

# Practices to involve employees in the strategy process

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**ABSTRACT, Companies that include employees in the strategy process perform better than companies that don't. However, for large companies it is hard to involve all the appropriate employees in the strategy process. This paper provides an answer to the question; what practices can be used to involve employees in the different phases of the strategy process? The practices that can be used in the analysis phase are: consultative participation, employee involvement teams and social media jam; in the formulation phase: employee involvement, social media jam and employee involvement; and in the implementation phase: employee involvement teams, social media jam and informal participation. Based on these results, this paper will offer clear suggestions for practitioners and contribute to the literature interested in strategy processes in larger organizations.**

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## **Keywords**

Strategy, process, employee, involvement, practices, participation.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

It has long been known that companies that involve employees in the strategy process have a higher improvement in firm performance than companies that don't. (Floyd & Wooldridge, 1990) The reasons are logical; if employees agree with the strategy they helped develop, they are more willing to participate in and understand the change process. Because information and knowledge in a company is dispersed, employees add a lot to the strategy process. (Childers, Hatfield, Sarason & Tegarden, 2005). According to Kleinknecht (2014) involving employees in the strategy process will prevent companies from taking excessive risks. In the financial crisis firms having employees involved in the strategy process lost less than those that didn't. Overall it is seen as beneficial for a company to involve employees in the strategy process, however large companies find it difficult to involve all employees in the strategy process in an efficient and effective manner. For small companies, involving employees in the strategy process seems to be easy. A small company with 10 employees can have a general meeting and discuss strategy. However, bigger companies struggle involving all employees in their strategy process. Nevertheless, IBM showed that with their 'innovation jam' there are possibilities to involve employees on a large scale. (Bjelland & Wood, 2008). While a discussion is a good way to involve employees in a small company, this method will not work in a large company.

In recent years strategy literature has shifted the focus to strategy as practice. According to Whittington (1996, p. 732) strategy as practice is about *'how managers and consultants act and interact in the whole strategy-making sequence. Thus the practice perspective is concerned with managerial activity, how managers do strategy'*. While strategy as practice literature doesn't provide information on how to include employees in the process, but mainly on what the managers do, in non-strategy literature this is more common. Decision making literature provides some clues. Black & Gregersen (1997) showed for example how teachers could generate solutions and choose the best afterwards for example. By comparing the literature on employee involvement in decision making, this paper aims to form a framework of practices that can be used to involve employees in the strategy process. The goal of this paper is to provide companies a framework, that will give an overview of practices they can use to involve employees in different phases of the strategy process. Gaps in the framework will need to be filled with new theories. Because of new technology, such as smartphones and tablets new ways of including employees can be developed and added to the framework. (Berry, 2006) The focus of this paper is on large companies with over 100 employees, because mainly for big companies it's hard to involve their employees in the strategy process.

According to De Wit & Meyer (2010, p. 5) the strategy process is about *'the how, who and when of strategy: how is, and should, strategy be made, analysed, dreamt-up, formulated, implemented, changed and controlled; who is involved; and when do the necessary activities take place?'* The strategy process will be split up in three phases; strategic analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation because the different phases require different practices for employee involvement. The research goal of this study is to find out how companies can involve their employees in the strategy process in an efficient and effective manner, by comparing literature on employee participation in non-strategy literature and form a framework linking these to the phases in the strategy process. Therefore the research question is; What practices can be used to involve employees in the different phases of the strategy process? To answer the research question, the following sub questions need to be answered first: (SQ1) What practices can be used to

involve employees in the strategic analysis phase of the strategy process; (SQ2) What practices can be used to involve employees in the strategy formulation phase of the strategy process; (SQ3) What practices can be used to involve employees in the strategy implementation phase of the strategy process. To answer the research question and sub questions, theories and practices, on strategy and employee involvement in decision making will be used. Since there is currently no framework on how to involve employees in the strategy process, this paper will provide academic relevance to the field of strategy. This paper is practically relevant by providing managers a framework they can use to involve employees in the strategy process. The second chapter contains a theoretical framework on employee involvement in decision making and the strategy process. The third chapter will contain the method used to come to answers to the sub questions and research question. The fourth chapter covers the results of the research. Chapter five contains the discussion and chapter six contains the conclusion. Chapter seven covers my acknowledgements. Chapter eight contains the references.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework used in this paper contains a paragraph on the strategy process and a paragraph on the practices used to involve employees in decision making. The last paragraph summarizes the theory on the strategy process and the theory on practices to involve employees in decision making and describes how the literature can be linked.

### 2.1 The strategy process

There is a lot of literature describing the strategy process. De Wit & Meyer (2010) describe the strategic reasoning process. This model contains four steps: Identifying, diagnosing, conceiving and realizing. The problem with a lot of strategy models, according to De Wit & Meyer (2010, p. 56), is that *'strategist do not always reason in this step-by-step fashion'*. Another example is the competitive forces strategy model. This model focuses on the exploitation of market power (Porter, 1996) *'In the competitive forces model, five industry-level forces – entry barriers, threat of substitution, bargaining power of buyers, bargaining power of suppliers, and rivalry among industry incumbents – determine the inherent profit potential of an industry.'* (Porter, 1996, p. 179) *'Pioneered by Porter (1980), the competitive forces approach views the essence of competitive strategy formulation as relating a company to its environment.'* (Porter, 1996, p. 179) Like the strategic reasoning process and the competitive forces model, there are a lot of models describing the strategy process, though not one of them is considered the golden standard at the moment. However, according to De Wit & Meyer (2010) most of them contain, whatever the order in, an analysis phase, a formulation phase and an implementation phase. There are other phases that are common in literature, but they overlap with these phases. There are many other models with different descriptions of the phases in the strategy process, but this paper uses these three because they are present in almost every model. The analysis phase of the strategy process is about analysing the internal and external environment of the company. In this phase, the analysis will identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunity's and threats of both the internal and external environment. The analysis of the external environment contains information on the power of suppliers and buyers, rivals, substitution threats and barriers for market entry. In the strategy formulation phase of the strategy process, the results of the analysis phase will be used to formulate a strategy. In this phase it is important to think about what the future state of the company looks like. Usually a mission statement will be formulated to describe the future of the

company. However, this statement alone doesn't provide clear guidance for the company. So objectives will have to be formulated to reach the desired state. When the objectives are clear, a strategy can be formulated to achieve them. When the strategy is formulated, it has to be accepted by the board of directors for it to be implemented. In the implementation phase the strategy developed in the formulation phase will be executed. The most common implementation problems that occur in this phase are; *'1 Implementation took more time than originally allocated by 92 percent. 2 Major problems surfaced which had not been identified earlier by 88 percent. 3 Coordination of implementation activities was not effective enough by 75 percent. 4 Competing activities distracted attention from implementing this decision by 83 percent. 5 Key implementation tasks and activities were not sufficiently defined by 71 percent. 6 Information systems used to monitor implementation were inadequate by 71 percent.'*( Al -ghamdi, 1998, p. 324 ) Monitoring this process is important to see if the new strategy results in achieving the objectives, set in the formulation phase. Even though these phases are presented in this order, the strategy process is usually a going forward and backward between phases. For example, when a strategy implementation does not result in objectives being met, a new strategy will have to be developed. (Mintzberg, 2003)

## 2.2 Practices to involve employees in decision making

This paragraph contains a review of literature on practices to involve employees in decision making. Practices that are similar are grouped in the same sub-paragraph. It is expected that all of these practices can be used in the strategy process, however, it is also expected that not every practice is useful in every strategy phase.

### 2.2.1 Consultative participation

Consultative participation is a method where employees engage in a long-term direct participation in decision making. *'Consultative participation refers to situations where employees engage in long-term, formal, and direct participation'* (Cotton, Vollrath, Froggatt, Lengnick-Hall & Jennings, 1988, p. 12). This method is usually used when the focus is on job issues. *'The content of the PDM is focused on job issues.'* (Cotton et al., 1988, p. 12). With this method, employees don't have a lot of power. According to Cotton et al.(1988, p. 12) *'Employees give their opinions, but typically they do not have a veto or complete decision-making power.'* The employees don't have decision making powers in a consultative participation practice. However, this method can be great to receive feedback from employees on a topic (Cotton et al., 1988).

### 2.2.2 Employee ownership

Employee ownership is an indirect method where employees engage in a long-term indirect participation in decision making. *'Employee ownership can be classified as formal and indirect PDM. It is formal because the employee has the formal "right" to participate as any stockholder does. It is indirect because although most of these organizations are owned by employees, they are operated conventionally'* (Cotton et al., 1988, p. 15). Like all stakeholders employees that hold shares have the right to vote about decisions in annual meetings, or present new plans to management. Its indirect because though employees, like other shareholders, have power, the manager still makes the decisions. With this practice however, the employees can select the board, which selects the manager and has power and control over his decisions. (Cotton et al., 1988)

### 2.2.3 Representative participation

Representative participation is another indirect participation method for employees. *'Employees do not participate directly, but through representatives elected to a governing council or, perhaps, through representatives on the board of directors.'* (Cotton et al., 1988, p. 15). The construction is similar to employee ownership. Employees don't have direct control over decisions, but they elect board members, or a governing council. Even though it is similar to ownership, the power of the employees is lower with this method, because they have no real authority, like owners do. *'Although the access of most employees is not high, the power of the representatives can vary from having a vote on the board of directors to a purely advisory voice on a workers' council'* (Cotton et al., 1988, p. 15). (Cotton et al., 1988)

### 2.2.4 Informal participation

According to Cotton et al., (1988) informal participation is a method for indirect employee participation. *'Many organizations do not have formally established participatory systems or groups involved in the decision-making process. Yet, PDM may still occur informally through the interpersonal relationships between managers and subordinates. council'* (Cotton et al., 1988, p. 14). Employees talk with their managers about what they think is going wrong or well. The managers employees speak with talk with their managers that make the decisions. Since employees don't have direct influence this approach is indirect. However, it makes sure that all employees can be heard. This method of participation is not just a good way to let go of your thoughts on what is going wrong, it's also great for generating new ideas. The managers that hear from the employees focus on the common thoughts and tell this to the manager in charge. Of course they can also inform them about clever ideas.(Cotton et al., 1988)

### 2.2.5 Employee involvement

According to Lawler (1994), employee involvement practices are a combination of measures that allow employees to participate in decision making. *'the most important overall focus in the work on employee involvement concerns locating decisions at the lowest level in the organization.'* (Lawler, 1994, p. 70) It requires a company to be designed in a way that employees can take control over the decisions. According to Lawler(1994, p. 70) *'In addition, it is argued that the individuals or teams should be given the power, information, and knowledge they need to work autonomously or independently of management control and direction. The job of management is seen as one of preparing the individuals or teams to function in an autonomous manner. Management is an enabler, culture setter, and supporter rather than a director of employee action.'* They further need the power to act on the information and be rewarded by their performance. According to Lawler (1994, p. 72) *'This ties directly into the idea of employees being responsible for performance and customer satisfaction.'* (Lawler, 1994)

### 2.2.6 Employee involvement teams

Employee involvement teams are teams, formed by volunteering employees. This method is also called delegative participation.(Cabrera, Ortega &Cabrera,2003) According to Cabrera, Ortega & Cabrera( 2003, p. 44) *'delegative participation, on the other hand, gives employees increased responsibility and autonomy'* The employees get paid like they normally would, but help with decision making. Teams are formed by putting random employees from different departments together, no matter what job they have. Managers and normal employees are equal in teams. The teams have to work on solutions to problems that the companies have, or decide on new strategies. Leana, Ahlbrandt & Murrell (1992, p. 865) write as

example "Teams had an average of 12 participants, with membership ranging from 10 to 15. Projects undertaken by the teams focused on such issues as safety, material usage, paper recycling, and material flow." (Leana, Ahlbrandt & Murrell, 1992)

### 2.2.7 Work councils and employee board level representation

Work councils or employee board level representation is a practice for employees to influence the company's decision making. "Works councils are mechanisms for employee participation in (or at least a critical scrutiny of) decisions at company or establishment level. They exist extensively in France, Germany, the Benelux countries, Austria, Switzerland, Finland and Sweden (Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick, 2010). A potentially more powerful procedure for participation in decision-making is employee board level representation, where employee representatives have seats on the executive or supervisory boards of companies." (Kleinknecht, 2014, p. 59) EBLR doesn't allow all employees to actively take decisions, but it allows employees to elect board members.

### 2.2.8 Social media jam

Social media jam is a practice to include all employees in a discussion. On internet or intranet there is a forum where all employees can post threats and comment on them. By allowing all employees to be involved in the discussions this is a very direct way to involve employees. Barclays have shown us that this practice works great to involve all employees in decision making. (Whittington, 2015) IBM showed that with this practice they got a lot of new innovative ideas to improve the company. (Bjelland & Wood, 2008) Even though employees don't have the official authority to make decisions, they can all vote for certain plans on the forum. By making decisions democratic, the employees gain power in the company.

## 2.3 Summary of literature

The strategy process consists of three phases; an analysis phase, a formulation phase and an implementation phase. In these phases multiple practices can be used to involve employees. These practices are: consultative participation, employee ownership, representative participation, informal participation, employee involvement, employee involvement teams, work councils and employee board level representation and finally social media jam. It is expected that not all practices can be used in every phase. Since in the analysis phase a lot of information is required, it is expected that practices like the social media jam, employee involvement teams, informal participation and consultative participation will be used because they can provide this. In the formulation phase, decisions will need to be made. Representative participation, employee ownership, work councils and employee board level representation and employee involvement are expected to be used, because these practices give employees the power to control decisions. In the implementation phase the focus is to control the implementation. It is expected that social media jam and informal participation practices are used to help and inform the employees.

## 3. METHOD

In this section the methods to come to an answer to the sub questions and the research question will be described. First the literature on the strategy process and the practices to involve employees in decision making will be combined, by looking at what is required in each phase of the strategy process and then linking the practices to these phases that have a fit. After the literature research provides a framework of practices linked to the strategy phases, an in-depth interview will be conducted with an experienced manager of a big company to validate the

framework. Aware of the restrictions of only one interview, this paper nevertheless aims to explore how the framework is validated in practice. After the interview the framework will be adjusted according to the findings in the in-depth interview. When the framework is validated the sub questions and the research question can be answered.

## 4. RESULTS

This section will cover the results, by first presenting what practices are linked the strategy phases and why. Subsequently the outcomes of the in-depth interview with a manager of a big company is presented. Finally a table, with the validated practices that can be used per strategy phase of the strategy process, is presented.

### 4.1 Practices to involve employees in the analysis phase of the strategy process

Because in the analysis phase it's important to acquire information on the company's internal and external environment, not all practices can be used. To find out what the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunity's and threats of both the internal and external environment are consultative participation and informal participation can be used. These practice works in the analysis phase because employees have the knowledge that is needed for the analysis. By giving their opinion on the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunity's and threats of both the internal and external environment the analysis can be made. Another practice that can be used for the analysis phase is the social media jam. Employees can interact with each other on a forum to discuss the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunity's and threats of both the internal and external environment. Because everyone is involved in these discussions, a lot of information will be shared, resulting in a diverse analysis. The analysis of the external environment contains information on the power of suppliers and buyers, rivals, substitution threats and barriers for market entry. This part of the analysis phase in the strategy process can be analysed by employee involvement teams. Teams can be formed to report on specific parts of the external environment. Because employees from different departments have different knowledge on these topics, forming a team will combine their knowledge to get a good analysis of the external environment. For every topic; power of suppliers and buyers, rivals, substitution threats and barriers for market entry, a new team can be formed.

### 4.2 Practices to involve employees in the formulation phase of the strategy process

In the strategy formulation phase of the strategy process, the results of the analysis phase will be used to formulate a strategy. In order for employees to be involved employee involvement practices can be implemented. When employees have the same information and skills as the managers, they can think about what the strategy should look like. Another practice that can be used is representative participation or employee involvement teams. With these practices employees are helping to develop the strategy. Representative participation allows employees to communicate directly with top management, while involvement teams can be formed to develop the objectives, or the overall strategy. In this phase of the strategy process objectives will have to be formulated to reach the desired state. Informal participation or a social media jam can be used to set the objectives. Employees can tell managers what they think should be objectives to reach the desired state by informal participation. The social media jam practice, allows all employees to communicate with each other about the objectives, provide new objectives or even vote for them. When the strategy is formulated, it has to be approved by the stakeholders. When the

stakeholders don't agree with the strategy it won't be implemented. Employees can be involved in this part of the process by employee ownership or employee board level representation. When employees own shares of the company they can accept the new strategy or demand a new strategy to be formulated if they don't agree with it. Employees board level representation can be used to make sure the voice of the employees is heard by the board. The board can of course veto or accept the strategy, giving the employees more power and involvement in the strategy process.

### **4.3 Practices to involve employees in the implementation phase of the strategy process**

In the implementation phase, the strategy developed in the formulation phase will be executed. It is important to get everyone to work according to the new strategy and not fall back on previous work methods. Informal participation is a great way to involve employees in this process. If employees struggle with some parts of the strategy they can tell their managers and get help. If a lot of employees struggle with the problems a social media jam can provide a solution. Allowing employees to help each other, provide answers to questions will really help in the implementation phase. Monitoring this process is important to see if the new strategy results in achieving the objectives, set in the formulation phase. In order to monitor the progress employee involvement teams can be formed, to check if objectives are achieved. For every objective a separate employee involvement team can be formed. Representative participation can be used to let employees thoughts on the new strategy be discussed with the board. Together with a work council, these practices make sure that employees are taken care of in the implementation phase.

### **4.4 In-depth interview with a manager of a big company.**

In my interview with Tom Groen, HR manager at Imtech, I asked him to tell me what he thought about every practice I suggested to use in each strategy phase. I also asked him what practices he would use to involve employees that I didn't write about.

#### *4.4.1 Comments on practices used in the analysis phase of the strategy process*

On the practices in the analysis phase of the strategy process Groen commented on consultative participation that he thought it would be a good way to inform managers on what the employees are thinking. However, Groen preferred to combine this with practices like appraisals that are already in practice. When every six months employees would get an appraisal the manager could ask employees also about topics relevant for the analysis phase.

Informal participation would be a good way to inform managers about what the employees were thinking. However, Groen said that managers usually don't have time for informal interviews, or don't act on information they receive during informal interviews. He didn't think this would be very successful method to gain information in the analysis phase.

The social media jam was by far the best solution to involve all employees in the analysis phase. Groen really likes this practice because its interactive. It's a great way to let employees communicate with each other. He also likes that employees can really see that they provide something, because others respond to it. When you have an idea and you tell your boss about it, you don't know what's going to happen with it. With the social media jam practice employees can see that their ideas will be used.

Employee involvement teams are also a great way to get good results in the analysis phase, according to Groen, however not all employees can be selected for this. As an example he said a

receptionist couldn't add a lot to a team when it comes to areas where great expertise is required. To conclude he was positive about employee involvement teams, however, the selection of employees needs to be precise. He also mentioned that in practice nobody has time, so that if you want to commit people to this practice you'll need to make sure they have the time to get involved. (T. Groen, personal communication, June 15, 2015)

#### *4.4.2 Comments on practices used in the formulation phase of the strategy process*

On the practices in the formulation phase of the strategy process he commented on employee involvement that it was crucial for the process. Although not all information can be shared, still transparency is a key factor to setting the right objectives. Although information sharing is easier to implement than knowledge sharing, both are seen as beneficial for the formulation phase. He did say there could be some issues with this practice, for example when a certain department needs to be shut down, the employees that work there can't really objectively participate in making that decision.

Employee involvement teams are a good way to involve employees in setting objectives. Team selection and time to participate remain an issue for this practice. He liked how employees from different departments would come together, resulting in new insights. You could for example, also assign multiple teams on the same subject to see if they come up with different strategies or objectives and pick the best one or vote for it by using the social media jam.

Informal participation would be a good way to inform managers about what the employees were thinking. However, he said that managers usually don't have time for informal interviews, or don't act on information they receive during informal interviews. He didn't think this would be very successful method to gain information or provide objectives in the formulation phase.

Social media jam is a great way to let employees vote for the direction the company should be going. Not only can employees discuss the objectives or strategies on this platform, they can also vote. By allowing the employees to vote for the objectives or strategy, they really participate in decision making.

Representative participation, employee ownership and employee board level representation are not really a great way to involve employees in the strategy process. Groen said that the strategy process should be a cooperation between employees and managers. Representative participation, employee ownership and employee board level representation usually leads to two sides in a company, where the employees and the managers want something else it becomes a battle for power, while the energy of employees and managers should be to focus on cooperating and finding a great strategy to help the company forward. (T. Groen, personal communication, June 15, 2015)

#### *4.4.3 Comments on practices used in the implementation phase of the strategy process*

Informal participation is important in this phase because employees have a lot of questions. However this is very time consuming. Groen preferred a weekly meeting with a department to talk about how it's going and to provide feedback for the entire department or team. This will cost less time, and provide great help for employees. By addressing issues that employees face, others also learn the solution which they can apply if they come across a similar problem.

Work councils and representative participation are not great measures to achieve a good implementation. As Groen mentioned earlier in the interview, the strategy process should be a cooperation between employees and managers. Representative

participation or work councils usually lead to two sides in a company. When the employees and the managers want something else it becomes a battle for power, while the energy of employees and managers should be to focus on cooperating and making sure the strategy implementation is successful.

Social media jam is a great practice that allows employees to help others with problems they face. Because everyone will benefit from a solution to a problem many people have, this is a great way to share information and leads to a better and faster implementation.

Employee involvement teams are a great way to way to help control the implementation phase, however team selection and time to participate remain an issue for this practice. Groen said even though the employee involvement teams provide more information in the other steps they can still be used to control and test if objectives are being met and think about solutions. (T. Groen, personal communication, June 15, 2015)

#### 4.4.4 Comments on what other practices can be used to involve employees in the strategy process

Tom Groen advised in the interview to use practices that are already in place, like appraisals. When you decided on your strategy or objectives you want to make it visual for employees to see how their department is doing. Regular feedback sessions are key to keep everyone on the same page, especially when the results are not as expected. Showing progress on monitors can really be a motivation for employees to keep working, when one department is falling behind for example. He also suggested using a company magazine or email could be a great way to communicate with employees about issues they are having with the objectives or new strategies. He also suggested that planning a day with a selected group of employees could be a great way to involve employees in decision making. They could form groups of around 15 people and brainstorm about strategy, and at the end of the day present their solution to the top management. (T. Groen, personal communication, June 15, 2015)

### 4.5 Validated practices that can be used in different phases of the strategy process.

Following the validation of the framework, by interviewing Tom Groen, the results of this validation are presented in table 1. The practices in the table are those, that Groen validated to be applicable in practice. Because Groen didn't think the other selected practices can be used in the strategy process, those are left out of this table. Groen's suggestions for practices are also not included in this table, they will be a part of the discussion.

Strategy phase	Validated practices that can be used to involve employees in the strategy process
Analysis	Consultative participation Employee involvement teams Social media jam
Formulation	Employee involvement Social media jam Employee involvement teams
Implementation	Employee involvement teams Informal participation Social media jam

**Table 1. Summary of validated practices for each phase of the strategy process**

## 5. DISCUSSION

The findings in this paper add to the literature of strategy. The practices that were validated were not associated with employee involvement in the strategy process before. The consultative participation, employee involvement teams, social media jam, employee involvement and informal participation practices were not linked to the phases of the strategy process. This paper therefore adds to the literature of strategy and provides new insights on how to involve employees in the strategy process.

### 5.1 Limitations and future research

In this section the limitations of this paper and future research propositions will be discussed. Only one manager reviewed these practices. To increase the reliability others are encouraged to validate this paper by interviewing more managers. By interviewing managers, the framework of practices can be better validated. By interviewing more managers, suggested practices by Tom Groen, and other managers, can be validated as well. By interviewing more managers other practices can be reviewed and added to the framework. Future research should also focus on current practices used by companies. A review of current practices common in companies can help develop new practices that are easier to implement, making the framework more practical. Another limitation is that this paper didn't research the practicality of the framework, by testing it in a real company that was developing a strategy. Future research will have to test if this framework can be applied in a company that is starting the strategy process. Another limitation is that this study only focuses on the positive effects of employee participation in the strategy process, there might also be negative effects. As Tom Groen stated in the interview no one has time to participate in these practices, so stress might play a significant role. Future research will have to validate this proposition. Finally the strategy process is, only in my theory, divided in three phases. Every strategy model is different, and the reality might be even different from those models.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The sub questions and research question can be answered, since the framework of practices is validated by a manager.

The first sub question is; (SQ1)What practices can be used to involve employees in the strategic analysis phase of the strategy process? The practices that can be used to involve employees in the analysis phase are: consultative participation, employee involvement teams and social media jam.

The second sub question is; (SQ2)What practices can be used to involve employees in the strategy formulation phase of the strategy process? The practices that can be used to involve employees in the formulation phase are: employee involvement, social media jam and employee involvement teams.

The third sub question is; (SQ3)What practices can be used to involve employees in the strategy implementation phase of the strategy process? The practices that can be used to involve employees in the implementation phase are: employee involvement teams, informal participation and social media jam

Now that the sub questions are answered, the research question can be answered; What practices can be used to involve employees in the different phases of the strategy process? The practices that can be used in the different phases are consultative participation, employee involvement teams and social media jam for the analysis phase, employee involvement, social media jam and employee involvement teams for the formulation phase, employee involvement teams, social media jam and informal participation for the implementation phase.

## 6.1 Practical implications

This paper provides practical implications for companies. When companies want to develop a new strategy they should use this framework to involve employees in the strategy process. For each phase there are validated practices that can be used to involve employees in the strategy process. Since the benefits of involving employees in the strategy process are beyond doubt, this framework provides a great tool for managers.

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