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[COPING WITH STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION: A CHALLENGE?]

Keywords: strategic management, strategy, strategy implementation, strategy execution, strategy realization, implementation approaches

Preface

This Master's thesis graduation assignment is the final phase of my study programme Business Administration, with the track Innovation & Entrepreneurship. This paper allowed me to bring the knowledge that I have gained during the courses of the Bachelor's Programme and Master's Programme in practice.

The research has been conducted under the supervision of Dr. ir. J. Kraaijenbrink, as the first supervisor of the University of Twente and Dr. R.P.A. Loohuis MBA, as second supervisor of University of Twente. Hereby, I would like to thank both supervisors for their support and supervision, especially to Dr. ir. J. Kraaijenbrink as my first supervisor, during the thesis.

Further, I wish to thank the 25 interviewees who participated in my research. Special thanks to the managing directors of these five organisations who gave me the opportunity to conduct the interviews within the organisations.

Enschede, July 2015

E.M. Tiemersma

Management summary

Several researches show that organisations are not successful in implementing their formulated strategies, therefore it can be suggested that strategy implementation is a challenge for organisations. Academic literature describes several frameworks and models for strategy implementation. However, academic literature provides limited information about which strategy implementation approaches are actually used by (manufacturing) organisations in practice. For this reason, the goal of this research has been to map the approaches that manufacturing organisations actually use for strategy implementation and the challenges which organisations face when doing so. Finally, an overall aim has been to develop a roadmap for strategy implementation.

For this research, five established medium-sized, i.e. 50 – 249 employees, manufacturing organisations have been investigated. In total, 25 semi-structured interviews with lower/non-management, middle management and upper management employees have been conducted. A coding technique has been used to analyse the gathered interview data.

The results show that two organisations declared that they use a specific approach for strategy implementation. One organisation uses an operational plan as implementation approach, and another organisation uses information sessions to implement their strategy. However, both approaches do not match with strategy implementation approaches which have been described in the academic literature. Moreover, two organisations use the Balanced Scorecard approach of Kaplan & Norton (1996). The organisations have determined KPIs, divided into four disciplines, to support the strategy implementation and therefore match with the Balanced Scorecard approach. The other three organisations do not use a specific approach for strategy implementation, i.e. there is no established procedure or the organisations do not take specific steps for implementing their strategy.

This paper discusses possible reasons that no approaches, except the BSC approach, from the literature have been used by manufacturing organisations to implement their strategy. The paper suggests two possible reasons for this: the amateurism within (manufacturing) organisations regarding strategy implementation and the bustle within organisations.

Furthermore, this research provides suggestions, i.e. recommendations, for a roadmap for strategy implementation. One suggestion is that there should be developed a roadmap which serves as a steering mechanism which systematically guides and monitors employees to achieve the determined objectives. Another suggestion is that the roadmap, or approach, should contribute to the clearness of objectives, personal targets, and resources, which are available for achieving the objectives. In addition, an approach should provide feedback if the agreed objectives and personal contribution have been delivered by the employees. Moreover, the time dimension is also an element where

value can be added. Managers, and employees, should reserve more time for strategy implementation and then primarily reserve time to research and discover the approaches mentioned in the academic literature. Altogether, an approach should provide employees systematically knowledge and steering about how to implement the strategy – whereby communication between different levels within the organisation is an important aspect – and the approach should provide personal feedback.

List of abbreviations

et al.   et alii – and others

etc.   et cetera – and the others

e.g.   exempli gratia – for example

cf.   confer – compared with

i.e.   id est – that is

BSC   Balanced Scorecard

CSR   Corporate Social Responsibility

HR   Human Resources

KPI   Key Performance Indicator

R&D   Research and Development

SBU   Strategic Business Unit

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Statement of original authorship

I, Ewout M. Tiemersma, hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial proportions of material which have been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at University of Twente or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgements is made in the thesis.

E.M. Tiemersma

July, 2015

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1. Introduction

1.1 Situation and complication in the Strategic Management field

According to the literature, strategy can be divided into two parts, namely the strategy generation/formulation part and the strategy implementation/execution part (Dobni, 2003; Guth & MacMillan, 1986; Hrebiniak, 2006; Kraaijenbrink, 2015). However, the line between these two parts is blurry. Leonardi (2015) stated that the "very technologies that are essential for implementing strategy also shape its making" (p. 20). In other words, strategy formulation and strategy implementation are not two distinct sets of activities which occur in a specific sequence (Leonardi, 2015). Hrebiniak (2006) stated that the literature provides abound information about prerequisites of good strategy formulation. Furthermore, Hrebiniak (2006) stated that "a vast array of planning models and techniques have been paraded before managers over the years, and managers for the most part understand them and know how to use them effectively" (p. 12). In addition, Alexander (1985) mentioned that majority of the strategic management literature has been on the actual content of the strategy being formulated. In other words, the formulation, i.e. generation, of strategy has already been widely addressed in the literature. However, Hrebiniak (2006) declared that "without effective implementation, no business strategy can succeed" (p. 12). For instance, Allio (2005) found that 57 per cent of firms were not succeeded at implementing strategic initiatives according to a survey of 276 managers of manufacturing organisations. Another example is the research of The Economist (2013), this research showed that 44 per cent of the surveyed generated strategies have never been implemented by manufacturing organisations. Altogether, it can be suggested that the strategy implementation is a challenge, especially for manufacturing organisations. The factors which influence the implementation, the obstacles and problems which occur with implementing strategy, and several implementation frameworks have already been described in the literature. For instance, Alamsjah (2011) described several factors which influence the strategy implementation, e.g. clarity of strategy, organisational structure, managing change, top management involvement, people's competencies, communication, degree of uncertainty in environment, corporate culture, people's commitment, and performance management are the factors which influence strategy implementation. Moreover, several authors described multiple obstacles and problems which possible occur with implementing strategy. For instance, Okumus (2003) explained that implementation taking more time than planned, lack of coordination, insufficient support from other levels of management, and poor communication are obstacles for strategy implementation. Furthermore, researchers have developed several frameworks for strategy implementation. For instance, the strategy implementation 7s framework of Waterman et al. (1980) where seven factors should be aligned for successful strategy implementation. Another example of

an implementation framework is the process oriented closed loop management system of Kaplan and Norton (2008), which exists of five stages for successful strategy implementation. In other words, these previous mentioned points have all been widely acknowledged in the literature. However, in the literature is limited information available about which approaches, which are suggested by several books and articles in the literature, are actually used in practice by organisations for implementing their strategy. In other words, there is limited systemic knowledge about how organisations go about implementing their strategy, which consists of several aspects. There is limited systemic knowledge about: firstly, the approaches organisations actually use for strategy implementation, secondly, the advantages and disadvantages of these approaches according to the organisations, and thirdly the challenges organisations face when implementing strategy. Altogether, any practical insight about how the organisation actually implement their strategy has not been acknowledged in the literature – which possibly explain the above mentioned high fail rates. This is peculiar, because both practical and academic experience indicate that decisions made in implementing strategy have substantial impact on organisational performance (Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1984).

1.2 Research Goal

The goal of this research is to map the approaches that manufacturing organisations use for strategy implementation process and the challenges which organisations face when doing so, with as overall aim to develop a roadmap for strategy implementation.

1.3 Research Questions

Research question:

Which approach can established manufacturing organisations use to effectively implement strategy?

Explanation of the core variables (see section 'theoretical framework' for a detailed explanation)*:*

1. The definition of strategy is "a unique way of sustainable value creation" (Kraaijenbrink, 2015, p. 18).

2. Strategy implementation refers to "a dynamic, iterative and complex process, which is comprised of a series of decisions and activities by managers and employees – affected by a number of interrelated and external factors – to turn strategic plans into reality in order to achieve strategic objectives" (Yang et al., 2008, p. 6).

3. Approach refers to "actions intended to deal with a problem or situation" (Oxford Dictionaries). For clarification, the paper defines a strategy implementation approach as predefined procedures, steps or way to implement strategy.

4. The definition of a manufacturing organisation is: "Any business that uses components, parts or raw materials to make a finished good" (Oxford Dictionaries).

5. The definition of an established organisation is: "Set up a firm permanently, cause to be accepted or recognized" (Oxford Dictionaries). In other words, an established organisation is an organisation which is already on the market for some time.

6. Effectively refers to "prepared for use or action; in operation or in force" (Oxford Dictionaries). In other words, effective refers to what organisations actually use in practice and what are the advantages and disadvantages of these approaches.

There should be researched multiple aspects to answer the research question. Firstly, the paper should map the several approaches described in the academic literature to provide an overview of the strategy implementation approaches which already have been developed by academic researchers. Secondly, the paper should provide insight about which approaches organisations actually use for strategy implementation to be able to check if these approaches match with approaches described in the academic literature. Thirdly, the term effectively should be researched, by determining the advantages and the disadvantages of the used approaches and the challenges which organisations face when implementing the strategy, to develop an effective strategy implementation roadmap. Therefore, the next sub research questions can be formulated:

1. Which strategy implementation approaches are already developed in the literature?
2. Which approaches are actually used by established manufacturing organisations?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of these approaches?
4. What are the challenges organisations face when implementing their (business) strategy?

1.4 Outline of the paper

The paper starts with the theoretical framework, which discusses the evolution in strategy implementation literature, definitions of strategy implementation, key factors of strategy implementation, key obstacles, challenges and problems of strategy implementation, and approaches to strategy implementation. After the theoretical framework section, the methodology of this research has been discussed. The methodology section has been followed by the analysis, which exists of two parts; a within case analysis and a cross case analysis. The paper ends with a conclusion and discussion.

As described, the next section describes the theoretical framework of this paper. The section starts with a citation report and follows by definitions of strategy implementation. Further, the section describes the key factors, obstacles, challenges and problems of strategy implementation. The section ends with an overview of the strategy implementation approaches.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Evolution in strategy implementation literature

As stated in the introduction, there is no shortage of (scientific) literature within the field of strategy implementation and strategy in general. To get an overview of the strategic management literature, a citation report analysis has been conducted, see table 1 and table 2. The analysis has been conducted on the website www.webofknowledge.com and by use of Publish of Perish – which uses Google Scholar – with two search terms, namely strategy implementation and strategy execution, because both terms have been used in the literature for the same topic, namely strategy implementation. There have been searched on title from the years 1945 till 2000 and from 2001 till 2015. It could be suggested, with use of both search terms, that the amount of published papers - using Web of Knowledge – have been increased after the year 2000, see figure 1 and 2, and same applies for the amount of published papers and books – using Google Scholar, see figure 3 and 4. It can be suggested that the field of strategy implementation/execution is a trending topic – because of the increasing amount of articles and books – and has received more attention from in the academic research last years.

Search for strategy implementation	
Topic (searched on title)	**Results**
Strategy implementation	
2001 - 2015	1507
1945 - 2000	546
Total (1945 - 2015)	2053
Most cited literature (100 times or more)	17
Strategy execution	
2001 - 2015	114
1945 - 2000	37
Total (1945 - 2015)	151
Most cited in literature (100 times or more)	0

Table 1: Citation report "strategy implementation" and "strategy execution". Source: www.webofknowledge.com.
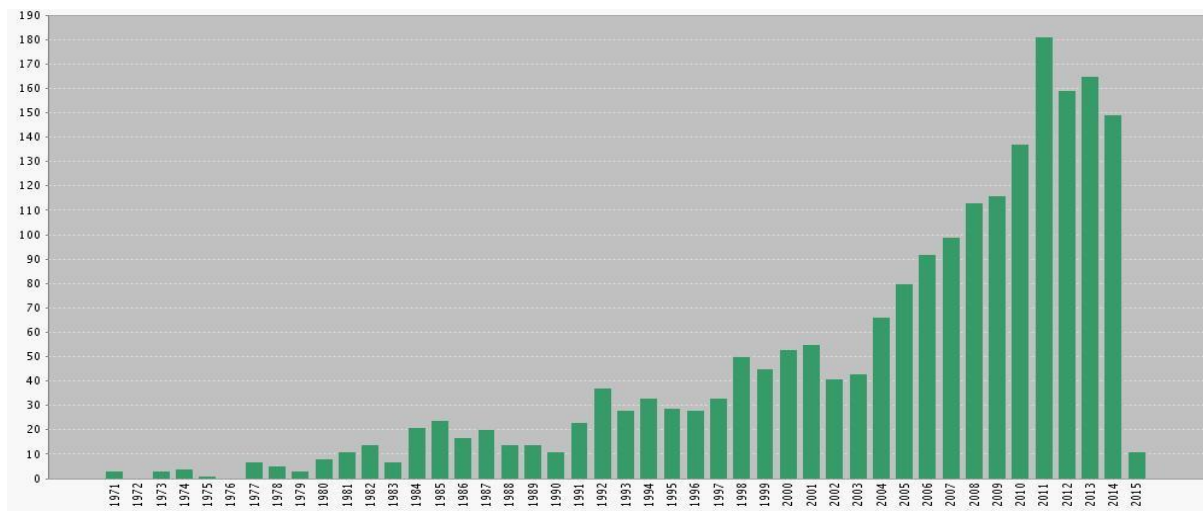
Figure 1: Published items "strategy implementation" in each year (1971 – 2015). Source: www.webofknowledge.com.
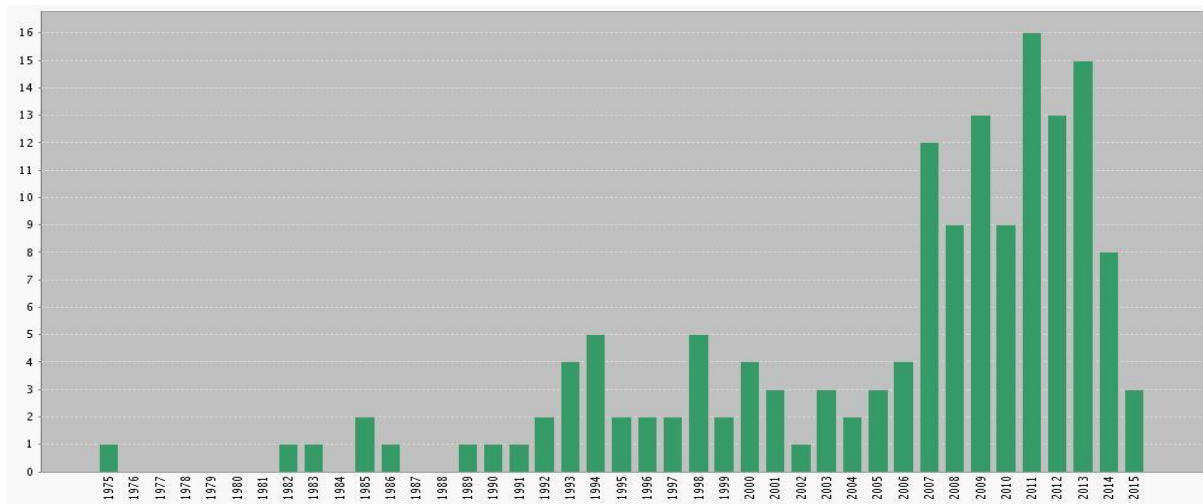
Figure 2: Published items "strategy execution" in each year (1975 – 2015). Source: www.webofknowledge.com.

Search for strategy implementation	
Topic (searched on title)	**Results**
Strategy implementation	
2001 - 2015	4261
1945 - 2000	1982
Total (1945 - 2015)	6243
Most cited literature (100 times or more)	77
Strategy execution	
2001 - 2015	553
1945 - 2000	78
Total (1945 - 2015)	631
Most cited in literature (100 times or more)	13

Table 2: Citation report "strategy implementation" and "strategy execution". Source: Harzing's Publish of Perish: Google Scholar.
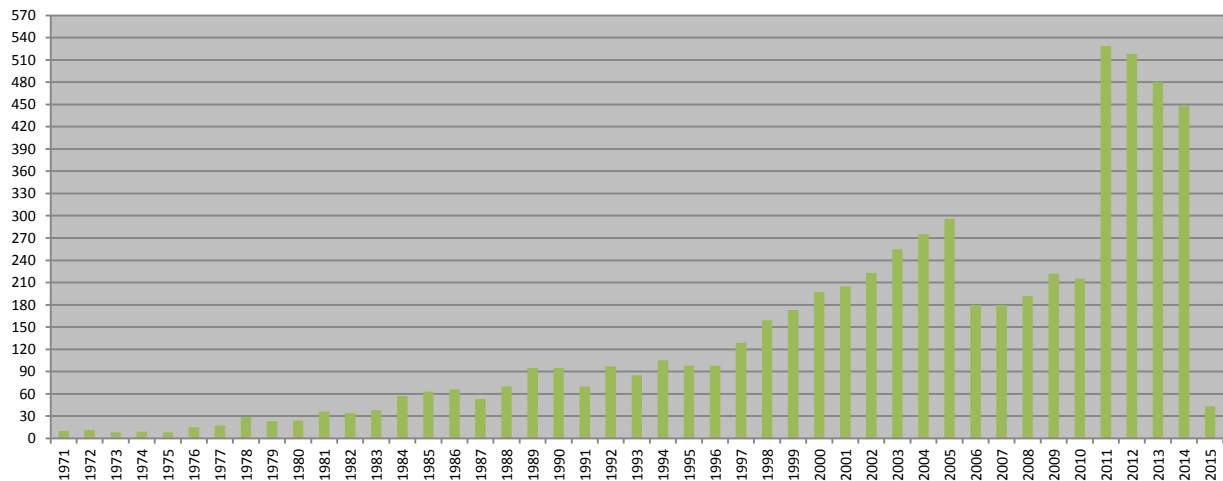
Figure 3: Published items "strategy implementation" in each year (1971 – 2015). Source: Harzing's Publish of Perish, Google Scholar.
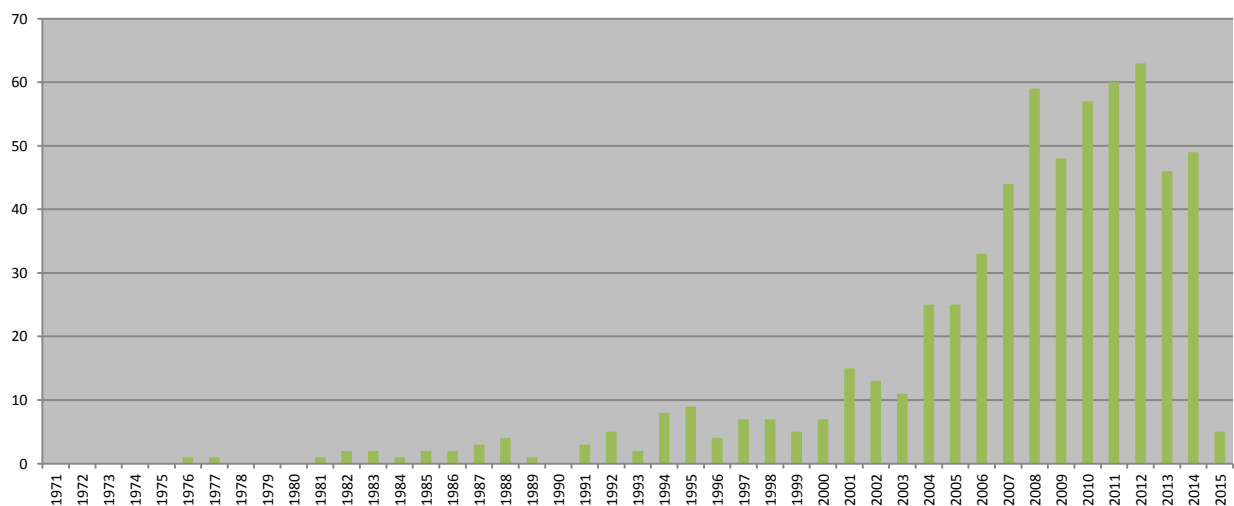
Figure 4: Published items "strategy execution" in each year (1971 – 2015). Source: Harzing's Publish of Perish, Google Scholar.

There are several well-known researchers in the field of strategy implementation. According to the citation report analysis, the most important articles, i.e. researchers who have the most citation on their published work, in the field of strategy implementation are: Waterman et al. (1983), Nutt (1983/1989), Bourgeois and Brodwin (1984), Gupta and Govindarajan (1984), Hambrick and Cannella (1989), Floyd and Wooldridge (1992), Noble (1999), Okumus (2003), and Hrebiniak (1985/2006). These authors wrote several papers about the topic strategy implementation. The most trending subjects within the topic strategy implementation are: key factors, i.e. levers, for strategy implementation, challenges, i.e. obstacles, of strategy implementation, roles of executors in the strategy implementation process, potential strategy implementation problems and approaches to strategy implementation. Table 3 provides a brief description of these most cited articles to obtain an overview of the key topics within the topic strategy implementation.

Furthermore, Yuang et al. (2008) wrote a review paper about the factors influencing strategy implementation. In this paper the researchers review the factors "that enable or impede effective strategy implementation and survey the state-of-art in this domain" (p. 2).

Article	Overview	Contribution
Waterman et al. (1980)	The article proposes a framework for organisational though and has claimed that the relationship between structure, systems, subordinate goals, style, staff, skills and strategy affects effective organisational change.	A framework for implementing strategy, the 7S framework.
Nutt (1983)	The article has taken the position that implementation prospects improve when the strategy planning process is linked to implementation and when an implementation approach is tailored to fit the internal environment of an organisation.	Considers a range of implementation techniques and power approaches for a variety of planning situations
Bourgeois and Brodwin (1984)	The authors consider 5 process models of implementation – commander, change, collaborative, cultural and crescive. Two fundamental variables appear to characterize these different views, shifting continuously from the commander to the crescive model. The variables are, first, a shift from centralized to decentralized decision-making for both strategy development and implementation and, second, an increasing blurring of the distinction between 'thinkers' and 'doers'.	Draws attention to an area that has traditionally been treated as merely an activity following formulation. This article serves to synthesize advances in the study of implementation, structured around these five models.
Gupta and Govindarajan (1984)	The authors researched the strategy formulation and implementation at level of divisions or Strategic Business Units (SBUs). The article has taken the position that general managers with greater marketing/sales experience, greater willingness to take risk and greater tolerance for ambiguity will make a greater contribution to effectiveness of strategy implementation.	The article reveals that, at the level instead of organisation as a whole, greater marketing/sales experience, greater willingness to take risk and greater tolerance for ambiguity on the part of SBU general manager contribute to the effectiveness of the SBUs.
Nutt (1986)	This study examined implementation tactics used by managers in making planned changes by profiling 91 case studies. Therefore, the article examined, with help of the transactional planned change process framework, how responsible agents regulate and control a process of planned change.	Identified four types of tactics; intervention, persuasion, participation and edicts.
Hambrick and Cannella (1989)	The authors found the following patterns of behaviour in cases of successful implementation: (1) obtaining broad-based inputs and participation at the formulation	The article emphasizes the importance of selling a strategy within the organisation, an area that has received limited attention in previous

	stage; (2) carefully and deliberately assessing the obstacles to implementation; (3) making early use of the full array of implementation levers- resource commitments, subunit policies and programs, structure, people and rewards; (4) selling the strategy to everyone who matters (upward, downward, across and outward); (5) steadily fine tuning, adjusting, and responding as events and trends arise.	implementation work.
Floyd and Wooldridge (1992)	This article examined an approach to implementation that focuses on the level of strategic understanding and commitment shared by managers within the organisation. A framework, which identify four categories of strategic consensus, has been introduced and uses as the basis for analysing differences in how managers perceive organisational priorities.	Describes a technique useful for identifying implementation gaps within an organisation and identifies several techniques for closing those gaps.
Noble (1999)	The article proposes that through taking a broadened perspective of the nature of implementation, a range of valuable insights for the implementation researcher is available. Further, the article distinguishes between structural and interpersonal process views of implementations.	This article showed that a wide range of related research may have worthwhile implications for its study. The article proposes potentially valuable insights for implementation researchers.
Okumus (2003)	The article main objectives were to identify and evaluate factors that play a significant role in implementing strategies. Further, the article has proposed a framework that explains and helps to understand complex issues of strategy implementation.	A literature review about the most cited implementation frameworks, the article has proposed a strategy implementation framework which exists of internal and external context, the process and the outcome.
Hrebiniak (2006)	This article summarized the obstacles to and problems of successful strategy implementation with empirical data from 443 managers.	There has been identified 5 key obstacles to and problems of strategy implementation; inability to manage change, poor or vague strategy, not having guidelines, poor or inadequate information, conflict with power structure and unclear responsibility.

Table 3: Brief description of key articles.

2.2 Defining strategy implementation

A first important step in defining strategy implementation is to detach the definition into two components, i.e. to separate the concept into two components, namely strategy and implementation. In the literature, the concept strategy has described thoroughly. According to Kraaijenbrink (2015), strategy can be defined as "a unique way of sustainable value creation" (p. 18). This definition can be subdivided into four aspects, namely; value creation, sustainable, unique and

way. Firstly, 'value creation' refers to "the value an organisation creates through its products and services" (p. 18). Secondly, 'sustainable' refers to four different aspects, namely; "strategy should be hard to copy or circumvent by others", "organisation receives something in return for the value it creates", "a strategy should not rely too much on resources that are easily depleted" and "a strategy should take into account the interests of important stakeholders" (Kraaijenbrink, 2015, p. 18-19). Thirdly, the aspect 'unique' refers to "a good strategy aims at doing something different from others" (Kraaijenbrink, 2015, p. 19). And fourthly, the aspect 'way' refers to "the strategy is an on-going and active process that is lived by the organisation on a daily basis" (Kraaijenbrink, 2015, p. 20). The researcher Porter (1980) developed a more comprehensive definition of strategy, the researcher defined strategy in terms of "taking offensive or defensive actions to create or maintain a defendable position in an industry, cope successfully with the five competitive forces or an yield a superior return of the firm" (p. 29). Further, Marucheck et al. (1990) provide a definition with a focus on the manufacturing organisation: "manufacturing strategy is a collective pattern of coordinated decisions that act upon the formulation, reformulation, and deployment of manufacturing resources and provide a competitive advantage in support of the overall strategic initiative of the firm" (p. 104).

There is no universally accepted definition of strategy implementation, or execution, in the literature. The researchers Yang et al. (2008) reviewed sixty articles and collected the definitions in a table. This table, see table 4, has shown below. Yang et al. (2008) divided the collected definitions into three perspectives; process, behavioural and hybrid, i.e. mix between process and behavioural, perspective. This paper has updated the table of Yang et al. (2008) by adding definitions from articles and books to the table from the last recent years. Next to this, Yang et al. (2008) found that "there are no articles differentiating strategy implementation from strategy execution in the sixty articles that we have reviewed" (p. 4). In other words, there is no need to distinguish strategy implementation from execution. Therefore, strategy implementation has used as term in this paper.

Perspective	Definitions
Process perspective	- Implementation is the *process* that turns plans into action assignments and ensures that such assignments are executed in a manner that accomplishes the plan's stated objectives. Kotler (1984) cited in Noble (1999), p. 120. - Strategy implementation refers to a process through which large, complex and potentially unmanageable strategic problems are factored into progressively smaller, less complex, and hence more manageable proportions (Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1984, p. 90). - Implementation was found to be a highly complex and interactive *process* with many variables impinging upon it – more of a 'spring' than a simple cascade. Many factors influence the flow and content of the 'spring' (Wernham, 1985, p. 641). - Strategy implementation is also portrayed as a dynamic *process* by which

		companies identify future opportunities (Reid, 1989, p. 554).
	-	Strategy implementation may be viewed as a *process* inducing various forms of organisational learning, because both environmental threats and strategic responses are a prime trigger for organisational learning processes (Lehner, 2004, p. 475).
	-	Implementation is a *process,* which is the result of a series of integrated decisions and actions over time (Hrebiniak, 2006, p. 14).
	-	Strategy implementation is an iterative *process* of implementing strategies, policies, programs and action plans that allows a firm to utilize its resources to take advantage of opportunities in the competitive environment (Harrington, 2006, p. 374).
	-	Strategy implementation links strategy to operations with a third set of tools and *processes*, including quality and process management, reengineering, process management, reengineering, process dashboards, rolling forecasts, activity-based costing, resource capacity planning, and dynamic budgeting (Kaplan & Norton, 2008, p. 2).
	-	The main task of implementation of the strategy is to bring the strategy into the life as a part of everyday decision making *process* of the company (Misankova & Kacisova, 2014, p. 861).
Behavior perspective	-	It is a series of decisions and resultant *actions* which commit resources to achieving intended outcomes. Grinyer & Spender (1979) cited in Wernham (1985) p. 634.
	-	Implementation is a series of interventions concerning organisational structures, key personnel *actions*, and control systems designed to control performance with respect to desired ends (Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1984, p. 17).
	-	Implementation designates the *managerial* interventions that align organisational *action* with strategic intention (Floyd & Wooldridge, 1992, p. 38).
	-	Implementation is the *actions* initiated within the organisation and its relationships with external constituencies to realize the strategy. Varadarajan (1999) cited in Homburg et al. (2004), p. 1331.
	-	Implementation is operationally defined as those *senior-level* leadership *behaviors* and *activities* that will transform a working plan into a concrete reality (Schaap, 2006, p. 14).
	-	Strategy execution revolves around *aligning* key organisational factors with strategy (Higgins, 2005, p. 3)
	-	*The action* that moves the organisation along its choice of route towards its goal – the fulfilment of its mission, the achievement of its vision – strategy implementation is the realization of intentions (MacLennan, 2011, p.11).
	-	Strategy implementation is all *the actions* necessary to turn your strategy into success (de Flander, 2012, p. 15).
	-	Implementation is a hands-on operation and *action*-oriented human behavioral activity that calls for *executive leadership* and key *managerial* skills (Apistola & Gottschalk, 2012, p. 93).
Hybrid perspective	-	Implementation is defined as "…the sum total of the *activities* and choices required for the execution of a strategic plan…the *process* by which strategies and policies are put into action" (Hunger & Wheelen, 2003, p. 192).
	-	In the instances where plans, strategies, technologies, or programs are markedly new to the firm, implementation appears to involve organisational design reconfiguration - i.e., a redesign of structure, systems, process, people, and rewards (Galbraith & Kazanjian, 1988, p. 30).
	-	Strategy execution is defined as the *step-by-step* implementation of the various

> *activities* that make up a formulated decision-making strategy. Strategy execution also can be treated as a *cognitive process* (Dyer & Singh, 1998, p. 662).
> - Strategy implementation is defined as an *iterative process* of implementing strategies, policies, programs and *action* plans that allow a firm to utilize its resources to take advantage of opportunities in the competitive environment (Harrington, 2006, p. 374-375).
> - Implementation involves running the business, including prioritizing information, making resource allocations, and specifying tasks (Miller et al., 2008, p. 201).
> - Strategy execution is *a process* in which strategy is actually realized through people's actions and by *doing* something with 'stuff' – technology, materials, buildings, etc. (Kraaijenbrink, 2015, p. 26).

Table 4: Definitions of strategy implementation. Source: derived from Yang et al. (2008) – revised.

All these definitions can be taken together to one comprehensive definition of strategy implementation. This comprehensive definition, used in this paper, is "a dynamic, iterative and complex approach, which is comprised of a series of decisions and activities by managers and employees – affected by a number of internal and external factors – to turn strategic plans into reality in order to achieve strategic objectives" (Yang et al., 2008, p. 6). The next section describes the key factors for strategy implementation.

2.3 Key factors for strategy implementation

Multiple researchers have described several factors, also called levers, which have an impact on the strategy implementation. Waterman et al. (1980) stated that "effective strategy implementation is essentially attending to the relationship between several factors" (p. 17). These factors should be taken into account when implementing strategy by organisations. Table 5 summarizes the different factors of strategy implementation mentioned by the most cited papers with the subject strategy implementation.

Waterman et al. (1980)	Hrebiniak (1992)	Heide et al. (2000)	Aaltonen & Ikavalko (2002); Dobni (2003); Freedman (2003); Linton (2002)	Okumus (2003)
Strategy formulation				Strategy development
(Organisational) Structure	Having a matrix structure	Formal organisational structure including control systems	An organisational structure and culture that is receptive to change	Organisational structure
Systems		Information systems for communication	Developing the management systems	Control
Style	Leadership		The backing of senior executives	Leadership
Staff	Developing global managers	Personnel management		People
Skills	Facilitating global learning	Learning; employees must have the necessary knowledge and skills for implementing strategy	Developing skills for change	
Subordinate goals				
			Communication activities	Communication
	Working with external companies			
		Political factors		Environmental uncertainty
		Organisational culture	The commitment of employees to the company's vision	
				Outcome
		Allocation of resources		Resource allocation
				Operational planning

Table 5: Key factors/levers for strategy implementation (1/2):

Yang et al. (2008)	Crittenden et al. (2008)	MacLennan (2010)	Alamsjah (2011)
Strategy formulation process	Policies; establishing strategy supportive policies	Task definition	Clarity of strategy
Organisational structure		Organisation structure	Organisational structure
Administrative system in place	Systems; installing strategic support systems	Budgeting systems	
Strategy executors	Interacting; the exercising of strategic leadership		Managing change
		Staff involvement	CEO and top management involvement
	Programs; instilling organisational learning and continuous improvement practices	Top team functioning	People's competencies Knowledge management
The communication activities		Communication Information sharing	Communication
		Cross functional co-ordination and conflict	Degree of uncertainty in environment
The level of commitment for the strategy	Organizing; the strategic shaping of corporate culture		Corporate culture People's commitment
	Monitoring; tying rewards to achievement	Performance measurement and feedback	Performance management
	Actions; who, what, and when of cross-functional integration and company collaboration		
		Strategy execution frameworks	
Relationships among different units and different strategy levels	Allocating; understanding when and where to allocate resources	Resource management	
The employed implementation tactics		Clarity of accountability	
			Execution plan
Consensus regarding strategy		Time pressure	

Table 5: Key factors/levers for strategy implementation continued (2/2)

Comparing the factors from these two tables, the most mentioned key factors for strategy implementation are; communication, control, culture, environment, leadership or style, people, (resource) planning, outcome, strategy development and (organisational) structure. To clarify the key strategy implementation factors, the definitions have described in table 6.

Strategy implementation factor	Definition
Strategy development	"Why and how strategy is initiated" (Okumus, 2003, p. 875).
Environmental uncertainty	"The degree of uncertainty and changes in the task and general environments" (Okumus, 2003, p. 876).
Organisational structure	"The shape, division of labor, job duties and responsibilities, distribution of power, and decision-making procedures in the company" (Okumus, 2003, p. 876).
Organisational culture	"The shared understanding of employees about how they do things in an organisation" (Okumus, 2003, p. 876).
Leadership	"The actual support and involvement of the CO in the strategic initiative" (Okumus, 2003, p. 877).
Organisational process	"The process of initiating the project and the operational planning of the implementation activities and tasks" (Okumus, 2003, p. 877).
Resource allocation	"The process of ensuring that all necessary time, financial resources, skills, and knowledge are made available" (Okumus, 2003, p. 877).
People	"Recruiting new staff and providing training and incentives for relevant employees" (Okumus, 2003, p. 877).
Communication	"The mechanisms that send formal and informal messages about the new strategy" (Okumus, 2003, p. 877).
Control (and feedback)	"The formal and informal mechanisms that allow the efforts and results of implementation process, which can be tangible and intangible" (Okumus, 2003, p. 877).

Table 6: Definitions of the key strategy implementation factors. Source: Derived from Okumus, 2003.

2.4 Key obstacles, challenges and problems of strategy implementation

Multiple researchers have described several obstacles, challenges and problems which occur during the implementation process. These obstacles, challenges and problems are of importance to succeed the strategy implementation process. For example, the aspect lack of understanding of the strategy by the employees; Kaplan and Norton (2005) found that "95% of the typical workforce does not understand the strategy of the organisation" (p. 17). Table 7 summarizes the several obstacles, challenges and problems of strategy implementation mentioned by the most cited papers with the subject strategy implementation.

Alexander (1985)	Lorange (1998)	Corboy & O'Corrbui (1999)	Beer & Eisenstat (2000)	Okumus (2003)
Implementation took more time than originally allocated				Implementation taking more time than planned
Major problems surfaced during implementation that had not been identified beforehand	Too much organisational complexity	The 'brick walls' are not recognised		
Coordination of implementation activities was not effective enough		Individual responsibilities for implementing the change are not clear	Poor coordination across functions, businesses or borders	Lack of coordination
Competing activities and crisis distracted attention from implementing this decision	Lack of speed and urgency	Forgetting to 'mind the shop'		
Capabilities of employees involved were not sufficient			Inadequate down-the-line leadership skills and development	
Training and instruction given to lower level employees were not adequate				
Uncontrollable factors in the external environment had an adverse impact on implementation				
Leadership and direction provided by departmental managers were not adequate enough	Lack of a true growth culture in the organisation, from top to bottom	Chief executives and senior managers step out of the picture one implementation begins	An ineffective senior management team	Support from other levels of management
Key implementation tasks and activities were not defined in enough detail		A lack of understanding of how the strategy should be implemented	Poor vertical communication	Poor communication
Information system used to monitor implementation were not adequate				
	Strong organisational kingdoms		Top down or laissez faire senior management style	
	Lack of tradition-	The strategy is not worth		

	breaking	implementing	
	Lack of cost competitiveness		
		Customers and staff not fully understand the strategy	Unclear strategy and conflicting priorities

Table 7: Key obstacles/challenges/problems of strategy implementation (1/2):

Hrebiniak (2006)	MacLennan (2011)	Flander, de (2012)	Ivancic (2013)	Mellon & Carter (2014)
			Took more time than originally allocated	
Inability to manage change effectively and overcome resistance to change	Many senior leaders mistakenly believe that the organisational realignments required to execute new planned strategies will be initiated by middle managers without their active input and oversight	Not understood by managers; managers should understand the process	- Improper coordination - Too few people involved in implementation	
	Leaders are reluctant to spend time and effort on strategy execution seeing it as a messy business that more junior employees should deal with			
		Not easy; companies started off with a straight forward and simple process; doesn't work.		
				Poor fit between strategy and company's organisational environment

	Relatively few managers seem to possess the learning and thinking styles required for strategy execution – to link conceptual ideas with concrete actions		Top and middle management conflicting goals and priorities	
Unclear communication of responsibility or accountability for executions decisions or actions		Not balanced; organisations invest in those strategy execution process steps that are already quite developed, but then neglect the weaker ones	- Improper communication between hierarchical levels and functions and poor information transfer - Inconsistencies in translating long range plans into short term objectives	
Poor or inadequate information sharing between individuals or business units responsible for strategy execution		Not measured; strategy execution is a black box in measuring	Improper monitoring and incentive system	
Trying to execute a strategy that conflicts with the existing power structure			Inadequate leadership style; top down or laissez fair senior management	
		Not to be changed; people don't look change	Inability to overcome resistance to change	
A poor or vague strategy		Not on the radar; lack of visibility	Vague strategy formulation	Lack of clarity
Not having guidelines or a model to guide strategy-execution efforts				
Lack of understanding of			Goals and target not well	

the role of organisational structure and design in the execution process			understood	
Lack of feelings of ownership of a strategy or of execution steps or plans among key employees	Success attribution; difficult to predict and evaluate how activities impact organisations' overall objectives	Not owned; fragmentation of ownership	Conflicting strategy principals	
		Not adapted to your needs; adapt your tools to your needs		
		Not budget friendly; time investment / activities of the process owners / the impact of external consulting and training		
			Lack of employee commitment	Emotional commitment

Table 7: Key obstacles/challenges/problems of strategy implementation continued (2/2):

Taking these obstacles, challenges and problems of the tables together, the next are mentioned most frequently: unclear strategy, improper methods, lack of communication, improper motivation, insufficient resources, lack of control system, and ignoring the environment. The numeration below gives a description of the mentioned obstacles, challenges and problems (Pindelski & Mrowka, 2011, p. 41):

1. Unclear strategy – "the strategy is formulated in a general manner, goals are unclear and ambivalent".

2. Improper methods – "the methods of translating visions into substantial targets and tasks are selected improperly, while the guidelines on the methods of their fulfilment are unclear as well".

3. Lack of communication – "insufficient or improper communication, the lack of verification of the level of understanding the message".

4. Improper motivation – "effective motivation systems, unfit for the strategy and non–supportive to the strategic target performance".

5. Insufficient resources – "wrong selection of the appropriate resources, improper allocation, inappropriate combination thereof".

6. Lack of control system – "the lack of control and monitoring of strategy performance progress, the lack of consistency in monitoring and supporting the employees in the performance thereof".

7. Ignoring the environment – "the varying elements of environment and the lack of space for the possible strategy changes in the course of its performance. Improper adaptation of the strategy to the varying enterprise environment".

2.5 Approaches to strategy implementation

Last decades authors have described several frameworks or models, i.e. approaches, for implementing strategy by organisations. For clarification, this research defines the concept strategy implementation approach as a predefined procedure, steps or way to implement strategy. These approaches have several similarities and therefore can be categorised into five categories. According to Okumus (2003), the next three categories can be distinguished. The first category simply lists and describes the alignment of implementation factors – which the paper describes as the alignment category. The second category are the approaches which describes the strategy implementation process as a step-by-step approach – the process category. The third category are approaches which emphasize the importance of context and process variables, but these approaches do not describe which implementation factors are of importance for the strategy implementation – combination category, context as well as process variables, without implementation factors. These approaches in this category describe that executives, and in less degree the employees, should take context,

process and outcome into account when implementing the strategy. According to Okumus (2003), following such a holistic approach is "essential in evaluating the best implementation options, challenges and enables, and considering these areas can help executives and middle managers to understand the wider implications of the processes of change in their organisations" (p. 878). This paper suggests that there should be added two additional categories to this categorisation. The fourth category emphasizes the importance of context and process variables as well, but also includes the earlier mentioned implementation factors in the approach – which the paper describes as the combination, context as well as process variables, category with implementation factors. This category describes that it is essential to understand how strategies can be implemented with having a proper coherence between the strategy implementation factors, while the third category describes that it is "essential to understand how strategies can be implemented without having a proper coherence between the implementation factors" (Okumus, 2003, p. 879). The fifth category has as primarily purpose to measure and control performance by setting Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – the performance measurement system category. In addition, the underlying idea of the performance measurement system category is that the KPIs should be aligned for successful strategy implementation.

The most cited strategy implementation approaches have been described in essence in appendix 1 (p. 57). The graphically representations of these approaches have been listed in appendix 2 (p. 62). The approaches for strategy implementation have been gathered and categorised into these five categories, which has shown in table 8. This categorisation has been based on the description of the five categories. This table shows that most approaches can be categorised into the alignment category, i.e. these approaches simply list and describe the implementation factors.

Alignment approaches	Process approaches	Combination category without implementation factors approaches	Combination category with implementation factors approaches	Performance measurement system approaches
Galbraith & Kazanjian (1978)	Vasconcellos e Sá (1988)	Pettigrew & Whipp (1991)	Schmelzer & Olsen (1994)	Reed & Buckley (1988)
Waterman et al. (1980)	Galpin (1996)	Roth et al. (1991)	Okumus (2003)	Kaplan & Norton (1996)
Stonich (1984)	Noble (1999)	Dawson (1994)	Pryor et al. (2007)	
Hambrick & Cannella (1989)	de Feo & Janssen (2001)	Allio (2005)	Yang et al. (2008)	
Miller (1997)	Kaplan & Norton (2008)	Stack (2014)		

Higgins (2005)	de Flander (2012)
Hrebiniak (2006)	
Mankins & Steele (2005)	
MacLennan (2011)	
Ivancic (2013)	

Table 8: Implementation approaches categorized per category.

Altogether, as visible in table 8 and appendix 1 and 2, researchers have developed multiple strategy implementation approaches and all of these approaches describe different ways for implementing strategy. As stated, the strategy implementation approaches can be divided into five different categories.

The next section describes the methodology part of the research. This section describes the research design, which includes selection, measurement instrument, data collection and data analysis, and describes the trustworthiness and conformability of this research.

3. Methodology
3.1 Research design

3.1.1 Selection

A qualitative research has been conducted in this paper. An important advantage of a qualitative research, cf. a quantitative research, is the possibility to gather more in-depth information and therefore conduct more detailed information (Babbie, 2010). Moreover, another advantage of qualitative research is that it gives the possibility to get face-to-face contact with people and to compare theory with practice and therewith gain deep insight (Babbie, 2010). Furthermore, the research is an embedded multiple case study consisting of 5 organisations. The reason for choosing a multiple case study is the ability to gather information from several organisations, and because of the relatively small sample, collecting in-depth information about the organisation is still possible. The selected interviewees are employees of the organisations. There have been selected 4-6 persons per organisation and these employees have responsibilities on lower/non-management level, middle-management level and the top-management level, i.e. the executives. The reason for choosing different levels of employees is that a strategy-as-practice study indicates, next to the top management, that middle- and lower/non-level management are also important strategic actors and that these employees work on different ways with strategy, from strategic-, tactical-, to operational level (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007). This results in a more representative picture about how different actors in organisations cope with strategy implementation. Table 9 shows the five organisations and the relevant organisations' characteristics for this research.

The units of analysis are manufacturing organisations with the size of 50 - 249 employees, i.e. the medium-sized organisations following the European Union's policy (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003). These organisations have already been established, i.e. it is not a start-up organisation which does not have sufficient experience in strategy implementation, in order to get a representative picture of the strategy implementation processes (Krippendorff, 2012). The reason for choosing for a medium-sized organisation is that that kind of organisations can be analysed on a way that is not possible with large-, and small-sized organisations. The reasons for this is that the large-sized organisations, where the number of employees are >250, their processes are complex to study and the small-sized organisations have often not developed any methodology for implementing strategy (Krippendorff, 2012).

Organisation	Number of employees	Number of interviewees	Job position interviewees
1 (Buckets)	120	4	Managing director – Sales manager – Technological manager – Production and Labelling manager
2 (Foil)	100	6	Managing director – Commercial director – Head

			production – Team leader production – Head planning department – Financial administrative assistant
3 (Valves)	180	5	Managing director – Assembly and Paint shop manager – Order processing manager – Head sales – Senior sales manager
4 (Explosion safety)	248	6	Managing director – Controller – Sales engineer + Planner – Manager system solutions – Sales manager system solutions – Adjunct director
5 (Glass)	150	4	Manager director – Operations manager – Head planning department – Team leader production
Total		25	

Table 9: Practical information about the organisations and interviewees who participated.

3.1.2 Measurement instrument(s)

For this research, qualitative research has been conducted with use of semi-structured interviews as the data collection technique. A semi-structured interview contains a set of predefined questions about several areas in the topic, but, next to the predefined questions, there is freedom to discuss specific topics more in-depth (Babbie, 2010). In other words, the semi-structured interview contains predefined questions and questions based on the answers from the interviewees. This gives the possibility to diverge and discuss particular topics within strategy implementation in more detail. Above on previous mentioned advantages, the reason for choosing a semi-structured interview for this research is to make the interviews comparable with other (manufacturing) organisations, but also to get more detailed information about specific issues within the topic strategy implementation. For clarification, the specific issues within strategy implementation are, for example, strategy implementation approaches, challenges and problems with strategy implementation, and involvement of employees in the process. The interview protocol, developed for this research, can be found in appendix 3 (p. 75). As visible in the interview protocol, the main subject of the questions is to gather information about the actual approaches an organisation use for strategy implementation and the advantages and disadvantages of this approach. For clarification, the covered subjects in the interviews, i.e. the structure of the interview, are:

1. Organisation structure
2. Strategy formulation
3. Strategic objectives
4. Strategy implementation approach
5. Communication
6. Budgets
7. Monitoring
8. Incentives

9. Strategy assimilation in job position

10. Difficulties

These ten subjects cover the mentioned key factors and key challenges, obstacles and problems from the theory section. For instance, the key factor 'strategy development' and the key challenge 'unclear strategy' have been combined into the subjects strategy formulation and strategic objectives. During the interviews, several sub-questions, depending on the given answer, have been asked to make the answer of the interviewee on the predefined questions more comprehensive and understandable for this research.

3.1.3 Data collection

The first step in the procedure of collecting the data has been to gather information about manufacturing organisations to search organisations which meet the earlier mentioned selection criteria – the amount of employees; should be 50-249 employees, and the type of organisation; should be a manufacturing organisation. The next step of data collection has been to conduct the interviews with the interviewees from the organisations, which are guided through the interview protocol. All the interviews were recorded and notes were taken during the interviews. The interviews were individually conducted in the office of the interviewed employees.

3.1.4 Data analyses

The interviews have been recorded, have been written down and have been coded afterwards. Coding refers to "the process whereby raw data [the records] are transformed into standardized form suitable for machine processing and analysis" (Babbie, 2010, p. 338). To be more precise, coding is "relating particular passages in the text of an interview to one category, in the version that best fits the textual passages" (Flick et al., 2004, p. 255). Both types of coding have been used, the open coding – create and categorize the data into labels – and axial coding – whereby relationships have been identified (Babbie, 2010). Eventually, to code and categorize the data of this research, the next labels have been used: organisation structure, strategy objectives, time frame strategy, strategy implementation approaches, communication, budgets, monitoring, incentives, strategy assimilation in job position, and difficulties.

3.2 Trustworthiness and conformability assessment

According to Schreier (2012), the most widely used criteria for evaluating qualitative content analysis are those developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The most widely used assessment criterion is trustworthiness, which consists of creditability, transferability, dependability and conformability (Schreier, 2012). These researchers used the concept 'trustworthiness' to support "the argument that the inquiry's findings are worth paying attention to" (Schreier, 2012, p. 2). Moreover, there is

"no clear dividing between qualitative and quantitative content analysis and similar terms and criteria for reliability and validity are often used" (Schreier, 2012, p. 2). For clarification, the next concepts are equal to each other: creditability and confirmability are equal to internal validity, transferability is equal to external validity and dependability is equal to reliability. In other words, to determine the trustworthiness and conformability of this research, the concepts validity and reliability can be used (Schreier, 2012). Firstly, the approximate internal validity of this research is positive. A first reason for this is that the analysis includes several literal statement and quotations of interviewees, which enhance the design validity. Further, to increase the internal validity, there have been reported negative cases in the analysis, i.e. quotations which are contrarian compared with the other quotations of interviewees, to show exceptions on patterns. Moreover, to assure conformability of this research an interview protocol has been established – and discussed with an expert in the strategic management field – which has been used for every interviewee. In other words, the data have been collected on the same way and checked by an expert and therefore the construct validity can be seen as positive. Further, the findings of this research should be generalizable over the manufacturing organisations, because the findings show how the surveyed medium-sized established manufacturing organisations cope with strategy implementation and other manufacturing organisations can use this information. Therefore, it could be suggested that the results of this paper have a positive external validity over the manufacturing organisations. For clarification, the generalizability over the manufacturing organisations is not the focus of this research, because the goal is to acquire in-depth insights and accuracy about five organisations. Moreover, it could be suggested that the research is reliable, because the answers of the interview questions are primarily facts, so if you repeat the question at another time, the same answer should be given.

The next section describes the results and has been divided into two parts. The first part describes the outcomes of the interviews per case, i.e. the within case analysis. The within case analysis has been structured with use of the next headlines: organisation structure, strategy formulation, strategic objectives, strategy implementation approach, communication, budgets, monitoring, incentives, strategy assimilation in job position, and difficulties. The second part of this section compares the cases with each other, i.e. the cross case analysis.

4. Results
4.1 Within case analysis

This section describes the outcomes of the interviews per organisation, i.e. the within case analysis. The structure of the within case analysis follows the structure of the interview: organisation structure, strategy formulation, strategic objectives, strategy implementation approaches, communication regarding strategy, budgets, monitoring, incentives, strategy assimilation in job position, and difficulties. These subjects, as stated earlier, have been derived from the key factors and key challenges, problems and obstacles from the theory section.

Organisation 1 - Buckets:

The organisation of case 1 is an established manufacturing organisation with a workforce of 120 fixed employees. The organisation has rapidly grown the last years, but the structure has not grown with this growth. Therefore, interviewees stated that the organisation is not used with working in structures, but the interviewees are aware of that the organisation should change in this – 'we are not used to think in structure …, we are aware that we need to give more flesh and blood to this' (Sales manager). Bringing more structure in the organisation is in development according to the interviewees.

Strategy formulation

The interviewees stated that the strategy of the organisation has not been established yet, but the organisation is in the process to develop a strategy. Further, the interviewees explained that the organisation makes choices regards strategy based on feelings and intuition – 'I think that we should grow as company' (Managing director) – and that these ideas and choices have not been recorded in documents. However, one of interviewees declared that the ideas have been recorded on paper by the managing director (Production and labelling manager).

Strategic objectives

The interviewees have described several (strategic) objectives of the organisation. The first interviewee – Managing director – described the next objectives; delivering a high quality product, offering a high service level, which includes fast delivery, short lead times and flexibility in delivery, and expanding the business to Germany to increase the organisation's turnover. The next interviewee – Sales manager – also described the objective of a high quality product. Further, another objective of the organisation is to add more structure in the organisation. The third interviewee – Technological manager – stated that delivering a reliable product is a strategic

objective of the organisation. The last interviewee – Production and labelling manager – stated that the organisation would like to improve the processes in the organisation, which includes; an optimum machine utilization, faultless production process and cost reduction by less personnel and more automation. The interviewees declared that the mentioned objectives are not recorded in documents. Moreover, there has not determined a timeframe for the strategic objectives, which indicates that there has not been a kick-off or endpoint for these objectives. There is a timeframe for the strategic objective of expanding the business to Germany. The kick-off was in the year 2012, but there is not determined an endpoint.

Strategy implementation approach

Next to the strategic objectives, all the interviewees stated that the organisation does not have a specific approach for implementing the strategic objectives, i.e. there is no procedure or the organisation does not take specific steps for implementing the strategy. One of the interviewee – Managing director – stated that the organisation uses a pragmatic approach, which indicates that the employees are doing their daily duties and do not have a plan to implement the strategy – 'we just go to work and we will so how we get there' (Managing director). The interviewees explained that the implementation of strategic objectives is based on feelings and intuition instead of on procedures or a plan.

Communication

The communication in the organisation proceeds primarily on an informal way – oral and by e-mail. One of the interviewees stated that conversations about objectives cannot be seen as the culture within the organisation – 'the culture here is more work, less pay' (Technological manager). However, there are meetings, not on a regular basis but around once a month, where the conversation is about the strategic objectives and about the problems in de organisation. During these meetings, the same persons of top- and middle management are present. The meetings are controlled and directed by the managing director. Further, there are work meetings on a yearly basis which have as subject to communicate about important decisions.

Budgets

The organisation does not work with budgets, so no budgets have been determined. However, the organisation is improving this, i.e. setting budgets is in development – 'we are working on it [to determine budgets]' (Production and labelling manager).

Monitoring

Monitoring the outcomes of strategic objectives is on monthly basis. The organisation numerically monitors the results of the produced and sold items and the financial margins of these items. This is purely numerical and no other instruments are used for monitoring this. These monitoring documents are shared with the purchasing department and with the top management.

Incentives

There is no clarity about the incentives in the organisation, because the explanation of the interviewees varies. Two interviewees explained that there is no bonus system in the organisation, while the other two interviewees explained that there is a bonus system. One interviewee stated that the bonus system is connected to turnover objectives, while the other interviewee stated that the bonus system is connected to personal targets, e.g. days of absence – 'if you are not ill, you will get some extra money' (Technological manager). Further, one interviewee – Managing director – stated that there is a profit sharing for all the employees, but it is not clear what the minimum profit is for a profit sharing.

Strategy assimilation in job position

Three of the interviewees stated that strategy has been assimilated in the job position, i.e. time is reserved for strategy in their job tasks – 'the frame has been given, we try to give substance to it' (Managing director). One interviewee explained that strategy is not included in the tasks, i.e. strategy comes on top of the tasks.

Difficulties

Further, all the interviewees expect that there are sufficient resources available to achieve the determined (strategic) objectives. However, the interviewees expect several problems and/or difficulties in the near future. First, it takes time to attract a broad customer base. Second, it is questionable if the market still accepts higher prices for higher quality products in the near future. Third difficulty is to get people with the right abilities to be able to produce high quality products. Another mentioned difficulty is that an improvement in the quality can lead to bottlenecks in the resources. A fifth difficulty is the ambition of the organisation. According to one interviewee – Technological manager – this ambition in the organisation is too low; it should be increased to stay competitive. The last difficulty is related to the communication and formulation of strategy. One interviewee stated that there is a relatively small group who is concerned with the strategy formulation and objectives, this leads to that the employees becomes lazy and do not spontaneously

think about (strategic) objectives – 'boys, do not think, we [the small group who is concerned with the strategy formulation] do that for you; this results in that people will not spontaneously think about it' (Technological manager).

Organisation 2 – Foil:

First of all, the organisation of case 2 is an established manufacturing organisation with a workforce of 100 fixed employees.

Strategy formulation

The strategy has been captured a business plan. The business plan precisely describes the short term objectives per year and also the longer term objectives for the upcoming 3 years. The business plan has been developed by the commercial director and managing director, with input from the management team. Three of the interviewees have knowledge of the business plan, but three other interviewees have no knowledge about this business plan. For these three interviewees, there is no clarity about the strategy, i.e. the interviewees cannot explain the organisation's objectives for the upcoming years – 'I cannot explain where the organisation will be in 5 years' (Head planning department). Further, these interviewees have not been acknowledged about the growth objectives of the organisation.

Strategic objectives

The interviewees described several (strategic) objectives of the organisation. Three interviewees described sustainability for the organisation and the environment as a strategic objective. The organisation increases the sustainability by buying proper installations whereby the emission of dangerous substances can be decreased. Further, an objective is to produce and deliver high quality products to the consumers. According to the interviewees, the organisation has determined growth rates of 15 till 20 per cent per year. The organisation has determined the next sub-objectives to realize the growth rates; penetrating the industry market, constantly improving products on regular basis and expanding the geographical area with help of new agents. Another strategic objective is that the organisation would like to become the market leader in their segment. Further, for two interviewees there is no clarity about the determined objectives. Moreover, one interviewee stated that there are no priorities present in the organisation, what results in an unclear guidance for the ideas in the organisation – 'The ideas bubble on all sides, but due no clear direction from the organisation, it is unclear how to use these ideas' (Head planning department). Moreover, there has determined a timeframe for the strategic objectives, which indicates that there has been a kick-off

or endpoint for these objectives. The completion of the business plan applies for the kick-off point. The organisation has determined the business plan for 5 years.

Strategy implementation approach

Next to the strategic objectives, all the interviewees stated that the organisation does not have a specific approach for implementing the strategic objectives or it is unclear if the organisation uses an approach. In other words, there is no procedure or the organisation does not take specific steps for implementing the strategy. Moreover, the interviewees stated that the ways how to implement the strategy are in the minds of the employees, i.e. based on feelings – 'we just use logically thinking' (Managing director).

Communication

The organisation has captured several meetings to discuss the objectives. There is a monthly meeting with all the employees where the managing director discusses the situation of last month and what are the expectations of upcoming month, i.e. discussing the general issues. Next to the monthly meeting, there is a weekly meeting, directed by the commercial director, where the management team discusses operational issues within the organisation. Another meeting is the meeting for R&D, which discusses the product developments and improvements. All these meetings have been recorded and shared within the organisation by mail. The business plan has shared with the employees by issuing a summary of the business plan, i.e. the broad outlines of the business plan. For the management team, the whole business plan is visible. Further, one interviewee stated that the organisation constantly pushes all the departments to achieve the expectations, both weekly and monthly – 'we are pushing the organisations; these are the expectations on weekly, monthly and yearly level, did you achieve it and if no, why not and how can you solve this' (Commercial director).

Budgets

According to four interviewees, the organisation has not determined budgets. Two other interviewees have no knowledge about budgets – 'it is unclear to me if the organisation has determined budgets' (Team leader production).

Monitoring

The organisation numerically monitors the results of the produced and sold items and the margins of these items, and on a monthly basis. During the operational meetings, the commercial director

provides feedback on these results. However, one interviewee – Team leader production - stated that the organisation does not monitor the processes on the production floor.

Incentives

Further, four interviewees stated that the organisation does not make use of an individual bonus system, while one interviewee – Head production – stated that there is a bonus system for the sales and management team. This interviewee explained that there are personal targets, e.g. situational leadership and qualifying yourself, and general targets, e.g. decreasing failure costs. Further, when there is a significant profit – it is unclear how much this profit sharing should be – there is a profit sharing present for all the employees.

Strategy assimilation in job position

Time has been reserved for strategy in their job tasks for the management team and managing director. Further, the interviewees stated that the task separation within the organisation is clear, everyone in the organisation is aware of his/her tasks and there is no overlay with other job positions.

Difficulties

The interviewees mentioned several difficulties where the organisation has to cope with. One of the difficulties is the competitors in the market, i.e. same number of competitors but a less spending market, and no knowledge about these competitors. Therefore one of the objectives is to search for other markets with fewer competitors. The knowledge difficulty can be solved by desk research to gather information about the competitors. Another difficulty is the focus within the organisation. The organisation does not pay attention to the competitors, i.e. the organisation has an internal focus. Further, efficiency within the processes is also a difficulty. According to one interviewee – Head production –, this difficulty of efficiency can be solved by training and by starting with an order as short as possible after the order. A next difficulty is the uncertainty that appears under the employees. One interviewee stated that the reason for this is the unclear strategy – 'the business strategy is not clear, this results in unclearness, why we do this and why we do not do that, and this results in uncertainties under the employees' (Head planning department).

Organisation 3 – Valves:

The organisation of case 3 is an established manufacturing organisation with a workforce of 180 fixed employees, 110 employees are located in the Netherlands and 70 in Korea. The organisation

has rapidly grown the last years. For this reason, the organisation developed a more formal structure within the organisation, which is still in development. Further, the sales structure has also changed from small islands with bigger groups to more islands with smaller groups – 'we have changed from less islands with more people to more small islands with less people' (Senior sales manager).

Strategy formulation

To generate strategy, the organisation makes use of business modelling developed by the researchers Moenaert and Robben (2006). This model visualizes the organisation's competitive advantage, by visualizing strong and weaknesses of the organisation, with the help of bullet points. Next to the business model, the organisation has determined their strategic objectives. Another element what have been used or determining the strategy is a sensitivity analysis for the different objectives. These elements have all been captured in the business plan. The business model has been composed by top-, and middle management. Moreover, the opinions of customers, by using questionnaires, have also been considered by composing the business model. For the business plan, the organisation has determined a timeframe of 5 years. The kick-off point is 2014, after finishing the business plan, and the end point is 2019. When the organisation has determined the business plan, there will be provided a presentation for all the employees where the headlines of the plan will be discussed. The business plan will also be shared to the employees.

Strategic objectives

There have been determined several strategic objectives by the management. A determined objective is to take out the distributors and agents. The reason for this is that the organisation would to be able to communicate directly to the customer without intermediaries. Another objective is to focus on the industry sector energy. The concept BIGHAC is another objective of the organisation, i.e. the organisation would like to exceed customer expectations. Further, realizing more framework agreements with customers is also an objective. Next objective is a healthy price differentiation, so quality / price ratio should be good. Further, the organisation has determined a couple of BSC KPIs, divided into several elements; financial, internal business processes, customers, and learning and growth. Next to the strategic objectives, there have also determined growth objectives; the turnover should growth with at least 7.5%, whereby the EBIT should be 20%, per year.

Strategy implementation approach

For implementing the strategy, the organisation uses an operational plan. This operational plan describes the objective, what are the actions to achieve this, how to measure if the objective has

been achieved, which (extra) resources and people are needed, when the objective should be finished and the KPI indicator. The operational plans have determined per department. After all the operational plans per department had been determined, the operational plans have been consolidated to one operational plan which applies for two years. According to the interviewees, the operational plan has several advantages. Firstly, the operational plan, and business model, is a tool to be able to discuss the strategy thoroughly with all the employees once a year. Secondly, the operational plan challenges the employees. Thirdly, the operational plan has been determined per department, this ensures that the plan feels as an own plan for everyone in the organisation, i.e. the plan ensures that it comes closer to the people that have to execute it. A fourth advantage is that it is easily to check the consistency between the departments. Moreover, the interviewees stated that there are no disadvantages for using the operational plan. However, two interviewees stated that implementation could be carried out better. The two interviewees explained that issues of the day quickly become important after the realization of the plan, there is no attention to the plan anymore – 'In the beginning, we spend significant time for the strategy formulation and to describe the operational plan, but when this is finished the focus is on the routine daily business' (Order processing manager). In other words, in the beginning sufficient time has been spend to develop the strategy and the operational plan, but after that the attention has been moved to the routine business.

Communication

The organisation has captured several meetings to discuss the strategy and objectives. The strategy process has started with the top- and middle management session to formulate the strategy with help of the business model, where the strengths and weaknesses are determined. In total, there are three sessions to determine the strategy. Next to this session, there is a general session, directed by the managing director, where the top management discusses the progress of the objectives and strategy on a monthly basis. The two mentioned sessions are both recorded on documents and shared with the appointed persons. There are also operational team meetings per department once in two years. During these meetings, the operational plan has been determined and discussed with the department. This meeting is directed by the head of the specific departments. The outcomes of these meetings have been recorded on documents and consolidated to one overall operational plan, which has been shared with all the departments.

Budgets

The organisation makes use of budgets. During the process of generating the operational plan, noteworthy investment proposals have been made and described in the operational plan. However, the departments are free in spending minor investments without permission of the management – 'Small amounts of money can be spend without permission' (Managing director). When a more major investment must be made, the management expects that this will be discussed. However, one interviewee stated that there is not a communication structure regarding budget, i.e. budgets is a grey area – 'Budgets are recorded in the in the job description, but in practice there is freedom in this; it is a grey area what you are allowed to spend' (Order processing manager).

Monitoring

Monitoring is carried out by the head of every department. The head chooses in which frequency the monitoring will be carried out and in which way. During the monitoring meetings, the objectives from the operational plan and determined KPIs have been viewed and checked. Further, there is a top management meeting where the results of last month and the KPIs have been monitored and discussed. Some of these KPIs are visible for all employees and customers, whereby the financial indicators are visible for top- and middle management. Moreover, two interviewees stated that a general feedback of the operational plan and business plan have been provided every two years. However, three interviewees stated that the organisation has not provided general feedback about the business plan – 'the general feedback of the organisation is open book, we have to use an own interpretation' (Senior sales manager).

Incentives

The organisation applies a profit sharing as bonus system for all the employees, with a personally target included. The personal targets are, for example, output, performance, absenteeism, and commitment to the organisation. Moreover, there are also incentives for all the employees when a large order has been retrieved – 'when we had a big order, we received an Ipad or PlayStation' (Order processing manager).

Strategy assimilation in job position

There is no time reserved for strategy duties in the job tasks. Further, three interviewees stated that the task separation within the organisation is clear, everyone in the organisation is aware of his/her tasks and there is no overlay with other job positions. However, two interviewees – Head sales and

Senior sales manager – stated that there is overlap between job positions and departments. Though, these two interviewees explained that less overlap is in development.

Difficulties

The interviewees mentioned several difficulties where the organisation has to cope with. One of the difficulties is increasing numbers of employees and the workload which results in too less space in the organisation. This difficulty will be solved by a new building in one year. Further, the high pressure in the organisation, i.e. the workload, leads to that there is no time for implementing the strategy. Another difficulty is that the quality department has too less contact with the customer and the departments. This should be professionalized to improve this contact.

Organisation 4 – Explosion safety:

The organisation of case 4 is an established manufacturing organisation with a workforce of 212 fixed employees and 36 temporary employees, i.e. 248 employees in total. The organisation structure can be seen as a 'helicopter view management', which means that the organisation is divided into several departments with several heads of these departments.

Strategy formulation

The six interviewees stated that the formulation of strategy has not carried out yet – 'I cannot say where the organisation will be in 5 years'; 'the organisation has not determined a strategy for last 50 years' (Managing director). In other words, the strategy of the organisation has not been written down and due to this, the strategy is not clear to the people, e.g. no business plan is available in the organisation. Two interviewees stated that the strategy is in the minds of the people. However, the strategy formulation is in process – 'this moment is the first time that we are actually determining a strategy' (Manager system solutions). Moreover, growth objectives have been determined for the upcoming year.

Strategy objectives

The interviewees have mentioned several strategic objectives. However, these objectives are not recorded on documents. The strategic objective, which all the interviewees mentioned, is to become the knowledge centre of explosion protection in the world, which includes that the name of the organisation should be connected directly to the knowledge centre of explosion protection and also as solution for explosion protection. Another objective is to growth internationally, with help of building a factory in the Middle East, and with a focus on the oil and gas industry. Three interviewees

stated that the organisation would like to be earlier in the sales process, i.e. offer a containerised solution for the customer. Further, the organisation has the objective to offer a more reliable delivering process to the customer. Next to these objectives, the organisation has several growth objectives for the turnover and EBIT, but these objectives applies for one year. The strategic objectives, except for the grow objectives, do not have a time frame, i.e. it is not determined when these objectives should be finished.

Strategy implementation approach

The organisation does not use a specific approach to implement the strategic objectives. In addition, the organisation does not have a plan or guideline to implement the strategy. Realizing the objectives is based on feelings – 'the whole implementation process is carried out intuitively' (Managing director). However, two interviewees stated that the strategy implementation approach is in development. Moreover, one interviewee – Adjunct director – stated that there several ideas and intentions available, but these ideas and intentions cannot be translated to the production floor. Further, one interviewee – Controller – explained that departmental objectives are translated to action points in the departments to realize the objectives.

Communication

The organisation has captured several meetings to discuss the strategy and the objectives. Two times a year there is a so called strategic meeting where general bottlenecks of the organisation are discussed with the management team. This meeting is directed by the managing director, but two interviewees stated that there is not sufficient guidance with these meetings. These meetings are recorded and shared with the management team. Further, there have been organized two brainstorm meetings to discuss and formulate the strategy where the management team is present. Next to these meetings, there is a monthly department meeting where action points and objectives are discussed per department. This meeting is directed by the managing direction. These sessions has been recorded and shared oral with the employees in the department. However, one interviewee – Adjunct director – stated that the communication within the organisation is minimal and should be improved – 'The communication culture is not good, because too less is communication within the organisation' (Adjunct director).

Budgets

According to the interviewees, the parent company has determined that the organisation should make proposals for the investments the organisation would like to make, and therefore budgets are present in the organisation.

Monitoring

The organisation uses an Enterprise Resource Planning system – i.e. ERP system – to monitor. This ERP system visualizes a dashboard where faults and improvements are shown on a monthly basis. The monitoring is numerical and is only shared with the management team, i.e. other employees have no view on the results. However, two interviewees have no knowledge about the monitoring system – 'The results of the monitoring data has not been shared with all the employees, only with the relevant employees' (Managing director). Moreover, the system does not provide feedback about the strategic objectives, but this is in development according to one interviewee.

Incentives

The organisation uses a bonus system for the employees in the management team. This bonus system depends on if personal targets have been reached. Moreover, there are also small incentives for all the employees when a large order has been retrieved – 'the organisation treats everybody to a pastry when the organisation gains a large order' (Sales engineer and planner).

Strategy assimilation in job position

The interviewees stated that strategy is a part of the tasks of a specific job, i.e. strategy has been assimilated in the job position. Further, three interviewees stated that, with help of the planners, the task separation within the organisation is clear within the department, everyone in the organisation is aware of his/her tasks. However, outside the department not everything has been outlined and there some overlay with other job departments.

Difficulties

The interviewees mentioned several difficulties where the organisation has to cope with. One of the difficulties is the sister organisations which sell their system, these sister organisations are not capable enough to sell the systems and the organisation is not capable to translate the knowledge to the sister organisations. Another difficulty is that the organisation purely focuses on engineering and do not pay attention to the customers, which, as stated by the interviewees, leads to arrogance within the organisation. Further, several interviewees stated that the culture within the organisation

should change; people should take responsibility for their faults and it should be easier to implement proposals of employees without resistance of managers. According to several interviewees this difficulty can be improved by giving employees more freedom in decision making and also provide the employees more guideline from the management. Another difficulty is the communication in the organisation, this should be improved to do not loose time and money by unnecessary communication faults. The last mentioned difficulty is the fast changing market, which results in difficulties to determine the strategy.

Organisation 5 - Glass:

The organisation of case 5 is an established manufacturing organisation with a workforce of 150 fixed employees, whose are spread within the Benelux.

Strategy formulation

The organisation has developed a strategy with help of several models: SWOT, PPA's and 10-80-10 rule. Moreover, there is paid attention to the European vision, mission and strategy when formulating the strategy, but the management team formulates its own vision, mission and strategy – 'there is a particular focus on parent's strategy, but we develop our own strategy which adapts to the organisation and circumstances' (Managing director). The strategy has been adapted with input of all the employees every year. The strategy has been recorded in the quality handbook and is visible for every employee. Further, the mission, vision and strategy are recorded on signs which are positioned on several places within the organisation. Next to the strategy, KPIs – which are divided into several disciplines – have been formulated as well and shared with the employees.

Strategic objectives

The organisation has determined several strategic objectives, which are recorded on signs. Firstly, business should take place on basis of safety, quality and reliability. Secondly, commitment should be created through communication with all employees. Thirdly, a sound efficiency development should be developed by optimal cooperation. Fourthly, there should be focus on development of talent. Fifthly, the organisation should continuously improve by optimizing the processes and, which as sub-objective, to commercialize products which add value. Further, the interviewees stated several other objectives. One of the objectives is to be a partner in sustainability and to strive for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Another strategic objective is to change the business model of the organisation from operational excellence to customer intimacy. Moreover, the whole lay-out of the production process should be redesigned to improve the processes. According to three of the

interviewees, a timeframe for these objectives has not been determined, which indicates that there has not been a kick-off or endpoint for the objectives. However, one interviewee – Managing director – stated that the timeframe of the objectives is two years.

Strategy implementation approach

The organisation uses an approach, model or framework for implementing the strategy. Two times a year the management convenes sessions with several small groups of employees. The structure of the information sessions is as follows: description of vision, mission and strategy, the objectives for the upcoming two years, departmental objectives, what the organisation has achieved the last year, the ideals of the organisation and the spearheads per department. This information will be described on PowerPoint slides and will be discussed during the sessions. After the session, the PowerPoint slides will be shared with all the employees. However, only one person mentioned this information session as strategy implementation approach, though the interviewees have mentioned the information sessions but did not connect the session as an implementation approach. According to the managing director, this way of implementing strategy has several advantages. First advantage is that it is a good way to communicate to all the employees; all the relevant information can be shared and people can easily ask questions during the sessions. A second advantage is that employees can provide input during the sessions. This input can lead to more commitment to the objectives and to the organisation. A third advantage is that the employees' input of previous sessions can be included into the objectives, which can also result in more commitment because people can recognize themselves in the objectives. Further, one interviewee – Operations manager – stated that, next to the information sessions, a monthly session with the management team about implementation of the objectives is the way how the organisation realizes the strategy.

Communication

As stated earlier, there is a yearly session where the vision, mission and strategy are updated. The updated strategy is communicated by a New Year meeting and by the earlier mentioned information sessions for all the employees. Furthermore, there are monthly sessions about the progress of CSR objectives. Moreover, there are monthly sessions about operational issues, where feedback about the last period and objectives for next month are discussed. All these sessions are recorded on documents and shared with the relevant employees.

Budgets

The organisation makes use of budgets. Three interviewees stated that everything is budgeted – 'Clear budgets have been determined for all the departments' (Operations manager). However, one interviewee – Team leader production – stated that there are not determined budgets in the organisation.

Monitoring

There are monthly meetings where the results of CSR and processes are discussed. These meetings are recorded on documents and shared with the employees with help of documents and also a screen with the results visualized – 'there are information screens which displays the CSR objectives and results' (Managing director). Two times a year, there is a session with all the employees about the results. Further, in the production hall the daily targets are shown on a digital board – 'the operational employees have day targets, which are visualized on a digital board' (Head planning department).

Incentives

The organisation uses a bonus system for all the employees. The bonus system has connected to CSR objectives; if the targets are reached, the employees will get a bonus. Moreover, there is another bonus system for the managers. This bonus system has connected to personal targets within their tasks.

Strategy assimilation in job position

All the interviewees stated that the organisation has reserved time for strategy in their job tasks.

Difficulties

The interviewees mentioned several difficulties where the organisation has to cope with. One of the difficulties is the competition from low-wage countries. Another difficulty is the development of talented employees. Further, the demographic factors are fluctuating, which is a difficult to cope with. The last stated difficulty is the increasing demands of the customers.

Next section compares, with help of a cross case analysis, the results of the five organisations and thereby discusses the most important similarities and differences per element between the organisations.

4.2 Cross case analysis

The elements, which are of importance for strategy implementation, have been used to structure the cross case analysis. A cross case analysis has been used to get an overview of the similarities and differences. The elements are strategy formulation, strategy implementation approach, communication, budgets, monitoring, incentives, strategy assimilated in job position, and job position hierarchical levels. The last element, job position hierarchical levels, is of importance to have understanding about eventual similarities and differences between different functions within the organisations.

Strategy formulation

Comparing the results of the within case analysis of the five organisations, several similarities and differences in the strategy formulation are visible. Table 10 shows that organisation 1 (Buckets) and 4 (Explosion safety) have not developed a strategy. All the organisations have developed growth strategies for the upcoming year(s), while only organisations 3 (Valves) and 5 (Glass) have determined KPIs. The interviewees of organisations 1 (Buckets) and 4 (Explosion safety) stated that they make choices which are based on ad hoc feelings and intuition, i.e. the strategic objectives are not recorded on documents. Moreover, organisations 2 (Foil), 3 (Valves) and 5 (Glass) have captured the strategy in a business plan or in a handbook, while the mentioned (strategic) objectives of organisation 1 (Buckets) and 4 (Explosion safety) have not been recorded on documents. In addition, the mentioned objectives of organisations 1 and 4 differ per interviewee. Further, a timeframe, i.e. an endpoint when the strategic objectives should be finished, has been determined by the organisations 2 (Foil) and 5 (Glass). There are differences between who developed the strategy within an organisation. The strategy of organisation 2 (Foil) has been developed by the top management, whereas the top- and middle management have developed the strategy for organisation 3 (Valves). Although, the strategy of organisation 5 (Glass) have been developed by the top-, middle-, and low/non-management.

Strategy formulation	Org. 1	Org. 2	Org. 3	Org. 4	Org. 5
A strategy has been generated		X	X		X
The organisation has determined growth objectives	X	X	X	X	X
The organisation has determined several KPIs			X		X
Strategy choices have been based on ad hoc feelings and intuition	X			X	
The strategy has been captured in a business plan		X	X		X

	Org. 1	Org. 2	Org. 3	Org. 4	Org. 5
The organisation determined a timeframe		X			X
The top management has developed the strategy		X			
The top-, and middle management has developed the strategy			X		
The top-, middle-, and lower/non-management have developed the strategy					X

Table 10: Comparing element strategy formulation per organisation.

Strategy implementation approach

Comparing the results of the within case analysis of the five organisations, similarities and differences in the strategy implementation are visible, see table 11. Firstly, organisations 1 (Buckets), 2 (Foil) and 4 (Explosion safety) do not have or use a specific approach for strategy execution, i.e. there is no procedure or the organisation does not take specific steps for implementing the strategy. The interviewees of these three organisations stated that they just do their jobs and will just see how they get to their objectives. In other words, these organisations implement the strategy based on ad hoc feeling and intuition. However, organisations 3 (Valves) and 5 (Glass) do use an approach to implement their strategy. Organisation 3 (Valves) uses an operational plan to implement the strategy. In this operational plan, the actions to achieve the strategy per department have been formulated. Further, organisation 5 (Glass) uses information sessions to implement the strategy. During the information sessions, several small groups of employees – often groups per department – have been informed about the strategy and action points have been provided to the employees.

Strategy implementation	Org. 1	Org. 2	Org. 3	Org. 4	Org. 5
The organisation uses a specific approach for strategy implementation			X		X

Table 11: Comparing element strategy implementation per organisation.

Communication

Comparing the communication element, several similarities and differences are visible, see table 12. First similarity is that all the organisations have captured meetings to discuss strategy and/or strategic objectives. Four organisations, organisation 2 (Foil), 3 (Valves), 4 (Explosion safety) and 5 (Glass), have recorded the meetings on paper. Organisations 2 (Foil), 3 (Valves) and 5 (Glass) share these records with use of documents, while organisations 1 (Buckets) and 4 (Explosion safety) share the outcomes of the meetings orally. Moreover, organisations 2 (Foil) and 4 (Glass) share the records of the meetings with all employees, whereas organisations 3 (Valves) and 4 (Explosion safety) share

the records with the involved people. As stated earlier, organisations 2 (Foil), 3 (Valves) and 5 (Glass) have captured the strategy in a business plan. Organisations 3 (Valves) and 5 (Glass) have shared the business plan with all employees, while organisation 2 (Foil) has only shared the business plan with the managers.

Communication	Org. 1	Org. 2	Org. 3	Org. 4	Org. 5
The organisation has captured meetings to discuss strategy and/or strategic objectives	X	X	X	X	X
The meetings have been recorded		X	X	X	X
The outcomes of the meetings have been shared with help of documents		X	X		X
The outcomes of the meetings have only been shared orally	X			X	
The records of the meetings have been shared to all employees		X			X
The records of the meetings have been shared to the involved persons				X	X
The business plan has been shared/communicated to all the employees				X	X
The business plan has been shared/communicated to the managers		X			

Table 12: Comparing element communication per organisation.

Budgets

As visible in table 13, organisations 3 (Valves), 4 (Explosion safety) and 5 (Glass) have determined budgets, while organisations 1 (Buckets) and 2 (Foil) do not have determined budgets for their operations.

Budgets	Org. 1	Org. 2	Org. 3	Org. 4	Org. 5
The organisation has determined budgets			X	X	X

Table 13: comparing element budgets per organisation.

Monitoring

The similarities and differences between the organisations have been visualized in table 14. The table shows that all five organisations monitor the results of the organisation. However, three organisations monitor the strategic objectives, whereby organisations 1 (Buckets) and 2 (Foil) only

monitor the results of the produced and sold items financially. Further, organisations 3 (Valves) and 5 (Glass) share the outcomes of the monitoring, which have been recorded on documents, with all the employees, while organisations 1 (Buckets), 2 (Foil) and 4 (Explosion safety) only share the monitoring documents with the (top) management. Moreover, organisations 3 (Valves), 4 (Explosion safety) and 5 (Glass) use a tool, the ERP system, for monitoring. Further, the interviewees of organisations 3 (Valves) and 5 (Glass) stated that the organisation provides feedback about the achieved objectives of the business plan. However, three interviewees of organisation stated that the organisation does not provide feedback about the business plan.

Monitoring	Org. 1	Org. 2	Org. 3	Org. 4	Org. 5
The organisation monitors the results	X	X	X	X	X
The organisation monitors (strategic) objectives			X	X	X
The monitoring documents are shared with all employees			X		X
The monitoring documents are only shared with the management	X	X		X	
The organisation uses a tool for monitoring			X	X	X
The organisation provide feedback about the business plan			X		X

Table 14: Comparing element monitoring per organisation.

Incentives

As visible in table 15, organisations 1 (Buckets), 3 (Valves), 4 (Explosion safety) and 5 (Glass) use a bonus system within the organisation to stimulate employees. The bonus system of organisations 1 (Buckets) and 5 (Glass) has been connected to general (strategic) objectives and applies for all the employees, while organisations 3 (Valves) and 4 (Explosion safety) connect the bonus system to personal targets. All the organisations use a profit sharing as bonus for achieving objectives or personal targets. Organisations 1 (Buckets), 2 (Foil), 3 (Valves) and 5 (Glass) use a bonus system for all the employees, while organisation 4 (Explosion safety) only uses a bonus system for the management. However, the interviewees of organisation 1 were not clear about the bonus system, i.e. the interviewees of organisation 1 (Buckets) gave different answers about the presence of a bonus system. For this reason, it is not clear if the organisation uses a bonus system.

Incentives	Org. 1	Org. 2	Org. 3	Org. 4	Org. 5
The organisation uses a bonus system	X?	X	X	X	X
The bonus system has been connected to general (strategic) objectives	X?				X
The bonus system has been connected to personal targets	X?		X	X	
The bonus system applies for all employees	X?	X	X		X

Table 15: Comparing element incentives per organisation.

Strategy assimilated in job position

As visible in table 16, organisations 1, 2, 4 and 5 have reserved time for strategy duties in the job position of the employees, while organisation 3 (Valves) does not have reserved time for strategy duties.

Strategy assimilation in job position	Org. 1	Org. 2	Org. 3	Org. 4	Org. 5
The organisation has assimilated the strategy tasks in the job position	X	X		X	X

Table 16: Comparing element budgets per organisation.

Job position hierarchical levels

Another element to analyse is the differences between hierarchical levels – i.e. top management, middle management, and lower/non-management – within the organisation. If the above mentioned elements have been taken into account, there are several differences visible regarding hierarchical levels within the organisations. Firstly, there are differences between the sharing of information about specific processes within the organisations. For example, several organisations do not share the records of the meetings to all the employees, but only to involved persons and/or managers. This can lead to unknowingness of relevant information such as, for example, budgets, incentives, objectives, plans et cetera. For clarification, the interviewees of organisation 1 (Buckets) have no knowledge if the organisation uses a bonus system, while persons of management stated that there is a bonus system within the organisation. Another remarkable element is what the management stated about several subjects and what the middle management or lower/non-management stated about this. For example, several employees of the top management of a specific organisation stated that all employees have knowledge about the business plan and the content of the business plan, while the middle- and lower/non-management interviewees declared that they have no knowledge about the presence of the business plan.

Altogether, the cross case analysis shows that two organisations declared that the organisation uses an approach for strategy implementation. Organisation 3 (Valves) described an operational plan as implementation approach. Whereby, organisation 5 (Glass) declared that the organisation use information sessions to implement the strategy. The other three organisations do not use a specific approach to implement strategy, whereby two organisations have not formulated a strategy.

The implementation approach of organisation 3 (Valves) is, as described earlier, to develop an operational plan per department. This operational plan describes the strategic objectives and per strategic objective the following elements should be determined: what are the actions to achieve this, how to measure if the objective has been achieved, which (extra) resources and people are needed, an indication of the costs to achieve the objective, when the objective should be finished and the KPI indicator. According to the interviewees of organisation 3, the operational plan has several advantages. Firstly, the operational plan, and business model, is a tool to be able to discuss the strategy thoroughly with all the employees once a year. Secondly, the operational plan challenges the employees. Thirdly, the operational plan has been determined per department to ensure that the plan feels as an own plan for everyone in the organisation, i.e. the plan ensures that it comes closer to the people that have to execute it. A fourth advantage is that it is easily to check the consistency between the departments. Comparing the implementation approach of organisation 3 with the characteristics of frameworks/approaches from the literature, it can be suggested that no theoretical approaches match with the approach of organisation 3.

Organisation 5 (Glass), as described earlier, captures information meetings to implement the strategy. During these meetings, the strategic objectives for upcoming two years are discussed within small groups of employees with use of PowerPoint slides. The structure of this session is: description of vision, mission and strategy, the objectives for the upcoming two years, the departmental objectives, what the organisation has achieved the last year, the ideals of the organisation and the spearheads per department. According to the managing director, this way of implementing strategy has several advantages. First advantage is that it is a good way to communicate to all the employees; all the relevant information can be shared and people can easily ask questions during the sessions. Second advantage is that employees can provide input during the sessions. This input can lead to more commitment to the objectives and to the organisation. Third advantage is that the employees' input of previous sessions can be included into the objectives, which can also result in more commitment because people can recognize themselves in the objectives. Comparing the information session of organisation 5 as implementation approach to the characteristics of the approaches/frameworks of the literature, no match can be found.

Moreover, two organisations, organisation 3 (Valves) and 5 (Glass), have determined KPIs, divided into four disciplines with targets, to support the strategy. Organisation 3 connects the KPIs in the operational plan – the KPI indicator – and monitors the KPIs. Several (monthly) meetings have been captured in organisation 3 to discuss and monitor the KPIs. Moreover, organisation 5 has determined KPIs as well and these KPIs have been determined into several disciplines. The KPIs – and other objectives – have been monitored on a monthly basis. For both firms, the BSC has been implemented and this framework is, according to the literature, an approach for implementing strategy.

The other organisations, organisation 1 (Buckets), 2 (Foil) and 4 (Explosion safety), do not make use of a model or approach. The employees of these organisations are performing their daily tasks and have not determined how to achieve objectives and/or strategy. The employees make decisions based on feelings and intuition and do not follow a procedure, guideline or plan to implement the formulated strategy.

Further, there are several remarkable differences and similarities visible between the organisations regarding elements of strategy formulation, communication, budgets, monitoring, incentives, and assimilation of strategy in job duties. A difference within the strategy formulation is the involvement of the different employees; one organisation only involves the top-management, whereas one organisation involves the top- and middle management and one organisation involves all the employees within the strategy formulation process. Moreover, the communication about strategy and other processes have also several remarkable differences. For example, four organisations have recorded the meetings on documents. However, three organisations share the outcomes with help of documents, while two organisations only share it orally. Another remarkable difference between the organisations is the difference in sharing of the records and the business plan among the employees; a couple of organisations only share it to the involved persons or management, while other organisations share it with all the employees. The next element is monitoring. The results show that all the organisations monitor, but only three organisations monitor the (strategic) objectives. The monitoring results have been shared to all the employees of two organisations, while three organisations only share the monitoring results with the management. Another difference is that only two organisations provide a feedback about the business plan. A difference with the element incentives is that all the organisations use a bonus system, primarily a profit sharing, while only one organisation connects the bonus system to (strategic) objectives and two organisations to personal targets. The last point is the assimilation of strategy in job duties. Remarkable is that the organisation, which uses an approach for strategy implementation, does not have assimilated the strategy in the job position.

Moreover, several above mentioned points match with the overview of obstacles, challenges and problems – which occur during the strategy implementation process – described in the theoretical section 2.4 (p. 15). For clarification, several examples could be given. A first example is that there could be suggested that there is a lack of communication within organisation 5 (Glass), because three interviewees stated that there have been determined budgets, while one organisation stated that there have not been determined budgets. A second example is the obstacle control system. The theoretical section states that there is a lack of control and monitoring of strategy performance progress, which is also the case within several organisations.

The next section describes the conclusion of this research. In this section, the answer on the research question has been given.

5. Conclusion

The research aim of this paper has been to map the various approaches that manufacturing organisations use for strategy implementation process and the challenges that manufacturing organisations face when doing so, with as overall aim to develop a roadmap for strategy implementation. In the strategic management literature limited systematic knowledge is available about how organisations go about implementing the strategy in practice. This paper less this literature gap by providing practical insight about how organisations implement their (business) strategy and the challenges these organisations face during the implementation process. Future academics can use these provided insights to further elaborate the strategy implementation approaches. Next to the theoretical contribution, the paper contributed to the practical side of strategy implementation. This paper provided practical insight for managers in how (manufacturing) organisations can implement their strategy. The overview of the strategy implementation approaches provides practical insight, as well as the practical information about how other organisations actually implement their developed strategies.

Furthermore, the used data collection method – i.e. the semi-structured interviews – and the data analysis method – i.e. the coding technique – have provided sufficient in-depth information to provide the needed information for this research. For instance, the semi-structured interviews provided the ability for probing questions on the given answers of the interviewees.

The results show that one approach, the BSC approach, has been used by two organisations to implement the strategy. However, the organisation does not describe the BSC approach as an implementation approach – the organisations use BSC for monitoring purposes. The same two organisations have both an own approach to implement the strategy. However, these two strategy implementation approaches do not match with approaches which have been developed by academic researchers, i.e. which have been described in the theoretical framework section. In addition, the approach of organisation 5 (Glass) put effort in the alignment of employees and therefore could be categorized into the alignment approaches – as described in the theoretical framework section. The operational plan of organisation 3 (Valves) can be seen as a process, and therefore could be categorized in the process approaches. There can be several possible reasons that no approaches from the literature have been used by manufacturing organisations. An important possible reason could be the amateurism regarding strategy implementation in the organisations, i.e. the managers – and employees – do not have sufficient knowledge about strategy implementation and underestimate its complexity. This knowledge gap could possibly be a result of the academic/educational content of educational institutions which is primarily about strategy formulation, while educational institutions pay less attention to the strategy implementation part.

Another possible reason could be the bustle within the organisations. Several interviewees declared that the issues of the day are more important for the organisations in comparison with strategy. For this reason, managers – and other employees – do not take sufficient time to thoroughly think about strategy implementation and do not take sufficient time to research and discover potential ways to implement strategy. In addition, two organisations did not even reserve time for formulation.

Three organisations have reserved time for the formulation process, but it is remarkable that these organisations do not reserve sufficient time in the implementation process, i.e. to research and discover potential approaches for implementing strategy. It could be suggested that the management teams of these organisation underestimate the strategy implementation process; the management presumes that when the strategy has been formulated, the employees will take up and follow up the strategy implementation, which is actually not the case. These findings match to the outcomes of the researches mentioned in the introduction of this paper: organisations do know how to formulate a strategy, but organisations are not successful in the implementation of the strategy and therefore strategy implementation is a challenge for organisations. In other words, the strategy implementation aspect has not been improved the recent years.

This research has considered which approaches are applicable for the specific organisations, i.e. if the specific organisations can use the approaches mentioned in the theoretical section. This is difficult to specify for two reasons. Firstly, the approaches of the theoretical framework are too generic to denote specifically for these cases. In other words, the approaches mention generic concepts, which make it difficult to connect it to the interviewed organisations. Secondly, the theoretical framework section divides the approaches into five categories – alignment, process, combination context/process without implementation factors, combination context/process with implementation factors, and the performance measurement system category. It could be suggested that most of the interviewed organisations have a lack of aspects in the different mentioned elements of the three categories of approaches – alignment elements, the process elements and the performance measurement elements. Taking both reasons into account, it is hard to state which theoretical approaches can be used for the interviewed organisations. Moreover, this research could suggest that the three categories of approaches should be combined into one approach – i.e. the alignment element, process element, and performance measurement system should be combined into one strategy implementation approach. As stated in the analysis, the several obstacles, challenges and problems from the theoretical section match with the findings of the organisations in this research. This match strengths the suggestion that the roadmap should combine the three above mentioned elements into one approach. The next section describes the discussion section, which has been divided into implications, recommendations, limitations and future research.

6. Discussion

Scientific implications

There can be suggested that the developed strategy implementation approaches – described in the theoretical section – are too abstract. In other words, the approaches do not provide sufficient steering to systematically guide the managers and employees to achieve the determined strategy. Moreover, as stated earlier, the strategy implementation approaches can be divided into five categories. However, it could be suggested that a strategy implementation approach should contain all the aspects of the five categories, i.e. an approach which combines all the aspects – alignment, process and performance measurement –, which has not been provided by the academic literature so far.

Recommendations

As described in the research goal, the overall aim of this research has been to develop a roadmap for strategy implementation. The gathered information is not sufficient to develop such a roadmap, but there can be named suggestions which are possible aspects for a roadmap. A suggestion is that there should be developed a roadmap which serves as a steering mechanism which systematically guide the employees to achieve the determined objectives, i.e. the steering mechanism should make objectives specific for (operational) employees. Another suggestion is that an approach should contribute to the clearness of objectives, personal targets, and resources which are available for achieving the objectives. In addition, the approach should provide feedback if the objectives and personal contributions have been delivered. In other words, the approach should systematically make the strategy understandable for the operational employees who contribute to realize the strategic objectives. Altogether, the approach should provide employees systematically knowledge and steering about how to implement the strategy – whereby communication between different levels within the organisation is an important aspect – and the approach should provide feedback, which results in that organisations can call someone to account if the objectives have not been reached.

Next to the roadmap, the time dimension is also an element where value can be added. As described earlier, the management put sufficient time in the formulation of strategy, but the management do not reserve sufficient time for the implementation. Therefore, it could be suggested that managers should reserve more time for strategy implementation and then primarily reserve time to research and discover the approaches mentioned in the literature.

Limitations

The paper has a few – possible – limitations. Firstly, the gathered data is for a large extent based on own thoughts and ideas of employees and therefore the provided data in the cases is for an extent

subjective, i.e. the statements have not been supported by (numerical) evidence. Secondly, the measurement tool, semi-structured interviews, has several limitations. For example, no guarantee can be given that the interviewees were completely honest in answering during the interviews, i.e. personal considerations and interests could play a role in answering the questions. Moreover, semi-structured interviews provide flexibility, but this can lessen reliability of the given answers. Another example of a limitation of the semi-structured interview is that it is difficult to completely avoid bias in an analysis. Thirdly, there have been selected five organisations for this paper. This amount of 5 manufacturing organisations makes that no hard statements can be made for the whole manufacturing industry.

Future research

The paper has several aspects for future research. Firstly, there have been mentioned possible requirements above. Researchers can develop these requirements further to develop a more comprehensive picture of the requirements of a strategy implementation approach. Moreover, this research is a snapshot of how organisations actually implement their strategy. It would be interesting to measure if an approach is effective, i.e. to check if such implementation approaches actually add value to the strategy implementation process. To judge the effectiveness of such approaches, it should be measured on several moments, i.e. a longitudinal study.

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8. Appendix

Appendix 1: Strategy implementation approaches

Alignment approaches	Description
Galbraith and Kazanjian (1978)	Galbraith and Kazanjian (1978) developed an approach which consists of several implementation factors which should be aligned to each other. The five implementation factors of the approach are task, people, structure, reward system, and information and decision processes. Important is that these factors should be consistent with the product-market strategy of the organisation. An example: "the organisation must match the people with the task through selection, recruitment, and training and development practices. The people must also match the structure; division of labour, the departmental structure, and the distribution of power" (p. 114).
Waterman et al. (1980)	The approach developed by Waterman et al. (1980) is called the 7S framework. The framework exists of seven factors which should all be interconnected to each other. These seven factors – structure, system, style, staff, skills, strategy and subordinate goals – are all influencing the organisation's ability to change. In other words, this framework focuses on interactions between the factors and the organisation is able to change when there is a fit between the factors.
Stonich (1984)	The approach of Stonich (1984) is primarily about the alignment between the performance management system with the corporation's strategy. The approach stated that the "system should be consistent with internal characteristics" (p. 46). The author refers to structure, Human Resources, culture and management processes as internal characteristics.
Hambrick and Cannella (1989)	The approach of Hambrick and Cannella (1989) consists of two broad elements which interact with each other; the substantive levers element and the active, broad-based, selling and communication element, i.e. careful assessment of implementation obstacles. The first element exists of the next levers; resource commitments, subunit program, structure, rewards and people, whereby the second elements refers to selling the strategy upward, downward, outward and across the organisation. These two elements must (all) occur to gain support for the strategy, which leads to an effective strategy implementation.
Miller (1997)	Miller (1997) did not develop an implementation framework for strategy, but proposes ten factors which influence the implementation process. The ten factors have been categorised into two groups; the realizers and the enablers. The realizers refer to the organisational factors which have the greatest import for success and enablers refer to organisational factors which have less import for success and are support factors for the realizers. The enabling factors are familiarity, priority, resource availability, structural facilitation and flexibility. The realizing factors are backing, assessability, specificity, cultural receptivity and propitiousness, which are more critical in implementing strategic decisions, cf. enabling factors.
Higgins (2005)	The approach of Higgins (2005) is based on the 7S model of Waterman et al. (1980). Higgins (2005) added an 8th dimension to the framework, called the strategy performance dimension, and did make some changes in the 7S model. The next dimensions should all be aligned for optimal strategy performance; strategy and purposes, structure, system and processes, style, staff and resources, and shared values. It is important that "all organisation's dimensions should be pointing in the same direction" (p. 4).

	The intention of this approach is to help executives of an organisation with the implementation process; the model makes it easier for an executive to see where changes should be made to let the strategy work.
Hrebiniak (2006)	The approach of Hrebiniak (2005) describes the key decisions and the actions which should be made during the implementation process. According to the approach, there is a logical flow in these decisions and actions, with feedback loops included. The decisions and actions which should be made during the process are; corporate strategy, corporate structure/integration, business strategy and short-term operating objectives, business structure/integration, and incentives and controls. An important contribution of this approach is that strategy implementation is a dynamic and adaptive process, i.e. the above mentioned decisions and actions should constantly be changed and adapted, where communication is an important aspect.
Mankins and Steele (2005)	The approach of Mankins and Steele (2005) is called the 'seven rules'. These seven rules serve as raising standards for planning and execution, that would say that the rules create clear links between the formulation and the implementation of the strategy. As stated by Mankins and Steele (2005) living these rules "enables them [=the leaders of an organisation] to objectively assess any performance shortfall and determine whether it stems from the strategy, the plan, the execution or employees capabilities" (p. 127).
MacLennan (2011)	The Inverted Pyramid framework is the strategy implementation approach developed by MacLennan (2011). This framework implies that an organisation should follow particular steps in the implementation process to make the strategy implementation process successful. The framework knows two phases; first phase is translating objectives into activities, i.e. aligning what is critical for successful strategy execution, and second phase is the alignment of organisational designs with organisational systems.
Ivancic (2013)	Ivancic (2013) proposes a framework which implies that critical implementation factors should be taken into account for efficient strategy implementation. When an organisation implements a strategy, there should be detailed guidelines for organisational structure, organisational culture, resources, leadership and time. Ivancic (2013) stated that "without guidance, execution becomes a labyrinth" (p. 7).

Table 17: Alignment approaches.

Process approaches	Description
Vasconcellos e Sa (1988)	Vasconcellos e Sá (1988) proposes an approach which consists of 10 steps, a step-by-step approach, for correctly implementing a strategy. The steps are: design a general framework of the organisation, select the SBU, centralize some functions, define each SBU's objectives, develops the programs to achieve the objectives, structure the SBU's, be unequalitarian, structure the sections, control and the last step is to check the previous nine steps for consistency.
Galpin (1996)	Galpin (1996) proposes a step-by-step model which exists of nine steps for implementing strategy. The model is called 'Nine Wedges Change Model'. Galpin (1996) stated that "an organisational change effort must target on two levels – the strategic level and the grassroots level" (p. 13). The steps in the approach are (1) establish the need to change; (2) developing and disseminating a vision of a planned change; (3) diagnosing and analysing

	the current situation; (4) generating recommendations; (5) detailing the recommendations; (6) pilot testing the recommendations; (7) preparing the recommendations for rollout; (8) rolling out the recommendations; and (9) measuring, reinforcing, and refining the change. Further, the model emphasizes the importance of understanding an organisation's culture.
Noble (1999)	The approach of Noble (1999) is a process oriented model and exists of four stages – pre-implementation, organizing the effect, the on-going management of the process and maximizing cross functional performance. The focus of the model is on "maximizing cross-functional issues, or relations, and dynamics" (p. 20). The underlying idea of the model is that "top managers can improve the effectiveness of the implementation processes if the managers understand the challenges and pitfalls inherent at each stage" (p. 20). Noble (1999) links these stages to several levers – goals, organisational structure, leadership, communications, and incentives. If these levers are considered, in combination with the related stage, the model provides a useful framework for efficient strategy implementation.
De Feo and Janssen (2001)	The authors de Feo and Janssen (2001) have described an approach which describes ten steps for strategy implementation, i.e. the 10 stage model. The purpose of the ten steps is to integrate the organisation's strategy with the culture of the organisation. Further, R&D, manufacturing, quality, finance, HR, marketing and customer service should be fully integrated with the organisation's vision and strategy to be able to implement a strategy.
Kaplan and Norton (2008)	The approach of Kaplan and Norton (2008) can be seen as a closed loop management system with five stages; develop the strategy, translate the strategy, plan operations, monitor and learn, and test and adapt the strategy.
De Flander (2012)	The approach of de Flander (2012) is called the '8'. The '8' is an approach that emphasis the linkage between individual level factors and organisational level factors. These two levels should be aligned for successful strategy implementation. The 8 stands for the next organisational factors; review and update strategy, communication and cascade, compare and learn, and the next individual factors; set objectives, monitor and coach, and evaluate the performance, whereby manage initiatives is the alignment instrument between organisational and individual level.

Table 18: Process approaches.

Combination group, context and process variables, without implementation factors approaches	Description
Pettigrew and Whipp (1991)	The approach of Pettigrew and Whipp (1991) exists of five central aspects which are all interrelated with each other. The five aspects are: coherence, environmental assessment, leading change, human resources as assets and liabilities, and linking strategic and operational change. This approach is about the alignment between the aspects to be able to successfully manage change.
Roth et al. (1991)	The approach, developed by Roth et al. (1991), is a strategy

	implementation framework which is internationally oriented. The framework builds on the idea that there must be a fit between the international strategy, the operational capabilities and the administrative mechanisms. If the alignment is the case, it is much easier to implement the strategy and to achieve the desired objectives. The operational capabilities exist of the variables; coordination, managerial philosophy and configuration, whereby the administrative mechanisms exist of formalization, centralization and integrating mechanisms.
Dawson (1994)	Dawson (1994) introduced a contextual, processual approach. This approach consists of three time-frames and three change determinants. The three time-frames are conception, transition and operation, whereby the three determinants are the politics, i.e. the political activity of consultation, negotiation, conflict and resistance, the substance, i.e. the use of new techniques and technologies, and the context of the change, i.e. the past, present and future external and internal environment.
Allio (2005)	Allio (2005) proposed a step-by-step approach which exists of the following stages; refining vision and strategy, crafting individual implementation programs, integrating implementation programs, ratification, and effective implementation. In these steps, Allio (2005) stated that eight factors should be taking into account: simplicity, a common language, assessment the roles and responsibilities, balancing short term with long term, accuracy, use a common format for programs, regularly and structured reunions, and link up implementation activities with the firm's financial infrastructure.
Stack (2014)	Stack (2014) proposed the LEAD framework as approach for strategy implementation. The LEAD framework implies that there are four keys to efficient strategy implementation; Leverage, Environment, Alignment, Drive. First key is leverage, which refers to if the right people are present in the organisation. Second key is the environment, which refers to if the right organisational atmosphere is present. Third key is alignment where the question is do your team members' daily activities move them forward to the accomplishment of the organisation's ultimate goals? The fourth key refers to agility of the leaders, teams and employees. The leaders, teams and employees need to be agile enough to improve quickly the potential problems in the first three keys. Otherwise, there is a speed and/or agility issue in the organisation.

Table 19: Combination group without implementation factors approaches.

Combination group, context and process variables, with implementation factors approaches	Description
Schmelzer and Olzen (1994)	The approach of Schmelzer and Olzen (1994) distinguishes two elements; the context activities and the process components, whereby the context activities directly influence the process components. Further, it is of importance that the relationships in the model are understood. The context activities exist of the perceived environment uncertainty (PEU), structure and organisational culture. The primary process components are information systems, planning & control, resource allocation, method of training and the project initiation style. The secondary process

|	components are the rewards and incentives.
Okumus (2003)	The framework of Okumus (2003) "employs a holistic approach to view the formulation and implementation of the strategy and then evaluate how the implementation factors interact with each other and how they impact the process" (p. 879). In other words, the approach is contextual as well as processual and strategy implementation is an interactive process between the different factors. Okumus (2003) stated that "strategy is the combination of all factors working together that makes the transformation process possible" (p. 873).
Pryor et al. (2007)	Pryor et al. (2007) developed the 5 P's model, which exists of these 5 elements; purpose, principles, processes, people, and performance, which all affect strategic implementation. Moreover, every element has several sub-elements (see appendix 1). As stated by Pryor et al. (2007), "the individual elements are significant as specific components, but their integration and alignment are even more essential for successful strategy implementation" (p. 7). The elements of strategy implementation are incorporated into an overlapping framework, where the integration and alignment of these elements is necessary to effective implementation.
Yang et al. (2008)	The approach of Yang et al. (2008) composes of nine key implementation factors which are distinguished as mixed-, hard-, soft-, and mixed factors. These factors should all be aligned to each other to create a consensus in the organisation. This consensus is needed to implement a strategy. Further, it is stated that this process can be divided into four phases, namely: pre-implementation phase, organizing implementation phase, managing implementation phase and sustaining performance phase.

Table 20: Combination group with implementation factors approaches.

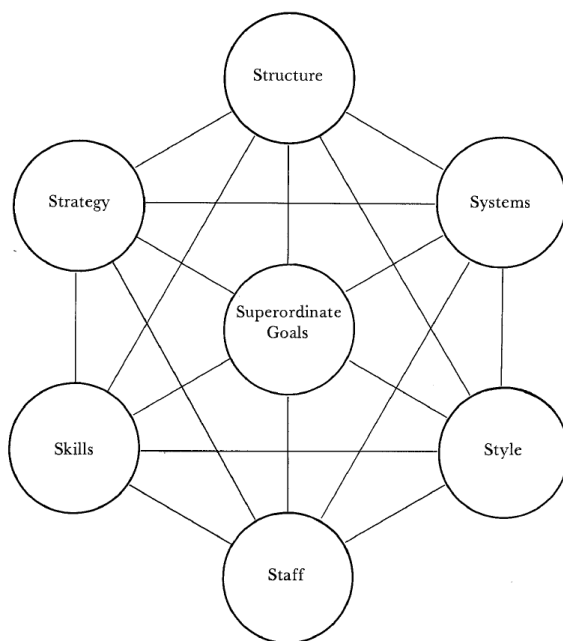| Performance measurement system approaches	Description
Reed and Buckley (1988)	According to the framework of Reed and Buckley (1988), strategy implementation is about the interrelationships between performance appraisals, goal-setting and critical success factors in implementation. This framework focuses on integrating the successfully strategic aspects of an organisation to make strategy work.
Kaplan and Norton (1996)	The approach developed by Kaplan and Norton (1996) is called the Balanced Scorecard Framework (BSC). This framework focuses on four aspects – financial, internal business, learning & growth and customer – which are all connected to the vision and the strategy of an organisation. The main purpose of the framework is to provide executives with a concise summary of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) per aspect, with as goal that executives can measure and control the performance. The performance measures in these four perspectives should be aligned for successful strategy implementation. Moreover, Kaplan and Norton (1996) suggest five principles for strategy implementation, namely: translate the strategy to operational terms, align the organisation to the strategy, make strategy everyone's job, make strategy a continual process, and mobilize change through leadership.

Table 21: Performance measurement system approaches.

Appendix 2: Graphically representation strategy implementation approaches

1. Galbraith & Kazanjian (1978)
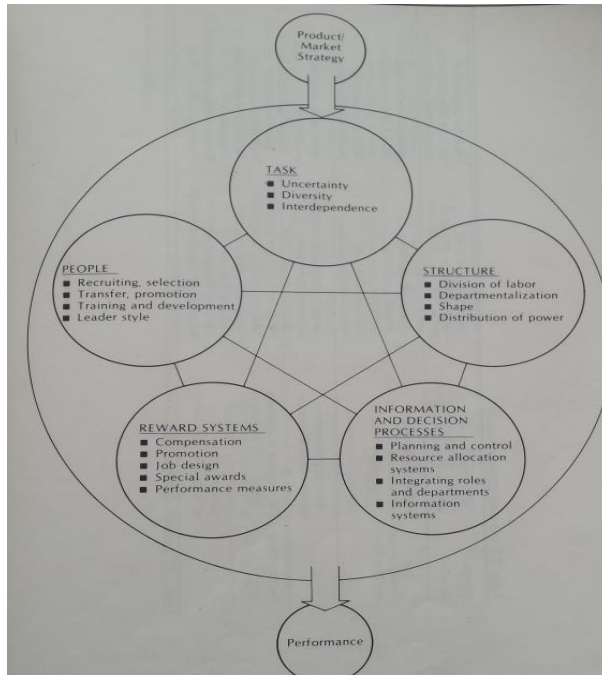
2. Waterman et al. (1980)

3. Stonich (1984)
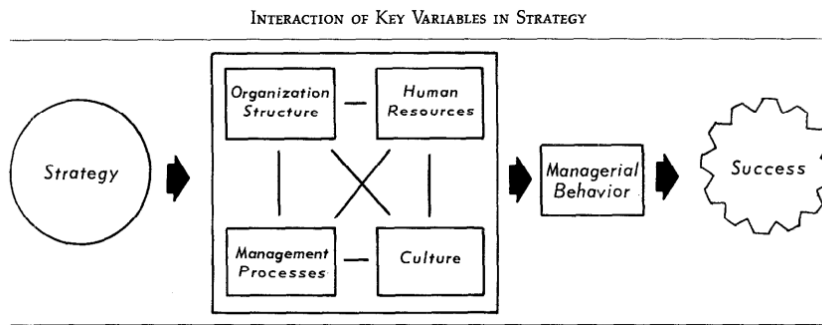
4. Reed & Buckley (1988)
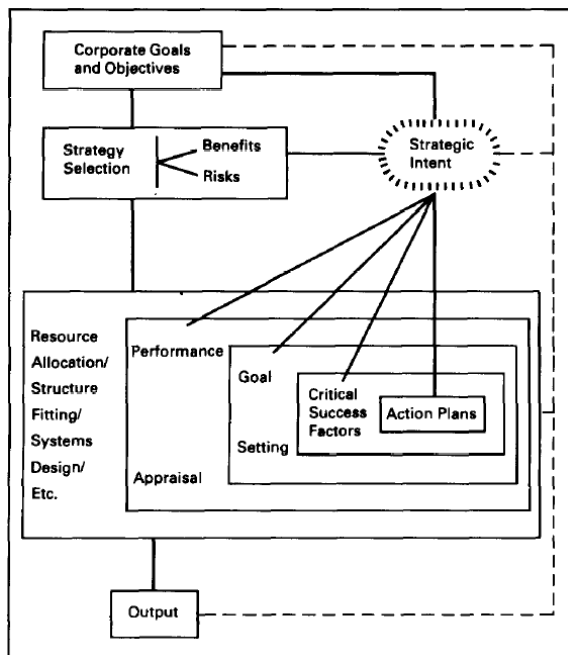
5. Hambrick & Cannella (1989)

6. Vasconcellos e Sá (1988)

Design a general framework of the organization

Select the strategic business units

Centralize some functions

Define each strategic business units objectives

Develops the programs to achieve the objectives

Structure the strategic business units

Be unequalitarian

Structure the sections

Control

Check previous nine steps for consistency
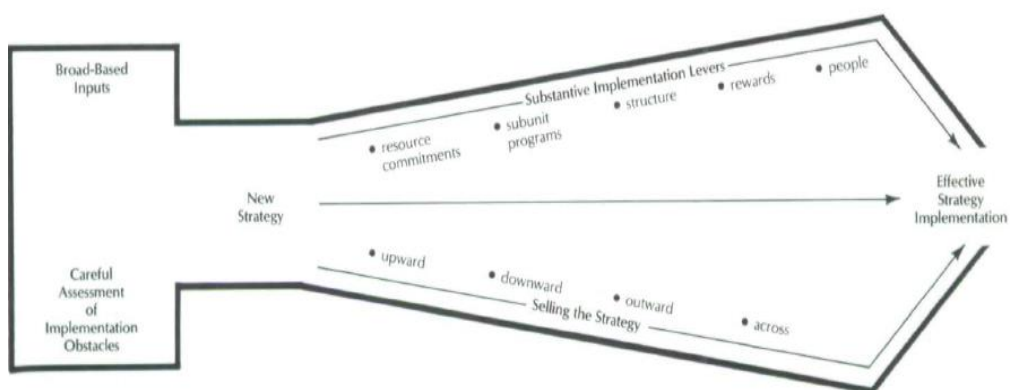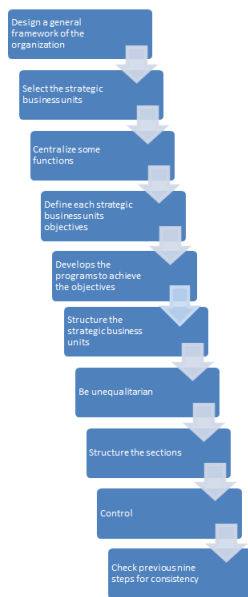
7. Pettigrew & Whipp (1991)
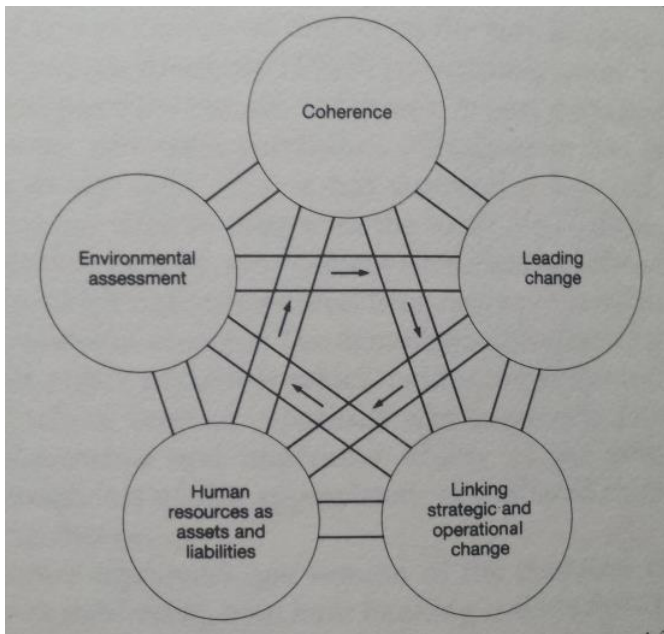
8. Roth et al. (1991)
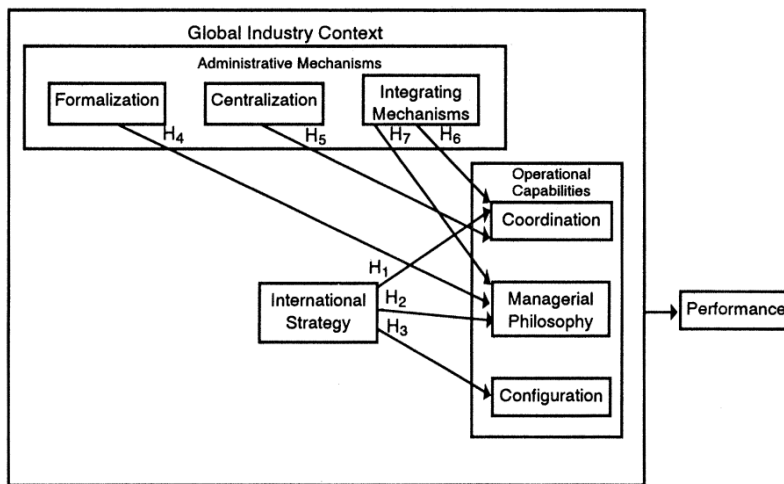
9. Dawson (1994)

10. Schmelzer & Olsen (1994)

11. Kaplan & Norton (1996)

Balanced Scorecard Framework*

12. Galpin (1996)

13. Miller (1997)

There is not a graphically representation of the approach of Miller (1997) available.

14. Noble (1999)

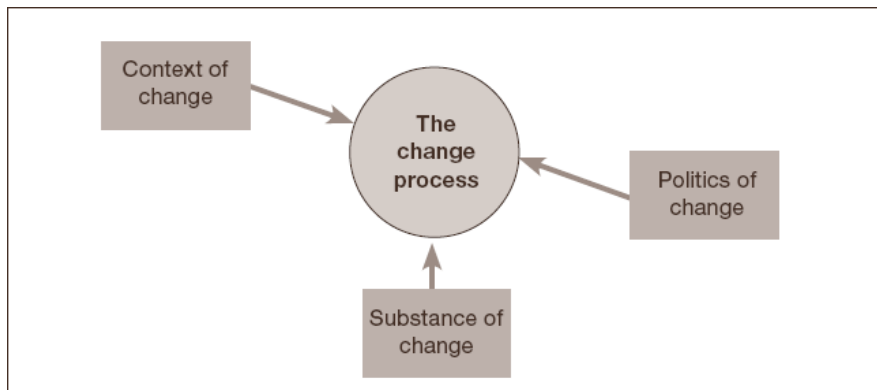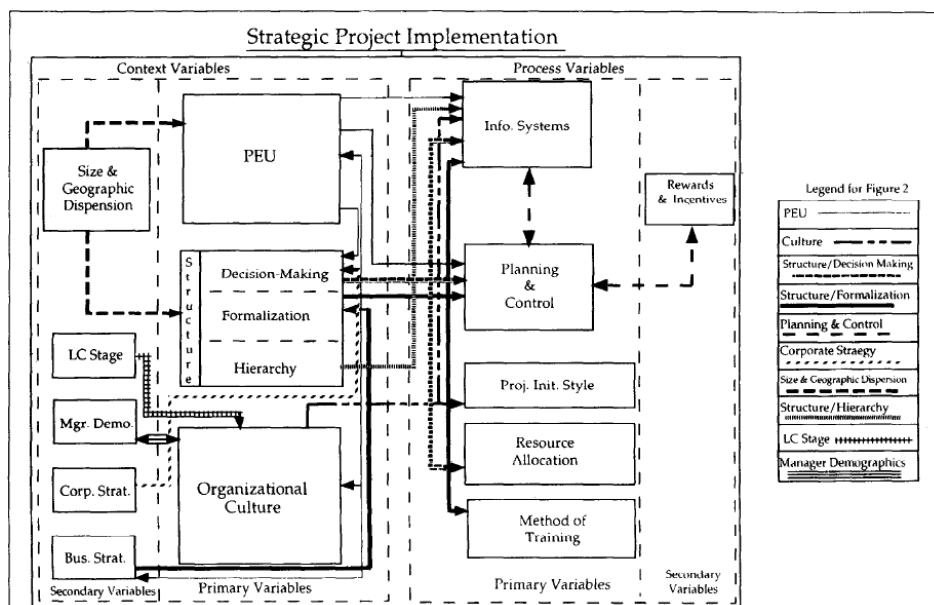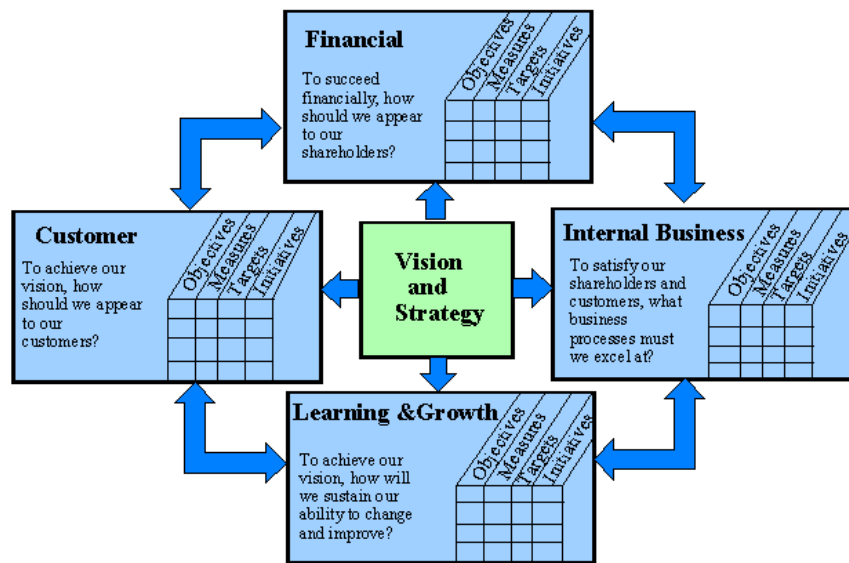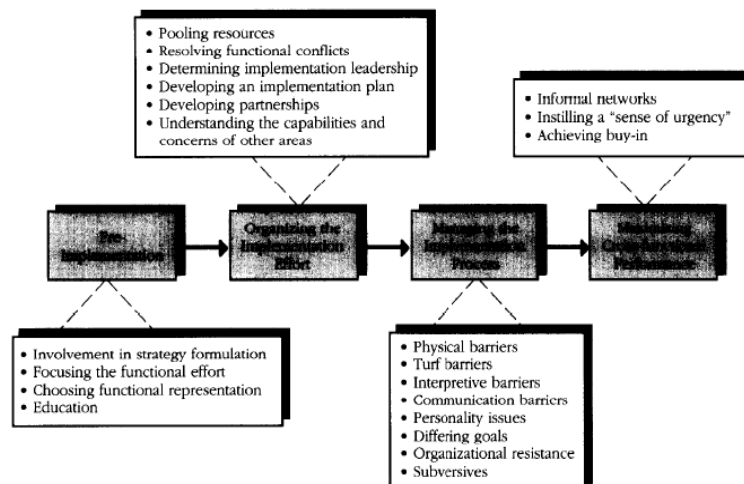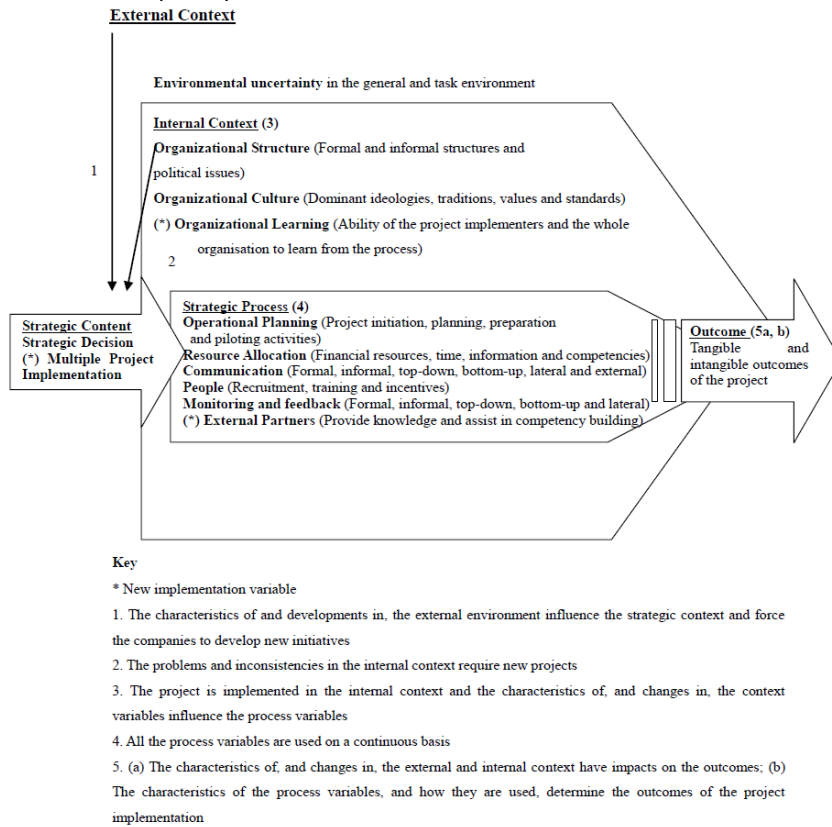| LEVERS	STAGES			
	Pre-implementation	Organizing the Implementation Effort	Managing the Implementation Process	Maximizing Cross-functional Performance
Goals	Ensure that all managers are aware of the strategic goals of the firm	Introduce goals of the strategy being implemented, including fit within firm's broader strategic vision	Maintain the flexibility to adapt goals based on environmental changes	Develop and focus on common goals to encourage cross-functional cohesiveness
Organizational Structure	Ensure that functional areas have the slack resources needed to be able to contribute to an implementation effort	Establish a formal implementation unit and ensure its visibility throughout the firm	Ensure equal representation by all affected functional areas	Temporarily suspend key implementation team members' normal responsibilities to allow them to focus on the implementation effort
Leadership	Develop employees' knowledge and appreciation of multiple functional areas	Establish a "champion" who has both official cross-functional authority and general respect in the firm	Ensure that leaders show equal attention to all functional-level concerns	Balance visible and charismatic leadership with a maintenance of autonomy for functional-level implementation efforts
Communications	Maintain regular cross-functional communications to foster understanding and appreciation	Discuss and resolve implementation details early in the process	Update implementation team frequently on progress and changes in objectives	Communicate implementation progress across the entire organization to foster buy-in
Incentives	Reward the development of cross-functional skills	Develop time and performance-based incentives for implementation team while lessening traditional functional incentives	Adjust incentives as strategy and environmental conditions change during implementation	Establish visible and consistent cross-functional rewards for successful implementation efforts

15. De Feo & Janssen (2001)
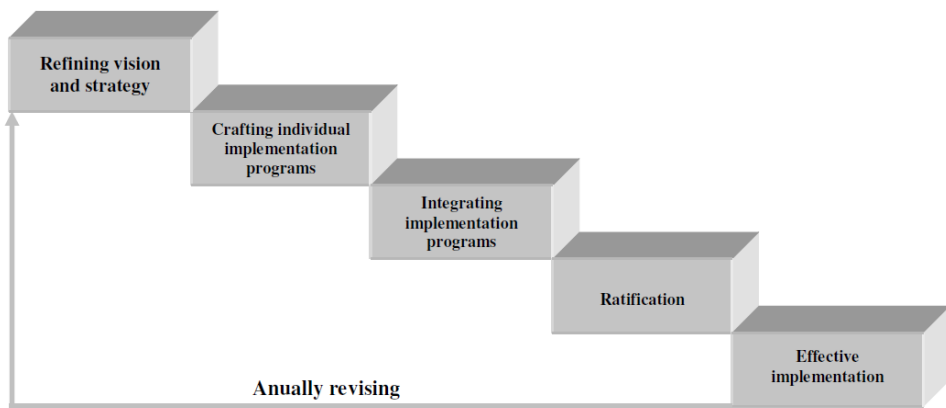
10 stage model:

1) Establish a vision
2) Agree on a mission
3) Develop key strategies
4) Develop strategic goals
5) Establish value
6) Communicate company policy
7) Provide top management leadership
8) Deploy goals
9) Measure progress with key performance indicators
10) Review progress

16. Okumus (2003)

External Context

Environmental uncertainty in the general and task environment

Internal Context (3)
Organizational Structure (Formal and informal structures and political issues)
Organizational Culture (Dominant ideologies, traditions, values and standards)
(*) Organizational Learning (Ability of the project implementers and the whole organisation to learn from the process)

2

1

Strategic Content
Strategic Decision
(*) Multiple Project Implementation

Strategic Process (4)
Operational Planning (Project initiation, planning, preparation and piloting activities)
Resource Allocation (Financial resources, time, information and competencies)
Communication (Formal, informal, top-down, bottom-up, lateral and external)
People (Recruitment, training and incentives)
Monitoring and feedback (Formal, informal, top-down, bottom-up and lateral)
(*) External Partners (Provide knowledge and assist in competency building)

Outcome (5a, b)
Tangible and intangible outcomes of the project

Key

* New implementation variable

1. The characteristics of and developments in, the external environment influence the strategic context and force the companies to develop new initiatives

2. The problems and inconsistencies in the internal context require new projects

3. The project is implemented in the internal context and the characteristics of, and changes in, the context variables influence the process variables

4. All the process variables are used on a continuous basis

5. (a) The characteristics of, and changes in, the external and internal context have impacts on the outcomes; (b) The characteristics of the process variables, and how they are used, determine the outcomes of the project implementation

17. Allio (2005)

Refining vision and strategy

Crafting individual implementation programs

Integrating implementation programs

Ratification
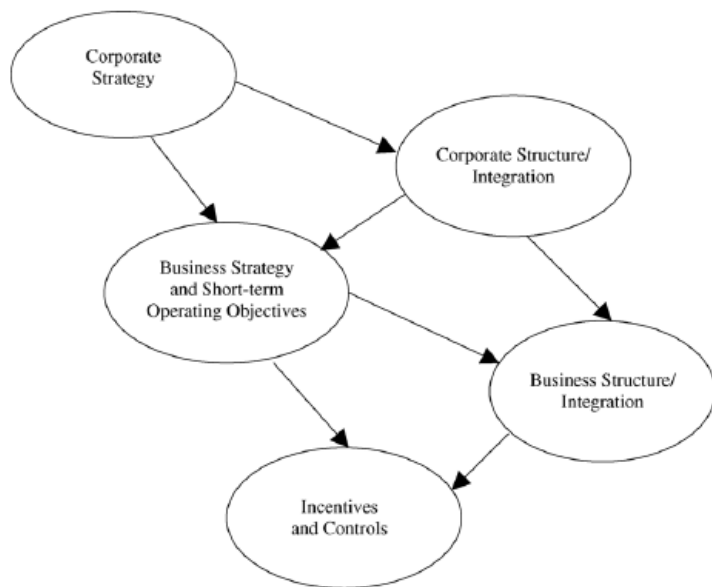
Effective implementation

Anually revising

18. Higgins (2005)

19. Hrebiniak (2006)

20. Mankins & Steele (2005)

Keep it simple: Avoid long-winded, lofty and vague goals.

Challenge assumptions: Ensure they reflect real-market economics, and your firm's actual abilities relative to rivals.

Speak the same language: All the business units must draw on the same framework for assessing performance.

Discuss resource deployments early: Ask how fast changes can be made, and how fast competitors will respond.
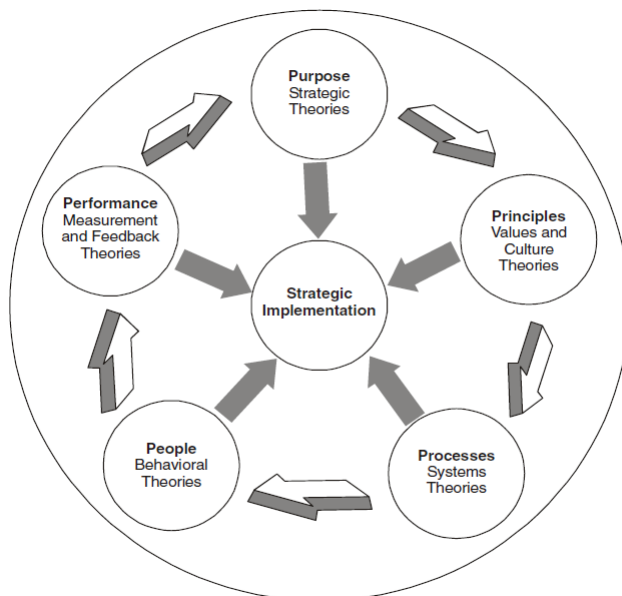
Identify priorities: Make them explicit so everyone knows when they should be executed.

Continuously monitor performance: Track results against the plan, then reset assumptions and resource allocations as needed.
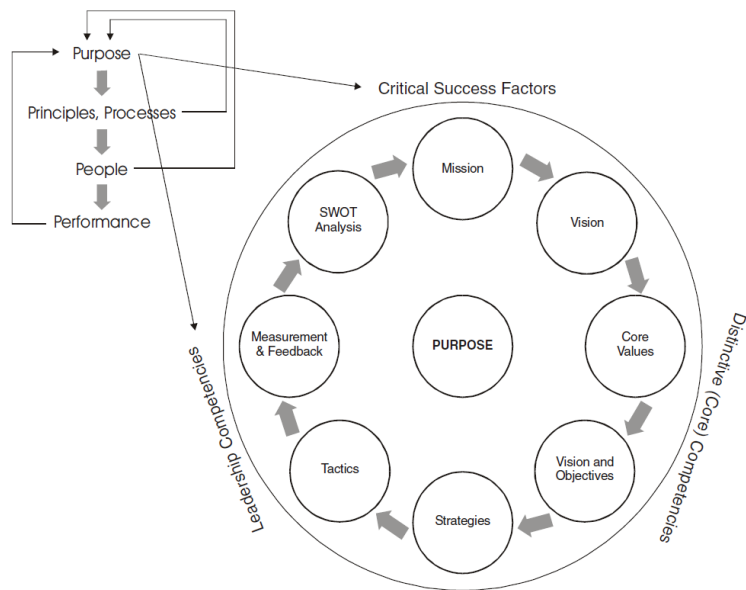
Develop execution ability: "No strategy can be better than the people who implement it." Hiring of managers is key.
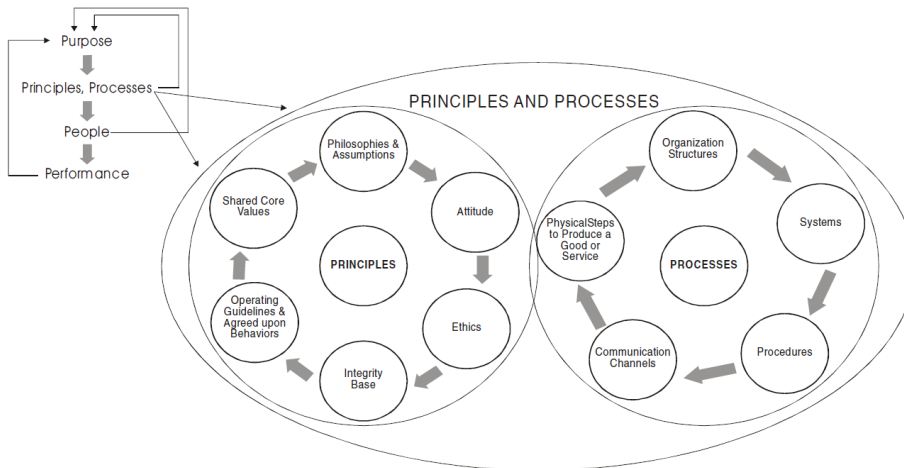
21. Pryor et al. (2007)
1/5

Purpose

Principles, Processes

People

Performance

Critical Success Factors

Leadership Competencies

Distinctive (Core) Competencies

Mission

Vision

Core Values

Vision and Objectives

Strategies

Tactics

Measurement & Feedback

SWOT Analysis

PURPOSE

Purpose

Principles, Processes

People

Performance

PRINCIPLES AND PROCESSES

Philosophies & Assumptions

Attitude

Ethics

Integrity Base

Operating Guidelines & Agreed upon Behaviors

Shared Core Values

PRINCIPLES

Organization Structures

Systems

Procedures

Communication Channels

Physical Steps to Produce a Good or Service

PROCESSES

Purpose

Principles, Processes

People

Performance

Process Stakeholders

Process Owners

Organization Leaders

Teams

Internal Customers

External Customers

Internal Suppliers

External Suppliers

Empowerment

Individuals

PEOPLE

22. Kaplan & Norton (2008)

23. Yang et al. (2008)

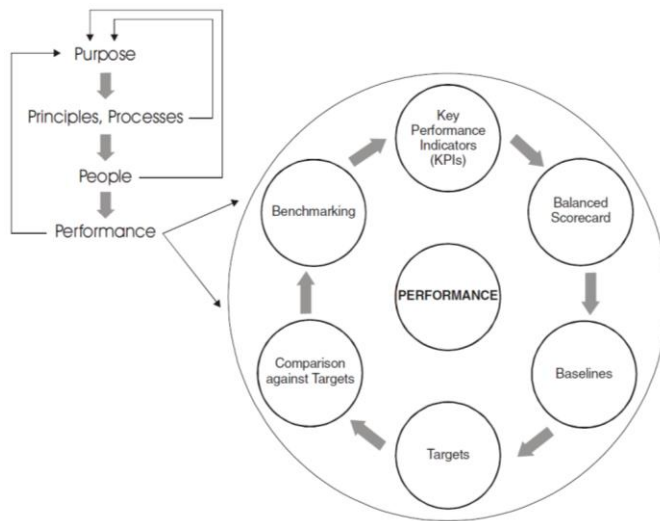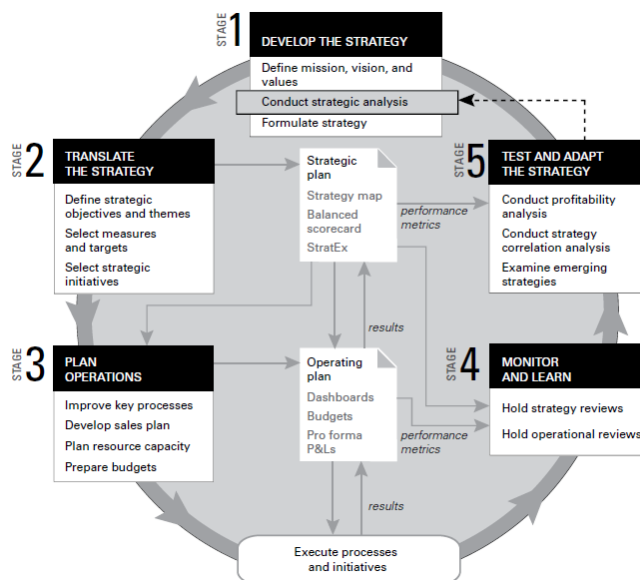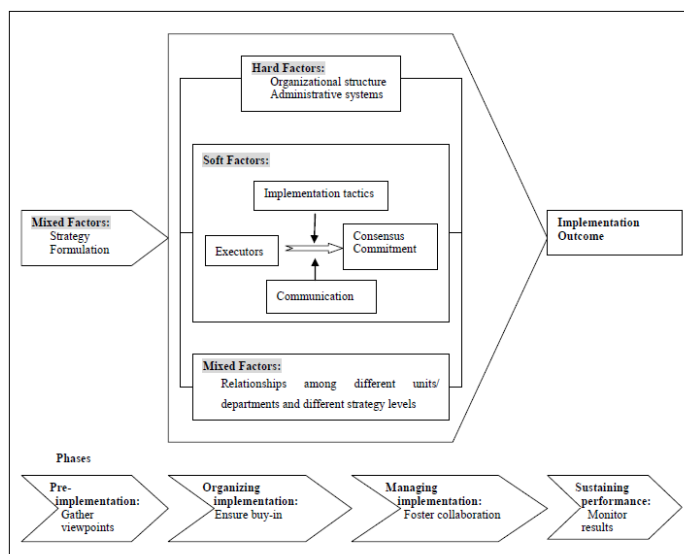24. MacLennan (2011)
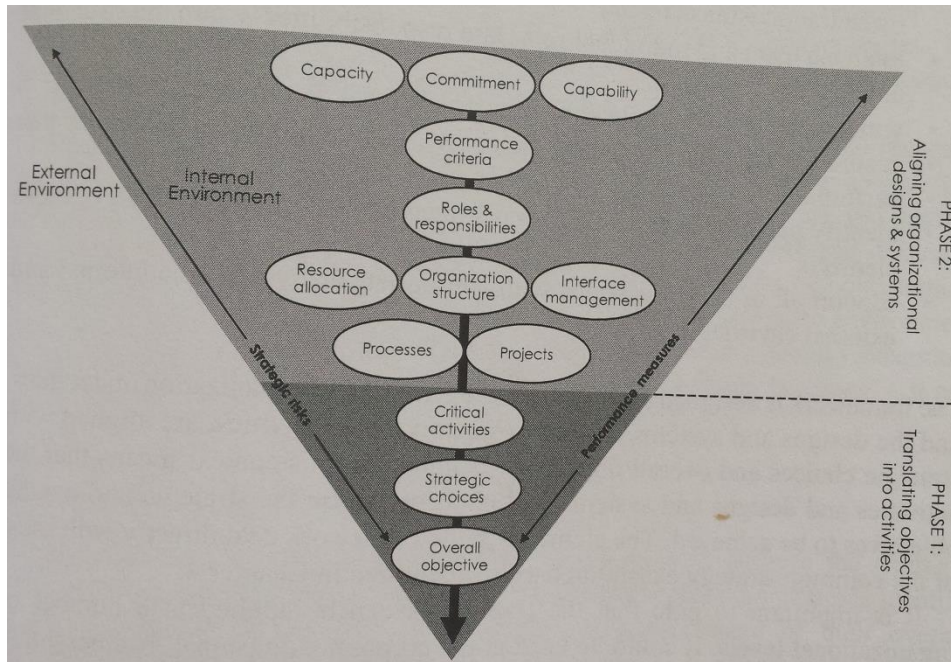
25. De Flander (2012)

26. Ivancic (2013)

Environment uncontrollable factors

Leadership	Resources	Time

Organizational structure	Organizational culture

Framework for efficient strategy implementation must contain:

Detailed **guidelines** for:	**Metrics**	**Evaluation of:**
Organizational structure	Quantitative KPI	External opportunities
Organizational culture	Qualitative KPI	External threats
Resources		
Leadership		
Time		

27. Stack (2014)

LEADERSHIP ROLES AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

L
LEVERAGE

Leadership Role
Engineer: Build It

Development
Opportunity
Talent/Resources

E
ENVIRONMENT

Leadership Role
Mechanic: Fix It

Development
Opportunity
Culture/Engagement

A
ALIGNMENT

Leadership Role
Conductor: Steer It

Development
Opportunity
Communication/
Productivity

D
DRIVE

Leadership Role
Bulldozer:
Knock It Down

Development
Opportunity
Speed/Agility

Appendix 3: Interview protocol

Topic	Subtopic	Questions
General information interviewee	Age	What is your age?
	Education	What is your educational background?
	Job	What is your function within the organisation?
		What kind of responsibilities do you have?
		How many hours do you work for this organisation in a week?
		How long have you worked for this organisation?
General information organisation	Value proposition	What kind for product does the organisation deliver?
	Size	What is the size of the organisation, i.e. the number of employees?
Strategy	Knowledge concept	What is strategy for you?
		What is strategy implementation for you?
Strategy formulation	Strategy objectives	What is the strategy of the organisation?
Strategy implementation	Approach	Does the organisation use an approach for strategy implementation?
		So yes, does the organisation take specific steps when implementing strategy? (go to subtopic 'Steps')
		So no, does the organisation use a framework where several aspects of the implementation have been captured? (go to subtopic 'Framework')
	Steps	If the organisation takes steps: Which steps does the organisation take when implementing strategy?
		Is there a guideline for the strategy implementation process? Or are the steps on an ad hoc basis?
		What are the benefits and disadvantages of these steps or guideline?
	Framework	If the organisation uses a framework where several aspects of the implementation have been captured: Can you tell more about this framework?
		What are the benefits and disadvantages of this framework?
	Time	Does the organisation have determined a timeframe for the implementation process? So yes, what is this timeframe?
		Does the organisation distinguish several phases in this timeframe?
	Communication	How is the communication with regards to strategy formulation/implementation?
	Involvement	What is your involvement in the strategy implementation process?
		Who else is involved in the strategy implementation

		process?
		Are always the same people involved in the strategy implementation process or varies this?
	Budgets	Are there budget determined in the organisation?
	Monitoring	How proceeds the monitoring within the organisation? Are the budgets monitored?
	Incentives	Are there incentives, connected to strategy objectives, in the organisation? If yes, for who applies these incentives?
	Strategy assimilated in job position	Are the strategy formulation and implementation processes assimilated in the job position/duties?
	Difficulties	Which difficulties does the organisation experience during the implementation process?
		Do the same difficulties occur more frequent?
	Cope with problems	How does the organisation cope with problems when these occur during the strategy implementation process?
		Who normally solve this/these problem(s), i.e. top-management, middle-management or lower/non-management?
	Tools	Does the organisation use a tool or tools for implementing strategy?
		Which tool(s) and could you explain the tool(s)?
		Does the organisation check if the strategy is well implemented? So yes, how? So no, is there a reason for this?
Notes interviewee	Notes	Do you have any questions or notes for this research?

Table 22: Interview protocol.