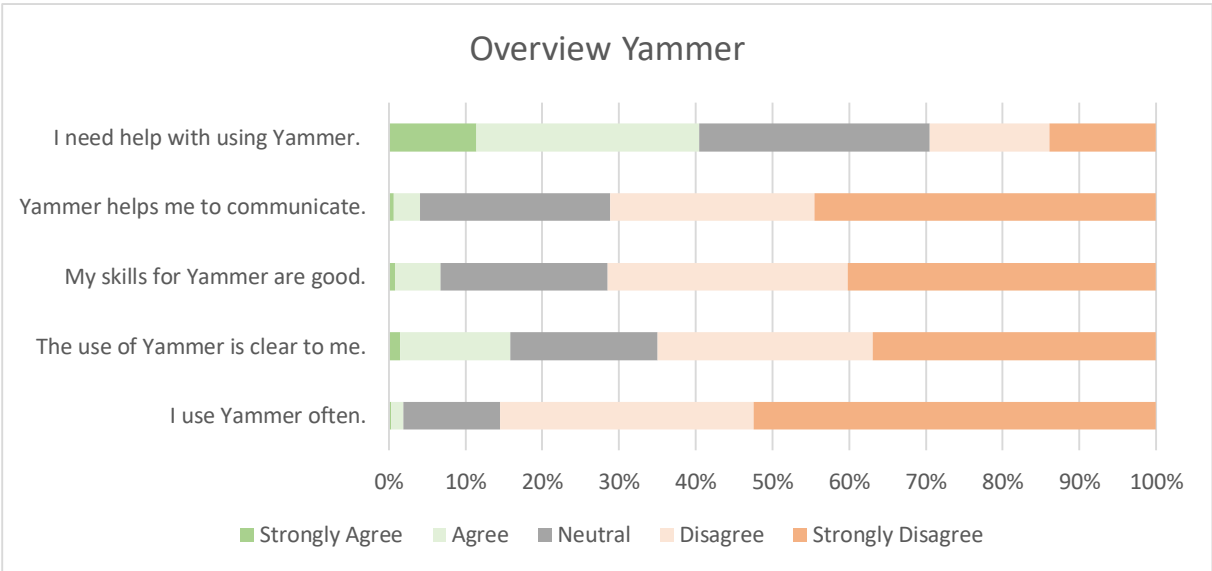


Figure 10: Overview Yammer (n=620)

Only 6% of the respondents agree that their skills for Yammer are good. However, only 56% of the people agree that they need help with Yammer (see Figure 11). This leads to the assumption that the respondents are not willing to learn about Yammer even though their skills are bad. This is supported by the statements of the interviewees who do not see a use for Yammer and are not convinced that they need Yammer in order to do a better job. (Keller, Volvo CE)

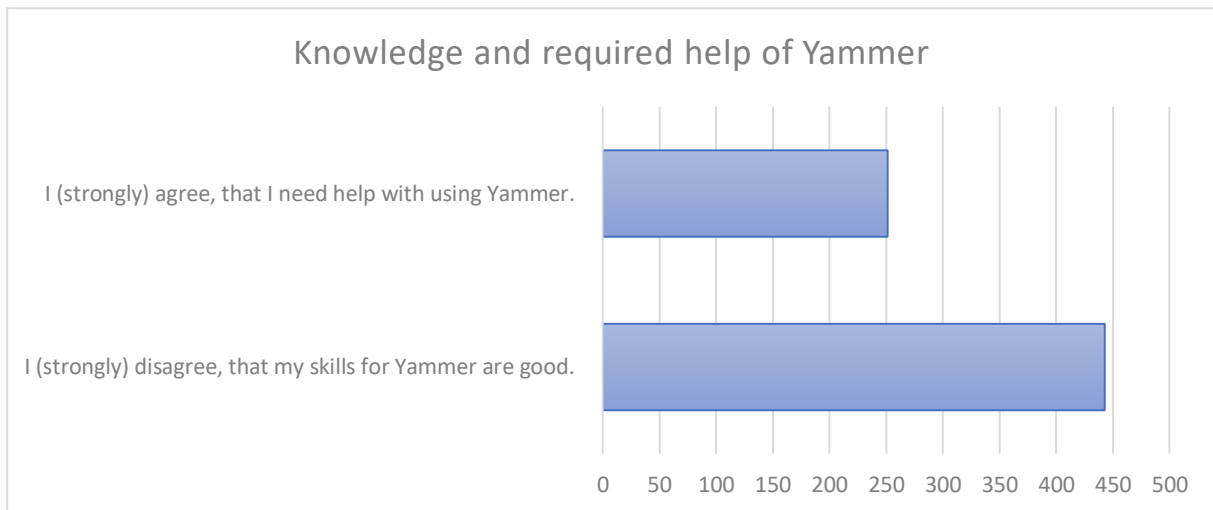


Figure 11: Knowledge and required help of Yammer (n=620)

#### 4.4.4 Challenges

A thematic analysis helped to understand the challenges and concerns mentioned by the interviewees, but also by the respondents of the survey on the question if they would like to add anything. A thorough analysis of the recordings, as well as the answers of the survey led to the aggregation of four main categories that represent the challenges and concerns about the Microsoft Office 365 tools. The four categories are technical issues, trust, overload and familiarity.

##### 4.4.4.1 Technical issues

One challenge that employees from Volvo CE experience with the Office 365 tools are technical issues. One issue is for example the access time, since it takes too long to open a document from SharePoint. (Keller, Volvo CE) Another example is the search function and the general overview of SharePoint:

*“Information is too complicated to find. It is a headache to find things.”*

– Humphrey, Volvo CE

Even though connectivity is one of the advantages, it is also a challenge. If you do not have a high speed connection, everything slows down and it takes even longer to open or download a document. Moreover, leaders have to travel quite a lot and might not be connected at the airport, for example.

*“If you don't have a good high-speed connection, everything slows down. Sometimes if you are at an airport or something, [...] I don't want to connect to TeamPlace. I just want to open the file on my computer, work on it. I don't want to log in and wait for a slow airport Wi-Fi.*

*You know, sometimes when you are in a slow connectivity environment, it is a little frustrating.”* - Knight, Volvo CE

*“No one is always 100% connected for all the time.” – Humphrey, Volvo CE*

Another challenge is that Volvo Group has not enabled all parts of *Teams* yet, namely video conferencing, meeting capabilities and calling capabilities. That makes it harder to explain to end-users why they should use *Teams*, because to call someone they still need to use Skype. The purpose of *Teams* is to have everything in one place, but without those functions, the purpose is not accomplished. (Rebeling, Microsoft)

#### 4.4.4.2 Trust

Another challenge related to the technical issues is the trust perspective. The interviewees were asking themselves, if the tools are really confidential. Moreover, the question was raised who can actually see the documents or edit them. Maybe someone is changing what has just been done and how can one be certain that it is really the last document. (Dewit, Volvo CE; Humphrey, Volvo CE) It can be concluded that topics like permission rights and confidentiality are big concern that need to be addressed.

#### 4.4.4.3 Overload

In general, it can be said that there is quite a bit of confusion at the moment. (Knight, Volvo CE) This is because there is too much information in too many places. (Dewit, Volvo CE; Humphrey, Volvo CE) As Humphrey (Volvo CE) states: “It is a headache to find things.” Dewit (Volvo CE) supports this by saying that you never know where anything is and that people need to use it in a consistent way. This was also emphasized by Knight (Volvo CE) who says that different people are using different approaches to the same problem. In turn, this leads to an inconsistent way of doing things.

However, it is not only a problem that there are too many places, but that there is also too much information. Traditional tools like Violin<sup>12</sup> and e-mail overload one with information, comments one respondent in the survey, and more tools are to come. Especially since some tools have the same function, it is hard to actually choose, or rather change. As Sköldbberg (Volvo CE) says:

*“We still have Skype, so why should we chat in Teams?”*

#### 4.4.4.4 Familiarity/Understanding

One of the biggest challenge that was mentioned by every interviewee is to get familiar with the tools and understand them. Since it is a new process, there is a learning curve (Roy, Volvo CE) and Volvo Group is only in the beginning. A lot of respondents in the survey mentioned

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<sup>12</sup> Violin is the intranet at Volvo Group.

that it is quite early in the process and that it might be even too early to actually evaluate the tools.

However, at the outset is the lack of understanding. To be more specific, Douglas (Volvo CE) asks:

*“What are the capabilities and which tools are efficient? What is the right tool for the specific situation? What is the benefit of changing?”*

In the next steps come the familiarity and the adaptation period. The problem is, however, that the employees do not make an effort to get familiar. This was seen in the results for the different tools, but was also mentioned by the interviewees. Sköldbberg (Volvo CE) stated for example that it is a hurdle to get going, while Matthews (Volvo CE) said that he did not see a reason to start using the tools since no one in his team used them and therefore he did not make an effort to use them. However, he also says, that it is all about simplicity. If the tools are simplified, then people will start using them. This can be boosted by training and education (Matthews, Volvo CE) to learn how to use the tools efficiently (Humphrey, Volvo CE), which leads to the next chapter on how to overcome those challenges.

#### 4.4.5 Overcome challenges

As mentioned before, trainings would make a good start to learn how to use the tools efficiently. Several of the respondents in the survey mentioned training and education also in further comments and felt left alone when the roll-out of those tools happened. More precisely, regular training sessions as well as Face-to-Face learning sessions have been mentioned in the comments.

The interviewees agreed with further training, but gave more concrete examples on what kind of knowledge they need. For example, Douglas (Volvo CE) would like to know which tools to use in which situation or five top tips to use a tool. Sköldbberg (Volvo CE) states that if they would realize that *Teams* is better, than they would use it. One respondent from the survey also mentioned the inconsistent way of doing things, which leads to the assumption that at least within each business area, the way of doing things should be the same.

Moreover, it was mentioned that it would help if the leaders start using the tools and set a direction, where employees can follow. (Knight, Volvo CE; Roy, Volvo CE) Also, the idea of the Digital Champions is highly appreciated:

*“I kind of like the idea of having one or two champions in different teams and different sites, that really know the tools and can help people.”* – Knight, Volvo CE

Keller (Volvo CE) also emphasized that he would start using the tools as soon as his environment is using them and he feels excluded and that he cannot execute his job in a proper way.

As said before, Volvo Group is only in the beginning which is why one comment from Sköldbberg (Volvo CE) is relevant and important to mention:

*“It just needs some time.”*

Nevertheless, it is important to mention that neither the respondents nor the interviewees only see challenges in the tools. Knight (Volvo CE) sees a huge potential in them and that it is a big step forward. Several respondents in the survey commented that digital communication is the future and necessary for today's world. Especially one quote summarizes the whole situation:

*“Let's go! This needs new ways of working and a change in mind set – but let's take on the challenge.”* – Survey Participant

#### 4.5 Adaptation process

A workshop from Microsoft was visited by the author in order to understand the adaptation process of digital tools better. They state that the successful adoption of any technology requires behaviour change. That means that it is not only about learning a new app, but to learn a new way of working. Therefore, the change is about people. Del Castillo (Microsoft) says that users must decide if they want to join the journey and that this can be reached by the ADKAR model. ADKAR is an acronym for **A**wareness, **D**esire, **K**nowledge, **A**bility and **R**einforcement. (Del Castillo, Microsoft)

Awareness is about why the change is important for the company and what will happen if one does not cross the bridge. Therefore, it is necessary to make the employee understand why the change is necessary. The desire is then about the willingness to support and engage in a change. It is followed by knowledge, which means to understand how to change and involves information, training and education that is necessary. The ability is about turning the knowledge into action and reinforcement is about sustaining the change long term. (Del Castillo, Microsoft)

#### 4.6 Summary

The results show that the tools are not fully used by Volvo CE yet. There are challenges that come up with the implementation of those tools, that need to be tackled. For this Volvo CE has planned initiatives, but it needs more time and a proper change process. The workshop at Microsoft has shown that a proper change process can help to simplify the adoption of those tools. An overview of the results can be seen in Table 8. It summarizes the perception of the tools and the agreement regarding the different statements. Moreover, it shows again what communication is and what the preferred way of communication is.

What is communication for you?		Interaction	Information	Sharing	Sense of Belonging	Engagement
		12,96 %	33,90 %	17,95 %	17,24 %	17,95 %
<b>What is your preferred way of communication?</b>						
What is your preferred way of communication?		Phone (Call)	Phone (Texting)	E-Mail	Face-to-Face	Skype
		43,5 %	17,25 %	68,22 %	79,67 %	70,32 %
		Yammer	SharePoint	Teams	Other	
		2,1 %	25,64 %	21,93 %	3,7 %	
<b>Strongly Agree</b>						
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
SharePoint	I need help with using SharePoint.	7,9 %	35,49 %	30,65 %	20 %	5,96 %
	SharePoint helps me to communicate.	9,03 %	47,43 %	24,19 %	13,39 %	5,96 %
	My skills for SharePoint are good.	5,64 %	33,1 %	36,12 %	19,67 %	5,47 %
	The use of SharePoint is clear to me.	18,06 %	46,62 %	20,33 %	10,96 %	4,03 %
	I use SharePoint often.	24,2 %	46,62 %	18,05 %	8,23 %	2,9 %
Teams	I need help with using Teams.	14,35 %	33,55 %	28,06 %	15,32 %	8,71 %
	Teams helps me to communicate.	2,9 %	23,39 %	29,19 %	20,48 %	24,03 %
	My skills for Teams are good.	2,74 %	14,19 %	30 %	29,52 %	23,55 %
	The use of Teams is clear to me.	5,48 %	26,3 %	21,61 %	24,03 %	22,58 %
	I use Teams often.	4,52 %	20,16 %	22,74 %	25,16 %	27,42 %
Yammer	I need help with using Yammer.	11,45 %	29,03 %	30 %	15,65 %	13,87 %
	Yammer helps me to communicate.	0,65 %	3,39 %	24,84 %	26,61 %	44,51 %
	My skills for Yammer are good.	0,81 %	5,97 %	21,77 %	31,29 %	40,16 %
	The use of Yammer is clear to me.	1,45 %	14,35 %	19,19 %	28,06 %	36,93 %
	I use Yammer often.	0,32 %	1,61 %	12,58 %	33,06 %	52,42 %

Table 8: Overview Results

## 5. Analysis

This chapter will analyse the empirical data and the literature in order to identify similarities and differences and thus answer the research question if the tools can help leaders to communicate efficiently. The analysis starts with leadership communication and how leaders at Volvo CE perceive communication. It is then related to the Microsoft Office 365 tools and how those tools support the characteristics of communication. Subsequently, the usage of the Microsoft O365 tools at Volvo CE are discussed, as well as the challenges. Last but not least, the theory about e-leadership communication will be picked up and set in relation with the current situation at Volvo CE.

### 5.1 Leadership communication

The importance of communication is aligned for both the interviewees, as well as different authors. Statements from the literature like “leadership is communication” (Müller, 2007) to statements from the interviews that you cannot be a good leader if you cannot communicate (Knight, Volvo CE), show that they are on the same page. Since communication is quite broad and can therefore be defined individually, it is necessary to understand what communication is for the leaders at Volvo CE.

According to the results of the survey (see Figure 4: What is communication for you?) five categories were identified that represent the meaning of communication at Volvo CE, namely information, interaction, sense of belonging, engagement and sharing. The leaders as well as the literature state that face-to-face communication is still the most commonly used medium in a company. (Lipiäinen, Karjaluoto and Nevalainen, 2014) This is understandable since it is aligned with the characteristics mentioned earlier. However, as Krajčák (2019, p. 277) mentions the virtual communication changed the company environment, since managers do not have to be in the same place as their employees and the latter can get news about the company at any place and at any time. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the Microsoft Office 365 tools and how their functions fulfill the mentioned characteristics of communication.

### 5.2 Digital communication tools

According to Krajčák (2019) the Office 365 tools include features and services that can boost internal communication. Hereinafter the theoretical functions and advantages of the tools are associated with the characteristics of communication at Volvo CE in order to figure out if the tools can help leaders to communicate. To recap, the important characteristics of communication at Volvo CE are information, interaction, sense of belonging, engagement and sharing.

#### 5.2.1 SharePoint

As the name states, SharePoint is for sharing documents. Since the documents can be edited from anywhere in the world, employees from global teams can easily interact with each other (Waghmare, 2019). Moreover, SharePoint as a communication site can be used to communicate

different information and share upcoming events and news. In that way employees can stay informed and engaged. (Microsoft, 2020) This leads to the conclusion that SharePoint is an appropriate tool for **information, sharing** news and **engaging** employees. A summarized overview of SharePoint can be found in the Appendix 4.

### 5.2.2 Teams

*Teams* is strongly connected with SharePoint and acts as a hub for different functions, because it connects everything. Since SharePoint lies underneath *Teams*, it can be used for document sharing and editing. Additionally, you can chat and video-conference in *Teams*. (Rebeling, Microsoft) According to the team's needs, the structure of *Teams* can be individualized. Employees who are located in different places have the possibility to stay in close contact with each other and share information, news and tasks within *Teams*. As chats and activities are visible to the entire team, no one will be excluded and everyone has the same kind of information. That can result in a stronger integrity of the team. (Volvo Construction Equipment, 2019) Therefore, it leads to the conclusion that *Teams* works well for all communication characteristics. It enables to spread **information, to share** news, events and documents, to **interact** via channels or chats, to **engage** the whole team and create a **sense of belonging** to the team by having a transparent communication. An overview of Teams can be found in the Appendix 5.

### 5.2.3 Yammer

In comparison to *Teams*, Yammer is not team specific, but rather organization wide. Since Yammer is a social networking platform that enables employees to collaborate and connect cross-functional, it clearly shows the possibility of interacting with each other. This goes beyond their own team and enables people to connect with colleagues that they are usually not in contact with. One way to use Yammer is to share events, content, news and other information. (Waghmare, 2019) Moreover, Yammer can be used for different interests which engage employees more. Additionally, it can also be used for live meetings, as Microsoft does, which increases the sense of belonging to the whole company. In that way, employees not only feel they belong to a specific team, but rather to the whole company since they can interact and engage with anyone from the company. (Rebeling, Microsoft) To conclude, Yammer is a good tool to **share information** and news across the whole company and to enable **interaction** by two-way communication. Moreover, employees can be **more engaged** and therefore feel a **sense of belonging**. An overview of Yammer can be found in the Appendix 6.

### 5.2.4 Summary

To conclude, the tools can help leaders to communicate, since the different tools have different functions that make it easier to collaborate and share information throughout the whole company, especially when the company is globally distributed. The tools can help to create a sense of belonging, even though teams are not sitting in one location and employees can interact even with people from different departments and different locations. However, in order for the



tools to help leaders to communicate *efficiently*, the leaders need to use the full potential of the tools. According to the survey and interviews, Volvo CE is not using the full potential of the tools yet.

### 5.3 Microsoft Office 365 Tools at Volvo CE and their challenges

One indication for not using the full potential is that the usage of the tools by the leaders was quite low, as could be seen in the survey. While Teams and Yammer are quite the threshold for many of the leaders, SharePoint is used most often. However, SharePoint is rather a natural progression which is why the change process is different since the use of SharePoint is similar to TeamPlace. Moreover, TeamPlace was replaced by SharePoint, which means that the employees from Volvo Group could no longer use TeamPlace. That shows that the change process is quicker and new tools get accepted faster when there is no other choice. However, the leaders were talking about SharePoint mainly as a document library and not about the possibility to communicate. SharePoint is therefore only used as they would have used TeamPlace, instead of using all the other functions SharePoint provides.

This lack of commitment to embrace the functions and to learn more is also shown within *Teams* and Yammer. While about 46 % disagree that the use of *Teams* is clear to them, only 29 % agree to need help. The same applies for Yammer where 71 % disagree that their skills for Yammer are good, while only 40 % require help. This clearly shows that the willingness to learn is missing. However, in comparison to SharePoint the problem is that the understanding is missing as well. The interviewees mentioned several times that they do not understand the use of Teams or Yammer and how it would simplify their work. Thus, if one does not understand why they need a new tool, why would one want to learn about it?

The challenges mentioned by the interviewees are aligned with the challenges mentioned in the literature. As technology becomes more and more integrated into our daily life, it is out of the question that people distrust the security aspects of new tools (Willis, 2019) and that it was therefore mentioned as one of the challenges by the interviewees. Especially since data in such a big company are often confidential and could have extreme repercussions if a data leak would make documents public. (Hicks, 2019, p. 35) This was also highlighted by the interviewees who mentioned that they were not sure who can actually see and edit the documents. It is also understandable that technical issues are having a major impact on the usage of the tools. Who wants to use a tool that takes minutes to open up a document? Another impact of technology is the overload of information (van Wart *et al.*, 2019, p. 89). This is accompanied by the number of tools and people feeling overstrained. As every person uses the tools differently, it is also hard to follow a pattern since a new document could be pretty much anywhere.

This does not necessarily mean that the tools cannot help leaders specifically at Volvo CE to communicate. It rather means that they have to overcome their challenges in order to use the full potential of the tools. Volvo CE is going in the right direction to overcome those challenges. The first and most important step is to enable all the functions the tools have. Especially for *Teams* it is crucial and would then lead to a natural progression from Skype. The chat function in *Teams* and the possibility to have tele- and videoconferencing in one places plus the disabled function of Skype would lead to the usage of *Teams*, because they would have to.

This is accompanied by more training and demo sessions that help the leaders and employees to understand better and to get themselves familiar, which is aligned with the third step of the ADKAR model, namely “Knowledge”. (Del Castillo, Microsoft) Especially the focus on administrative assistants and thus the leaders, will have a great impact on the use of the tools.

However, the change process needs a proper plan and a structure, which for example can be reached by the ADKAR model that Microsoft is using. It helps to follow a structure where employees start to understand the need and therefore answer the question “why”. Optimally employees are willing to change and acquire knowledge through training and education. In the long term it is then important that the employees are able to apply their knowledge and continue using the tools.

#### 5.4 E-leadership communication

The literature mainly talks about the functions of the tools themselves. But, tools are only tools and in order to communicate efficiently in a virtual environment further characteristics are necessary. (Darics, 2020, p. 7) The results of the survey and interviewees show that most of the leaders still follow the traditional leadership style. This can be seen due to the highlighted use of Face-to-Face meetings and the wish to continuing it. Moreover, the missing knowledge of the tools supports the assumption of rather traditional leaders, even though they were aware that it is important to blend the communication tools. This is also stated by several authors who highlight the importance of a combination of tools, even for an e-leader. (van Wart *et al.*, 2019, p. 83) Even though, the literature covers e-leadership and its characteristics for efficient communication, the literature about digital tools and especially Microsoft O365 tools have not been set in relation to it.

The characteristics mentioned by the literature are e-communication skills, e-social skills, e-change management skills, e-team skills, e-tech savvy skills and e-trust. E-tech savvy skills are about the knowledge of the technologies (Roman *et al.*, 2019, p. 858). As the survey and interviews have shown the skills of the tools are rather low with only 39 % agreeing to have good skills in SharePoint, 17 % in *Teams* and 15 % in Yammer. This can be fulfilled with further training and awareness sessions which Volvo CE has already planned. However, this will not be enough in order to communicate efficiently. The communication then has to be clear, miscommunication has to be avoided and only the proper amount of information can be shared in order to avoid overload (e-communication skills) as stated by Roman *et al.* (2019). Moreover, the leaders need to make sure that their employees use the tools the same way and help them with the changes in their daily life (e-change management skills) (Roman *et al.*, 2019, p. 857). This also includes to motivate the team and include also the employees who are not located in the same place (e-team skills). In order to ensure this, good leader support is necessary to ensure that all employees are involved and supported (e-social skills). Last but not least, a good e-leader is responsible that the employees trust the virtual environment and that their information and documents are secure (e-trust skills). (Roman *et al.*, 2019, p. 857)

## 5.5 Summary

To conclude, the correlation of the theory as well as the empirical data shows clearly that there is the potential for the tools to support leaders to communicate, but that there is still room for Volvo CE to improve. According to their perception of communication, the tools are appropriate to fulfill those characteristics. However, the usage and knowledge about those tools is rather low. Moreover, even though the tools are quite useful it is necessary to mention that the leaders also need certain characteristics themselves in order to communicate efficiently in a virtual environment.

## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1 Main findings

This research aimed to identify whether the Microsoft Office 365 tools can help leaders to communicate efficiently in a virtual environment. Based on the intended use by Microsoft as well as supporting literature, it can be concluded that the tools can help leaders to communicate. Moreover, the characteristics of communication for Volvo CE are fulfilled with the use of those tools. All three tools enable to spread information, share news and engage employees. Additionally, *Teams* allows people to interact, as well as to create a sense of belonging in the team, while Yammer facilitates a sense of belonging in the whole organization. That is why Yammer is particularly useful for leadership communication to the whole organization, while *Teams* is rather team-specific. Especially the interaction is important since a good leader does not only need to communicate, but also needs to listen, ask the right questions and understand what is going on in order to engage employees. Due to digital communication tools it is possible for companies to communicate effectively and fast to their employees around the world and it is therefore crucial for a global company. Especially the leadership communication is relevant, since the top management defines the tone of voice of the internal communication, which is decisive for the reputation of the company. The reputation is set through earning people's trust and to engage them is important for a company.

However, there is a gap between the intended use of the tools by Microsoft and the actual use of Volvo CE. Even though the tools are all implemented (even though with some restrictions), the tools are not used to their full potential. The results show that the skills and the actual usage are rather low, as well as that there is uncertainty and confusion about the tools. Most of the respondents clearly state that they are still in the beginning of this change process and need to learn about the tools. This aspect about the learning and change process is missing the literature even though it is necessary when implementing those tools. This could be done for example with the ADKAR model that Microsoft is using. Besides the lack of knowledge, it is also necessary to address other characteristics a leader needs. Since virtual teams are harder to manage, leaders need to acquire certain skills in order to communicate efficiently in a virtual environment. That leads to the conclusion that the Microsoft Office 365 Tools can help leaders to communicate effectively in a virtual environment when fully used, but rather as a support function. In order to communicate efficiently, the leaders still need to acquire e-leader skills.

## 6.2 Further research

Further research should therefore be done in the area of e-leadership skills and how exactly those skills can be acquired in order to use digital tools more efficiently. Since this thesis focuses on the Microsoft Office 365 tools, it would also be interesting to research different digital communication tools in order to understand which tools are useful for which situation. Moreover, the thesis is limited by perspective, since only leaders have been a subject of discussion. As is known, communication is twofold and can therefore be further researched to understand the employee's perspective on those tools. The results of the thesis should be taken into consideration when implementing those tools and can lead to further research about the change process and if the ADKAR model is the right model to use. An interesting aspect would be to research how the change process should look like when implementing those tools in order to have a smooth transition. Since the COVID-19 pandemic changed the virtual environment as well, it would be interesting to see how the results for Volvo CE changed afterwards. Therefore, the same study could be replicated in a year to see the effects that COVID-19 had. Last but not least, the generalizability of the results is limited by the single case study and should be replicated in other cases in order to confirm the results.

## 6.3 Recommendation of action

When implementing new digital tools, it is important to understand that no one-size fits all. Therefore, it is crucial to understand one's own needs and demands and what characteristics need to be fulfilled. Then the appropriate tools can be chosen and implemented. During the implementation of the change process and the learning curve it is important to keep in mind, which can be done with the ADKAR model.

### 6.3.1 Awareness

The first step is to create awareness as to why the change is needed. This also leads back to the "Why" of the different tools, which was shown in the results that a lot of people do not know why to use a tool or not. It should also include the business driver or opportunities that lead to this change, but also the risks of not changing. It is necessary to make people understand why the tools are necessary and useful, in order for them to understand the change needs. This can be done for example by the internal communications team by communicating regularly about the tools in order to create awareness. An effective communications plan, effective sponsorship and the coaching by managers and supervisors are only three ways on how to build awareness. Since it was mentioned that leaders are highly relevant in the adoption of new tools, the managers need to be aware of the change first, followed by the employees.

### 6.3.2 Desire

Everyone needs to make the decision to participate in the change on their own, which is why desire is relevant because it represents the willingness to support and engage in a change. In regards of the communication consistency, openness and transparency are very important. This also includes the senior leaders, which need to represent the support of the change, interact with

their employees and be willing to answer questions. As employees follow their leaders, it is important that managers actively and visibly support the change. Therefore, managers need to be equipped as change leaders, so that they can demonstrate their own commitment in their own words, walk the talk and address their team proactively.

### 6.3.3 Knowledge

Additionally, leaders and employees need to understand how to change, which requires knowledge in form of information, training and education. One way to build knowledge is to offer training and education programs. Moreover, different resources can help to build knowledge, for example checklists, templates, online help files and scripts. SharePoint can be used to create a “Office 365-Group”, where all resources are available and which is best connected to Yammer where people can ask questions. At Volvo CE it is not only important how to use them, but also to address the security aspect, since many leaders were worried about it.

### 6.3.4 Ability

The ability is turning the acquired knowledge into action, which means to further involve leaders and employees in the digital tools. That can be done for example through further training, but also through further communication about those tools. Different campaigns which were mentioned can help to engage employees in the network, for example Yammer. Those campaigns could be for example the World Photo Day, a plastic free July, and so on. This can be orchestrated by the internal communications team in order to communicate further with the employees around the world. It could also be considered to employ a community manager or digital communications manager who is responsible for these kinds of campaigns and makes sure that the whole company feels like a community.

### 6.3.5 Reinforcement

Those campaigns also help to reinforce the change and to make sure that the change will survive for a long time. Apart from different campaigns to engage employees, different events can also be celebrated, employees can be recognized for their participation in the community and rewards can be given. Moreover, the involvement of the leaders plays a vital role in the sustainability of the tools. That is why it is necessary for the leaders to actively post, read and listen what is going on in Yammer. From asking business related questions, to welcoming new employees or sharing photos from a business trip – the opportunities are multifarious.

### 6.3.6 e-leadership skills

In order to communicate efficiently in a virtual environment, leaders should acquire e-leader characteristics, which can be for example done through a workshop. In terms of Volvo CE, the characteristics and skills could be included in the leadership communication program from Volvo CE. In that way leaders can be trained to fulfil all necessary skills to be a good e-leader.

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Volvo Construction Equipment (2020b) *Corporate Presentation*. Available at: [https://volvogroup.sharepoint.com/:p:/r/sites/unit-corporate-communications-volvo-ce/\\_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BB0711B1A-4C3E-47EF-9AE1-3F0393F605B4%7D&file=1.%20Volvo%20Construction%20Equipment%20Corporate%20Presentation%202019.pptx&action=edit&mobileredirect=true](https://volvogroup.sharepoint.com/:p:/r/sites/unit-corporate-communications-volvo-ce/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BB0711B1A-4C3E-47EF-9AE1-3F0393F605B4%7D&file=1.%20Volvo%20Construction%20Equipment%20Corporate%20Presentation%202019.pptx&action=edit&mobileredirect=true).



Volvo Group (2019) *Digital Champions*.

Volvo Group (2020) *Volvo Group presentation*. Available at: [https://volvogroup.sharepoint.com/:p:/r/sites/cs-facts-figures/\\_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B52106D74-5A75-49FA-88F7-8DE503BF9ED3%7D&file=Volvo%20Group%20presentation%202020\\_Feb.pptx&action=edit&mobileredirect=true](https://volvogroup.sharepoint.com/:p:/r/sites/cs-facts-figures/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B52106D74-5A75-49FA-88F7-8DE503BF9ED3%7D&file=Volvo%20Group%20presentation%202020_Feb.pptx&action=edit&mobileredirect=true).

Waghmare, C.D. (2019) *Beginning SharePoint Communication Sites: Creating and Managing Professional Collaborative Experiences*. Berkeley, CA: Apress.

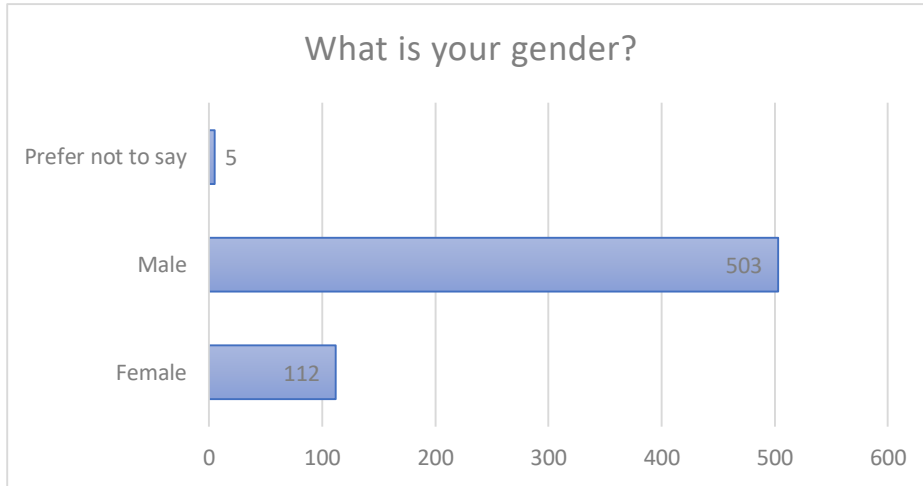
Willis, H. (2019) 'The road to digital transformation: Five questions with AvePoint's Hunter Willis', *KM World*, pp. 27–28.

Young, A.M. and Hinesly, M.D. (2014) 'Social Media Use to Enhance Internal Communication', *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 77(4), pp. 426–439. doi: 10.1177/2329490614544735

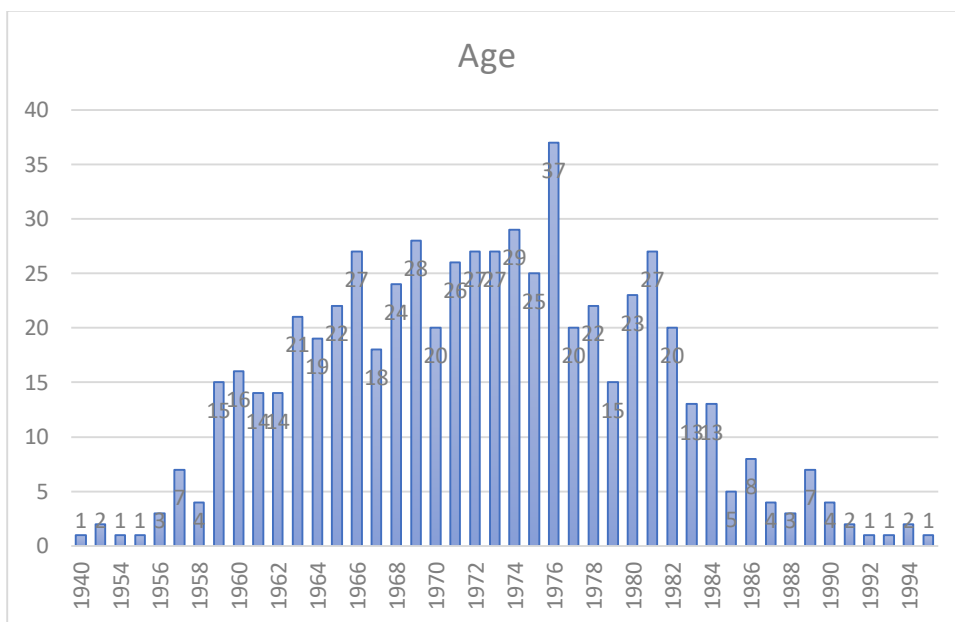
# Appendix

## Appendix 1: Survey

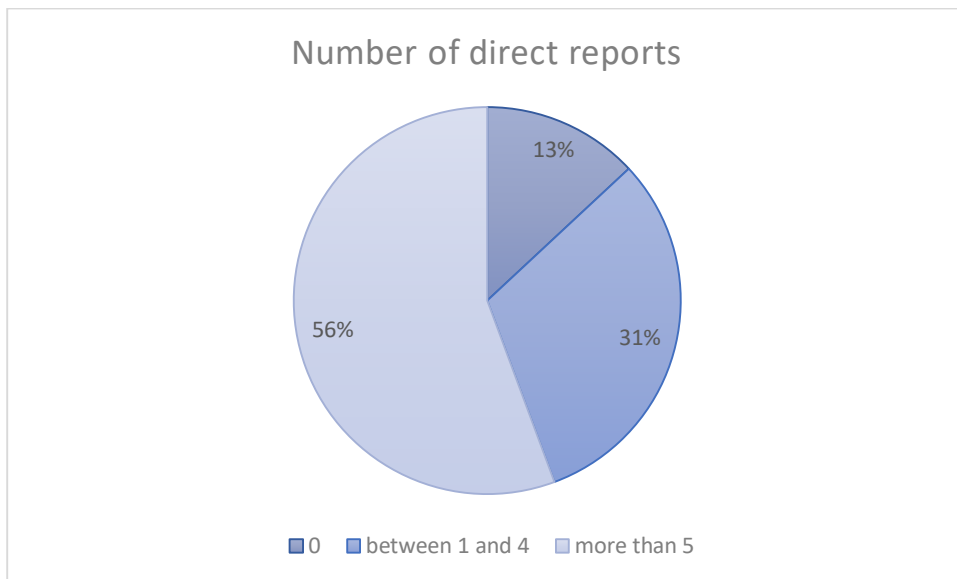
### 1. What is your gender?



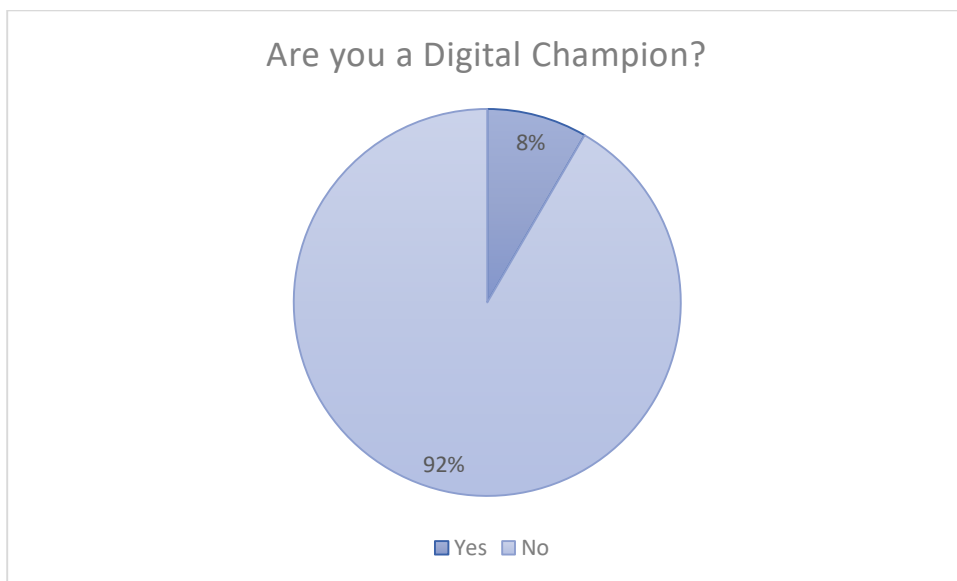
### 2. What is your age?



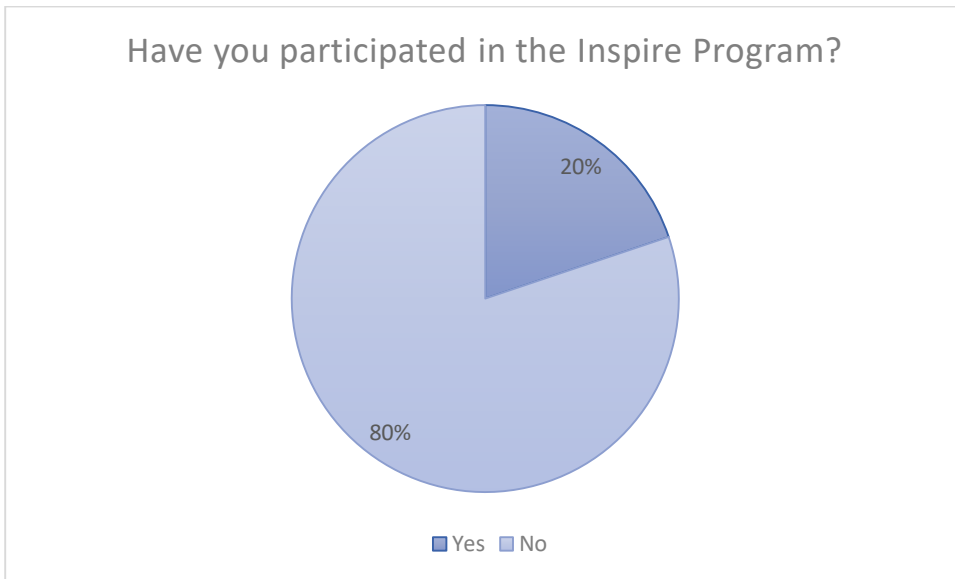
### 3. How many people report directly to you?



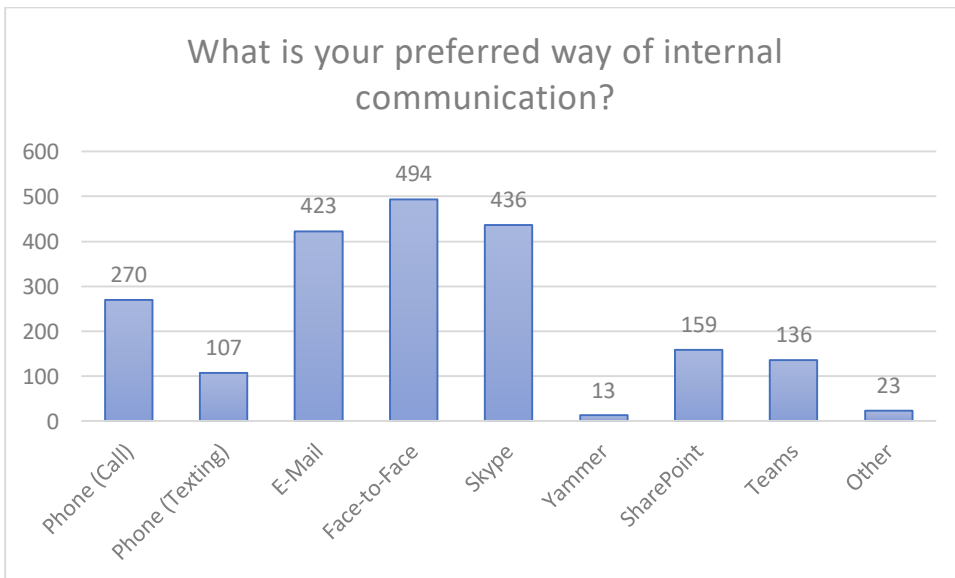
### 4. Are you part of the Digital Champions?



**5. Have you participated in the Inspire Program?**

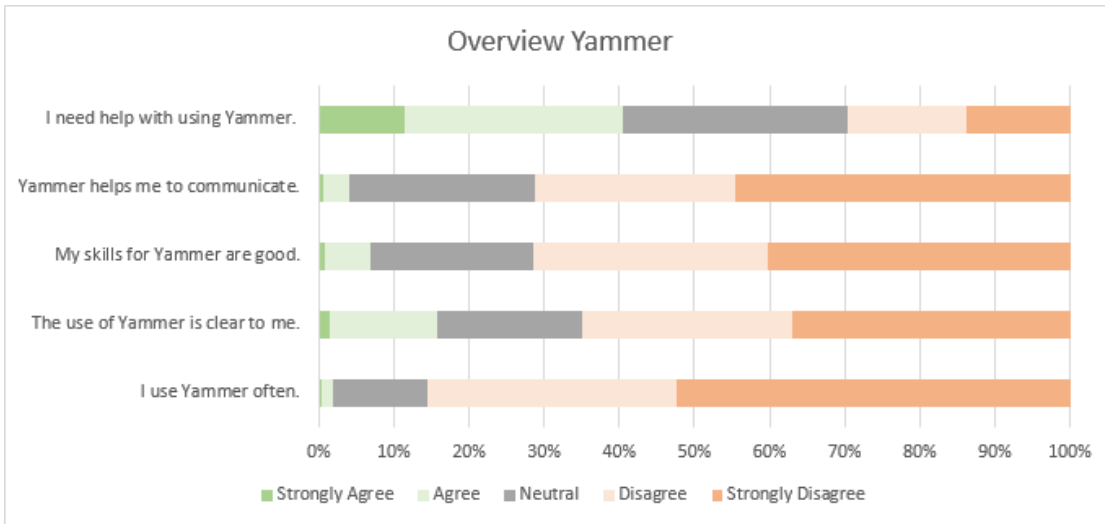


**6. What is your preferred way of communication?**



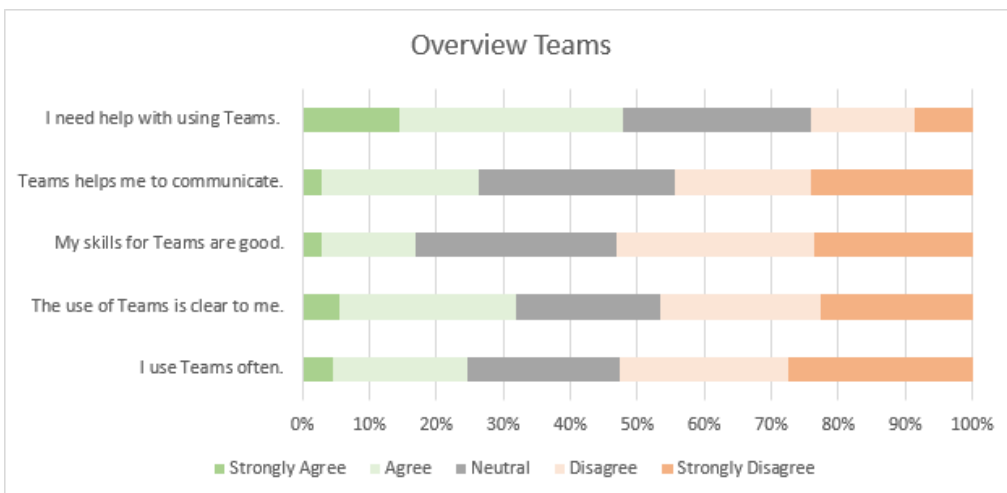
**7. Please rate the statements for the tool “Yammer”.**

- a. I use Yammer often.
- b. The use of Yammer is clear to me.
- c. My skills for Yammer are good.
- d. Yammer helps me to communicate.
- e. I need help with using Yammer.



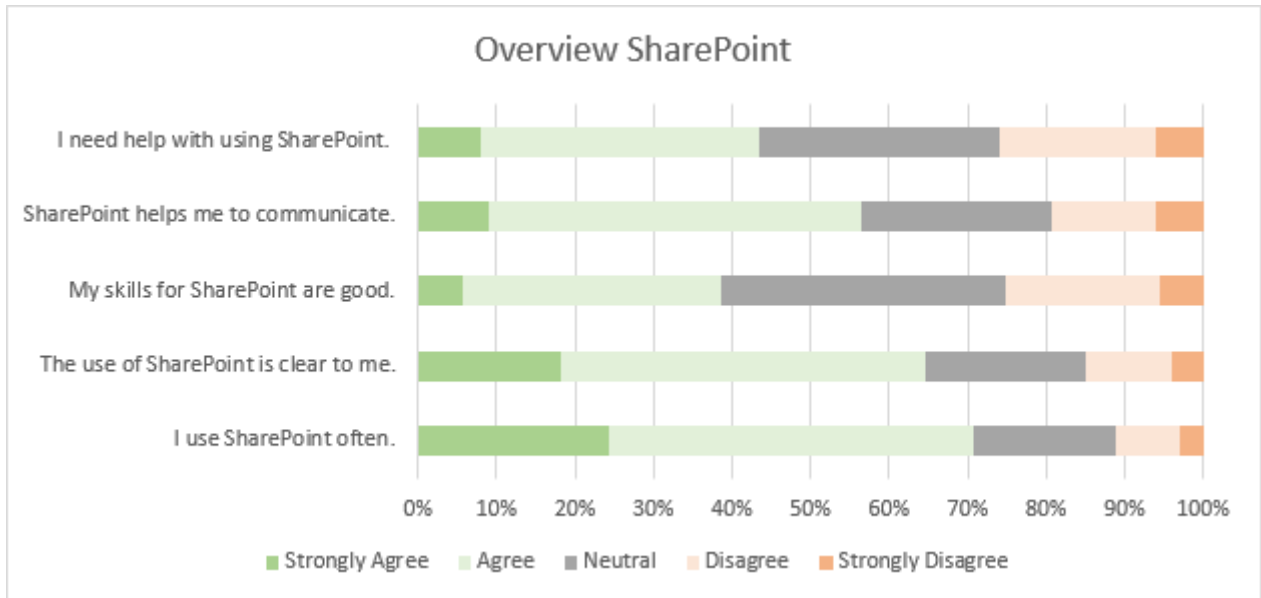
**8. Please rate the statements for the tool “Teams”.**

- a. I use Teams often.
- b. The use of Teams is clear to me.
- c. My skills for Teams are good.
- d. Teams helps me to communicate.
- e. I need help with using Teams.



**9. Please rate the statements for the tool “SharePoint”.**

- a. I use SharePoint often.
- b. The use of SharePoint is clear to me.
- c. My skills for SharePoint are good.
- d. SharePoint helps me to communicate.
- e. I need help with using SharePoint.



**Appendix 2: Interview guide**

1. Why do you communicate? Why is communication important?
2. How do you communicate currently?
3. How do you use the new tools for communication? For example, Yammer, Teams, SharePoint
4. Where do you see the opportunities with those tools?
5. Where do you see challenges in those O365 tools?
6. What could help you to overcome those challenges, so that you would communicate with those O365 tools?

### Appendix 3: Ideas for using Yammer to engage employees<sup>13</sup>

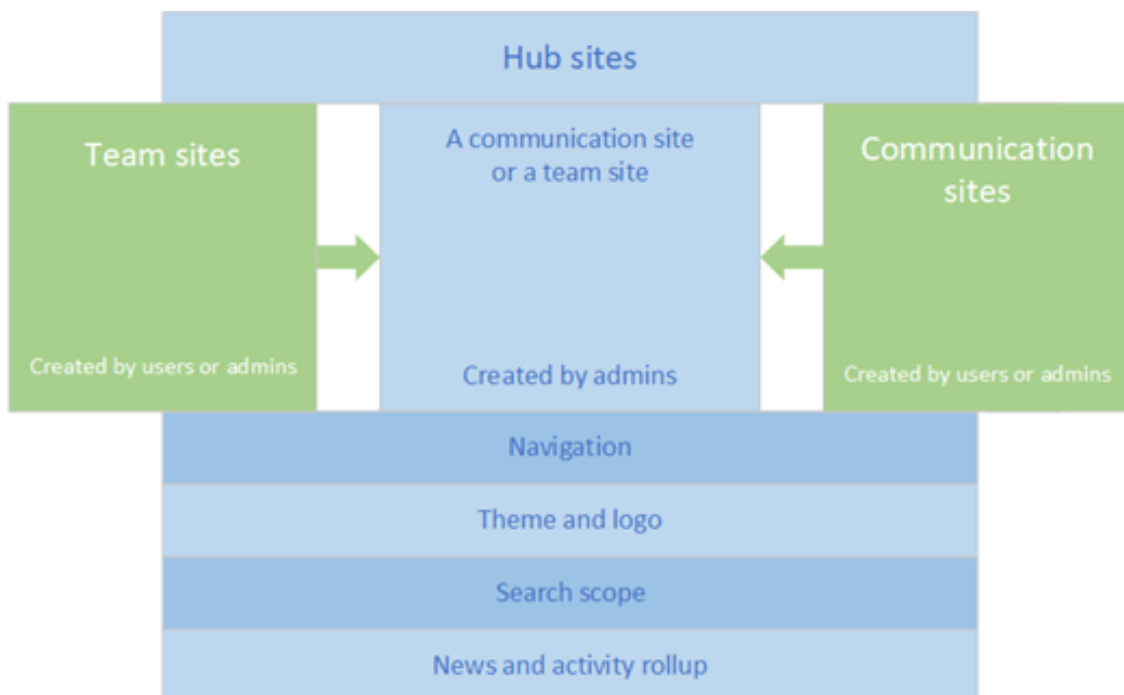
<i>Company</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Idea</i>	<i>Quotes</i>
<i>Wiley</i>	Leaders	Welcoming new employees	“That sort of connection and authenticity is very important.” “It’s leadership that results in employee engagement.”
		Posting organizational updates and milestones #BigWileySelfies → posting pictures from business trips and office visits	
<i>ANZ Australia</i>	Comm. Team	#WorldPhotographyDay or #DayInTheLifeOfWiley	“People shared photos of their co-worker and offices – simple, quick phone shots – it really conveyed a sense of community.”
	Leaders	Show authenticity and listen to employees	
<i>Consultancy company Chaucer</i>	Comm. Team	Help with conversation starter	“We can suggest conversations they may be interested in jumping into, but we can’t do the listening for them, they have to do that.”
	Leaders	Welcoming new employees and ask them to introduce themselves	“Straight away they get replies. Everyone is welcoming. Someone with the same name will point out they share the same name, that sort of thing”
<i>Medibank Australia</i>	Leaders	“Craig Chat”, where the CEO Craig Drummond communicates with employees	
<i>Bankwest</i>	Leaders	Monthly Q&A sessions with leaders on Yammer	

<sup>13</sup> Lock Lee and Dawson (2019).

## SharePoint Online (based on Microsoft, 2020)

People work together whenever they need to, wherever they are. SharePoint allows you to share and manage content, knowledge, and applications across the organization and beyond, securely.

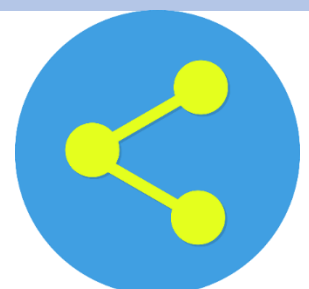
Team Site	Communication Site	Hub Site
<p><b>Collaborate</b></p> <p>When you want to create a place where the members of a work group or project team can work together on project deliverables, plan an event, track status, or exchange ideas, you want a team site. Team sites are connected by default to an Office 365 group to deliver a full range of communication and collaboration tools, including Microsoft Teams and Planner.</p>	<p><b>Communicate</b></p> <p>When you want to broadcast a message, tell a story, share content for viewing (but not editing), or showcase services or people, you want a communication site. Communication site owners often want to include an engagement component - for example an "Ask Business Development" area on a site communicating information about business development. This is a great place to connect a Yammer group.</p>	<p><b>Connect</b></p> <p>When you want to create a shared experience for a family of related sites—to discover related content by rolling up site activity and news, organize related sites so that they share a common navigation, and apply a common look and feel.</p>



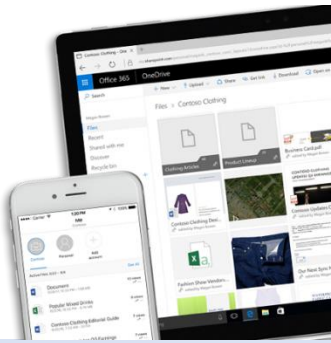
### Tips ‘n Tricks

#### Save and share your files

Use SharePoint for collaboration with your team members, including managing and sharing files or folders—from team sites or intranet sites across your organization. Share files, data, news, and resources. Collaborate effortlessly and securely with people inside and outside your organization, across PCs, Macs, and mobile devices.





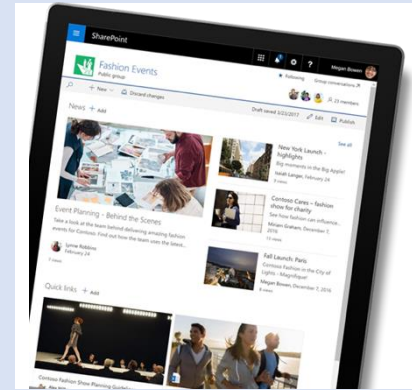


## Stay in the know on the go

Do your best work, wherever you are, with the SharePoint mobile apps for Android™, iOS®, and Windows devices. Collaborate effortlessly with secure access to important sites, files, data, and applications. Stay in-the-know with news from all your teams. And publish news to your teams right from your device while you're on-the-go.

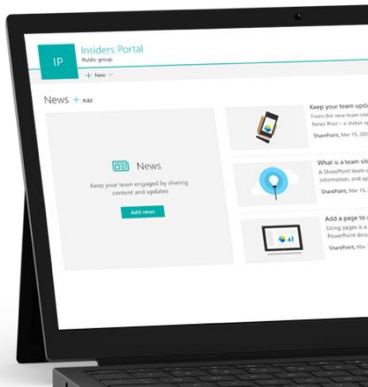
## Communication sites

You can create communication sites in seconds. They are perfect for internal cross-company campaigns, weekly and monthly reports or status updates, product launches, events and more. And by default, your communication site looks great on the web, on PC or Mac, on mobile browsers, and in the SharePoint mobile app. You focus more on your message, the layout and organization of content, and worry less about how they look in Web and mobile.



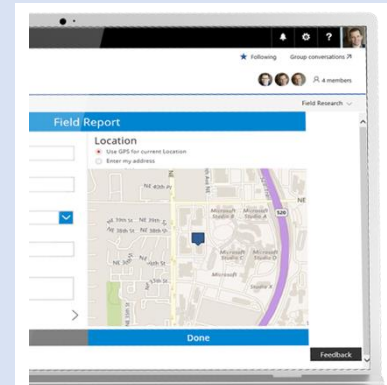
## Read and create news

Read recent articles from sites you're following and frequently visit along with sites suggested for you. By default, News is at the top of your team site. It includes a space where you can begin adding your stories too. You can quickly create eye-catching posts like announcements, people news, status updates, and more that can include graphics and rich formatting. You can also read and create news on the go with the go with the SharePoint mobile app.



## Collect and manage data

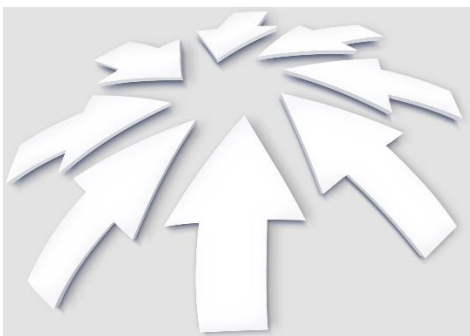
While we love Excel, it's sometimes so much better gathering and sharing data in SharePoint. SharePoint lists enable you and your teams to gather, track, and share information. With SharePoint lists (and libraries), Microsoft PowerApps, and Flow, you can create rich digital experiences with forms, workflows– business apps for every device. Of course, you can connect data from Excel to a SharePoint list, too.



## Hubs Sites

SharePoint hub sites are used to organize families of team sites and communication sites together. SharePoint hub sites help you organize your intranet by connecting and organizing sites based on project, department, division, region, etc. making it easier to:

- Discover related content such as news and other site activities.
- Apply common navigation, branding, and site structure across associated sites.
- Search across all associated sites.





## Training

Detailed Introduction into SharePoint: <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-gb/sharepoint/sharepoint-online>

SharePoint Online Video Training: <https://support.office.com/en-us/article/sharepoint-online-video-training-cb8ef501-84db-4427-ac77-ec2009fb8e23?ui=en-US&rs=en-001&ad=US>

## Teams (based on Microsoft, 2020)

Microsoft Teams is your hub for teamwork in Microsoft 365. Teams is a chat-based workspace that brings together chat, meetings, calling, and Office 365, all-in-one. And it's built on the trust of Microsoft security and compliance that's crucial for today's businesses.

Teams delivers in four core areas to create a digital workspace for high-performing teams: Communicate, Collaborate, Customize, and Work with confidence.

### Why Teams?

Microsoft Teams extends the capabilities of Skype for Business, bringing together chat, meetings, calling, collaboration, app integration, and file storage into a single interface. This new central hub for teamwork can help streamline the way users get things done, improving user satisfaction and accelerating business outcomes. We're continually expanding Teams' capabilities to enable you to communicate and collaborate in new ways, break down organizational and geographical barriers, and drive efficiency in process and decision making. Learn more about the benefits of upgrading to Teams in the Forrester report: [Total Economic Impact of Microsoft Teams](#).

Skype for Business Online will be retired on July 31, 2021, after which it will no longer be accessible or supported. While the Skype for Business Online service will be fully functional through July 31, 2021, Microsoft encourages customers to begin their upgrade journey today, allowing ample time to complete their upgrade prior to the retirement date.

Communicate	Collaborate	Customize
Teams meets the communication needs of a diverse workforce by providing a complete meeting and calling solution, including chat, voice, and video. You can use Teams for informal 1:1 or group chats by using the Teams desktop or web client or directly on your phone if you're on the go. You can also have an open conversation in a channel so people can share information in a transparent way to accelerate decision-making. It's easy to move from a chat into a face-to-face meeting, helping you to bridge geographical barriers.	When it comes to collaboration, the deep integration of Teams with Office 365 enables today's multigenerational workforce to use the Office apps they are familiar with—Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, SharePoint, Planner, even Power BI—right within the context of Teams. Teams brings all the Office 365 services together so that you can easily share and co-author files.	With Teams, you no longer need to jump between Office 365 apps and services. Because Teams is the hub for all the services and tools your teams use on a day-to-day basis, you can customize Teams with tabs, connectors, and bots to include the apps and services you need, including common third-party apps. Teams is an extensible platform that enables you to build apps and integrate with business processes.

Teams	Channels	Chat
<p>Teams can be dynamic for project-based work (for example, launching a product), as well as ongoing, to reflect the internal structure of your organization (for example, departments and office locations). Conversations, files, and notes across team channels are only visible to members of the team.</p>	<p>Channels are dedicated sections within a team that keep conversations organized by specific topics, projects, or disciplines. Files that you share in a channel (on the Files tab) are stored in SharePoint. Team channels are places where everyone on the team can openly have conversations. Channels are most valuable when extended with apps that include tabs, connectors, and bots that increase their value to the members of the team.</p>	<p>While channel conversations are public, chats are just between you and someone else (or a group of people). Think of them like instant messages in other messaging apps. Private chats are only visible to the chat participants. You start one-on-one and group chats the same way: by selecting New chat at the top of Teams. Once in a chat, you'll be able to send messages that include files, links, emoji, stickers, and gifs. There are many formatting options for chat messages, including options for highlighting, font size, lists, and more.</p>

## Teams Live Events

With Teams live events, users in your organization can broadcast video and meeting content to large online audiences.

Microsoft 365 live events bring live video streaming to a new level, encouraging connection throughout the entire engagement lifecycle with attendees before, during, and after live events. You can create a live event wherever your audience, team, or community resides, using Microsoft Stream, Teams, or Yammer.

## Tips'n'Tricks

### Add fun to your chat

Let your team's sense of the humour and personality shine. Share emoji's, memes, and stickers.

Here's how:

- Select Teams, and then select a channel.
- Select 😊 in your compose message box /text editor.
- Select a sticker, enter a fun caption and select Done.

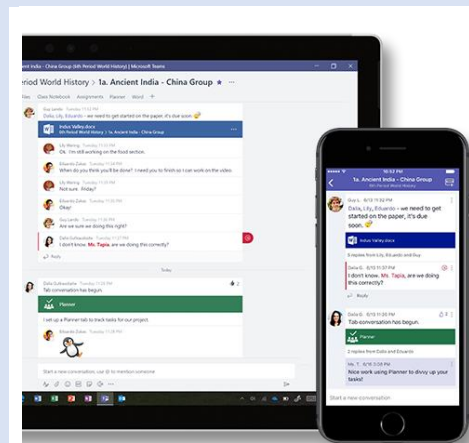
@mention co-workers before you send the message, and then press Enter.

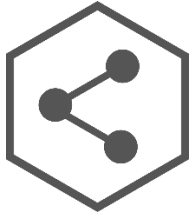


### Get everyone on-board

- If your team isn't taking off the way you want, use **@team** and **@channel** to get everybody's attention, and kick off your next team communication within Teams (like planning a Team's training event).
- Encourage members to turn on channel notifications so that they are notified when a new message is posted to a channel (right click on a channel name and choose *"Follow this channel"*).
- Be personally active in channels.

Forward emails to a channel to continue discussions in Teams.





### **Make collaborating on files a breeze**

Files that you share in a channel are stored in your team's SharePoint folder. Files that you share in a private or group conversation are stored in your OneDrive for Business folder and are shared with the people in that conversation.

### **Work on Office documents in Teams**

Office 365 apps like Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Planner, Stream, PowerBI and more are built in, so you can manage all your content across these apps without having to leave Teams.



## **Training**

**Interactive Demo:** <https://teamsdemo.office.com>

**Microsoft Teams video training:** <https://support.office.com/en-us/article/microsoft-teams-video-training-4f108e54-240b-4351-8084-b1089f0d21d7?omkt=en-001&ui=en-US&rs=en-001&ad=US>

**Instructor led-training for Microsoft Teams:** <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoftteams/instructor-led-training-teams-landing-page>

**Detailed introduction to Teams:** <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-gb/MicrosoftTeams/teams-overview>

## Appendix 6: Yammer Overview

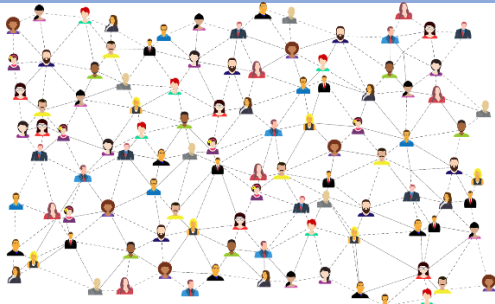
### Yammer (based on Microsoft, 2020)

Yammer is a company's enterprise social network, a private and secure online environment. Use Yammer to discuss ideas, share updates, and crowdsource answers from co-workers around the globe. Yammer gives your team a faster, smarter way to connect and collaborate across Volvo. Yammer is extremely intuitive and easy to use. It's here to help you form connections across the company.

### Why Yammer?

- Ask questions and get quick answers even if you don't know who has the answer.
- Save time by preventing redundant or duplicate work.
- Meet co-workers who share your interests and bring relevant expertise.
- Share news and announcements with the people who need to know.
- Discuss major decisions and prepare for change.
- Solicit opinions and ideas from across the company.
- Coordinate work between different projects and teams across the organization.
- Gain visibility from leaders and insight on what's happening where.
- Stay connected on-the-go with Yammer mobile apps.
- And/or include company-specific use cases.
- Improve teamwork and communication across departments.
- Prevent redundancies and duplicate work.
- Connect dispersed workers and teams.
- Reduce email clutter and the need for meetings.
- Share great ideas and best practices.

### Tips'n'Tricks

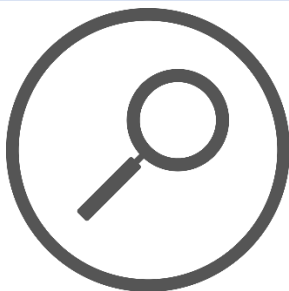


#### Create community

Share insights and new ideas within communities in Yammer. Groups provide an open space for conversations, updates, and more

#### Search for answers and experts

Think that something may have been shared already? You can search for experts and conversations to find answers and context to make faster decisions.



#### Search for people and information

Yammer uses information from across Office 365 to deliver personalized search results based on your interests and interactions at the company. Find experts, conversations, communities and files that stop you from duplicating work.



### **Share and discuss topics of interest**

Yammer makes it easy to engage with your colleagues and keep the conversation going wherever you are. Your Yammer inbox lets you view, prioritize, and manage what's most relevant to you. Notifications and priority settings let you tackle the most important messages and announcements from across your groups.



### **Discover your network's knowledge**

Your Yammer discovery feed surfaces people, information, and groups that may be interesting to you based on who you work with and what you are working on. Using the intelligence of Microsoft Graph, the Yammer discovery feed is the smarter way to keep up to date on what's happening across your network.

### **Training**



Detailed Introduction to Yammer: <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/yammer/yammer-landing-page>