

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND BARRIERS TO
STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

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Acknowledgments

This dissertation is the culmination of a major change in my life. I know where I want to go, but, I admit, I still do not know where to go. I have no hesitation in saying that the lessons I have acquired over the time I attended the Master of Science (MSc) in Business Administration at ISCTE Business School will be the basis for the acquisition of knowledge in the future. From now on everything will depend on me.

This way, my first and main thanks go to my parents. The educational conjugation based on freedom and the increase of values as the respect as the neighbor was the main condiment for the formation of the person that I am today. Today, with a sedimented maturity, I look back and recognize the importance of its close follow-up. With all the virtues and defects I have, a good part of the person I am is due to them. All the lines that follow - and more - are devoted to my father and mother.

My family, of course, deserves a word of appreciation. Over the years, even in periods of lesser moral brilliance, I was always encouraged to look for the course of life that suited me. As such, this prominence, more than deserved, is a must.

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On one last, but vital note, unfortunately, fate did not allow everyone who started, to finish this degree. I remember here Vicente Castro Feijó, an opponent of football in his youth and an eternal friend, as of adulthood. I dedicate all these lines to his memory.

Abstract

This dissertation aims to understand and identify the barriers to strategic implementation, focusing, then, through an inquiry, in one of them, to make a deeper analysis of one of the variables.

To that end, this document begins by exploring what the concept of strategic management consists of, contextualizing history on this theme - from the 1950s to the present - and analyzing all its steps and processes - especially the moment of formulation, implementation and evaluation and control.

Subsequently, based on a poem and an interesting time from a cultural and communicational point of view, one begins to identify the importance that strategic communication has in the process of propagating a given individual idea or, in the terms that interests us most, within of an organization - whether ascending or descending, horizontal or vertical. In the organizational arena, business and communication are two inseparable issues.

The last point ends with the connection to the most important part of these lines: the barriers to strategic implementation. In this part, it is explained more deeply in what this moment consists in its variances of application and it is immersed in the multiple possibilities that can cause the collapse of the plans orchestrated by the companies and the main responsible ones.

In the end, as a theoretical complement, a questionnaire was designed for a relatively large number of people who were confronted with the topics under discussion throughout this dissertation.

KEYWORDS: Strategic Management, Strategic Communication, Strategy Implementation, Barriers

JEL CLASSIFICATION: L10, M10

Resumo

Esta dissertação tem como objectivo fundamental compreender e identificar quais são as barreiras à implementação estratégica, focando, depois, através de um inquérito, numa delas, para fazer uma análise um pouco mais profunda sobre uma das variáveis.

Para tal, este documento começa por explorar no que consiste o conceito de gestão estratégica, fazendo uma contextualização histórica sobre este tema - desde os anos 50 até aos dias de hoje - e analisando todos os seus passos e processos - principalmente o momento de formulação, implementação e avaliação e controlo.

Posteriormente, com base num poema e numa época interessante do ponto de vista cultural e comunicacional, começa-se a identificar a importância que a comunicação estratégica detém no processo de propagação de uma dada ideia individual ou, nos termos em que mais nos interessa, dentro de uma organização - quer seja por via ascendente ou descendente, horizontais ou verticais. Na arena organizacional, empresas e comunicação são dois assuntos inseparáveis.

O último ponto desemboca com a ligação à parte mais importante destas linhas: as barreiras à implementação estratégica. Nesta parte, explica-se mais profundamente no que consiste este momento, nas suas variâncias de aplicação e mergulha-se nas múltiplas possibilidades que podem causar o colapso dos planos orquestrados pelas empresas e pelos principais responsáveis.

No fim, como complemento teórico, foi realizado um questionário destinado a número relativamente vasto de pessoas que foram confrontadas com os temas em discussão ao longo desta dissertação.

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1. Introduction

In a global, complex and dynamic environment, strategic implementation is of fundamental importance for one company to gain competitive advantage over others and to be the leader of its industry platoon. Today, in times of worldwide competition, the critical success factors for an organization are challenged on a daily basis, which implies an adaptability and a constant need for change in the projects outlined. It is this bustling environment that forces companies to transform their strategies (Leker, 2001), through continuous innovation and adaptation (Heracleous, 2000).

It is interesting to look at the evolution, not only of this vector, but of all that make up Strategic Management, from the end of the Second World War to the technological days of today. Formulation, Implementation and Evaluation and Control are at the heart of what are interdependent processes with a very clear objective: to enable corporations to achieve the challenges proposed.

We are living in a world of pure and sometimes almost uncontrollable quickness. Never in any part of our history, we faced such constant changes both in our personal lives or in any sector of activity. As business is becoming more competitive, all information is increasingly useful, not only for knowledge to flow through all levels of a company, but also, especially, to anticipate the movements of competitors (Zerfass & Huck, 2007).

Strategic Communication appears with a bastion of one of several ways to prepare a company for an ultra-competitive reality where any detail can make a difference and also as a way to accomplish its mission and objectives. The corporate world was not indifferent to the overwhelming changes that have occurred in the way we communicate over the last years - not only inside but also outside organizations. The rise and application of the concept of stakeholder within business corporation and the concern to have an organic approach that, directly and indirectly, influence in their strategies rather than only shareholders – Pruzan (2001) reminds the importance of trust and competitive advantage of it –, was starting to be in vogue in late 80's - even if the credit of the term should be attributed to William Dill in 1958 (Preston & Sapienza, 1991).

As communication has become more multidimensional and energetic, this vector could be appropriate to the successful implementation of a strategy implementation.

However, companies face multiple fences to applicate their own planes, and communication, that could be one the keys to have a massive impact on the execution of new projects, can also be a huge barrier to it.

This leads us to the ultimate question: what are the barriers to strategic implementation? Does it prevent a totally successful strategy implementation? This is what, in the end, we will address, taking advantage to slightly deepen one of the variables under discussion.

These are the questions that I humbly aim to reply. It is not my goal to be a moral guardian of this subject, but I believe this document is enough to try to make the reader have a deep thought about the theme and maybe dive into this topic in the future.

2. Literature Review

This section aims to share much of the literature that guided the execution of this thesis. While many dissertations make mention of it, the number of documents talking directly about the problems to communicate strategies inside companies are scarce. While the objective of this piece is to provide to the reader an academic vision of strategic implementation and the barriers to pass the message between the multiple levels of an organization, this segment starts with an introduction to strategic management and its history.

2.1 - The evolution of Strategic Management

“Management is the means by which organization set and carry through their objectives; without it modern civilization and its process of wealth creation would not exist”

(Thomson & Young, 2002:13)

Modern civilization development made management one of the most significant phenomenon in the world (Weitzel, 2004). While its origins come from previous centuries – Roman Catholic Church and National Armies were the only large-scale organizations, apart from the then traditional commercial trading companies from colonies (Grant, 2010) -, the development of the notion of strategic management, in particular, not only is often related to military science (Weitzel, 2004), as in the last decades can be categorized as overwhelming. With globalization and a whole industry transformation – that resulted in a rearrangement of services, products or resources – new businesses and markets have appeared as consequence of substantial changes in technology and customer demands (Bonn and Christodoulou, 1996).

The success or failure of a company is explained by its strategic management (Rumelt et al., 1994). It is fascinating to look at the evolution of the concept and his methodology because it is a reflection on how fast the world can become different but also a fanciful excuse to some managerial failures. Since the 1950's, the constant shift led to a new search of concept and methods towards successful management (Bonn and

Christodoulou, 1996), even the impact of administrative impatience and the lack of time to implement a complete strategy, especially in uncertain times, cannot be diminished (Wilson, 1998).

The evolution of strategic management took shape after the Second World War. Following the end of the conflict, and up until the 1960's, there was no clear plan and the only concern was to allocate funds to different projects, respecting the premises of annual budget. This era was labeled as "Basic Financial Planning" and is contemporary with the first attempts to create corporate strategies, even if without any proper concern for the big picture (Schnaars, 1998).

On the next decade, the budgeting type of strategy evolved to "Long-Range Planning". With the advances in forecasts, the assumptions of multiannual consequences of annual budgets and the realization of the importance of setting goals for firms, managers would quickly shape planning departments to comply the new entrepreneurial principle (Schnaars, 1998). Thanks to demands of growth, organizations adopted an extended time of preparation horizon, multi-year estimation, environmental scrutiny and a less erratic allocation of resources (Gluck et al., 1980).

The emergence of the third phase, in the 1970's, is marked by the "Externally Oriented Planning" in which strategic planning enjoyed its apogee. Back then, as the competition was fierce, organizations began to search for new ways to generate alternative courses of strategies and dynamic distribution of funds, that turned out to be the rule in that time (Gluck et al., 1980).

In the 1980's, the techniques have become not more sophisticated, but more indivisible. This culminated into the merging of strategic planning and management into a unified process. The "Strategic Management" phase is characterized by the need to search for effectiveness for culminating projects. By the middle of this period, it was obvious that many companies used to do strategic plans that, after all, would not be unimplemented, with their respective stagnation of profits and/or losses (Bonn and Christodoulou, 1996). This led to the quality movement and just-in-time inventory methods that would set the tone for next decade.

According to Schnaars (1998) the 90's is characterized by an emphasis on restructuring companies by cutting costs and collaborators with the justification of trying to maintain competitiveness. The size was swapped by speediness and the velocity of distributions of products through distributions channels was converted into the objectives of operators. If the focus of profit were more focused on internal terms rather than external (Grant, 2008), this ultimate strategy solidified the idea of customer satisfaction initiated years before and that become a trend in those times (Schnaars, 1998). The so-called "*resource-based view of the firm*" embodied a modification in the way strategy was thought. The transformation was centered on inner resources – and finding the differences inside the corporation - in place of seeking for attractive markets like was more natural.

The evolution of strategy management in this century, as stated by (Grant 2008) culminated, in the first decade, in technology as a striking force with the fulminant emergency of TMT (Technology, Media and Telecommunications) and internet-based business models and, after the world-wide crisis originated (yet with previous bases) by the bankruptcy of Lehman Brother, in 2008, by the outbreak of a strong belief in corporate social responsibility, ethics and sustainability.

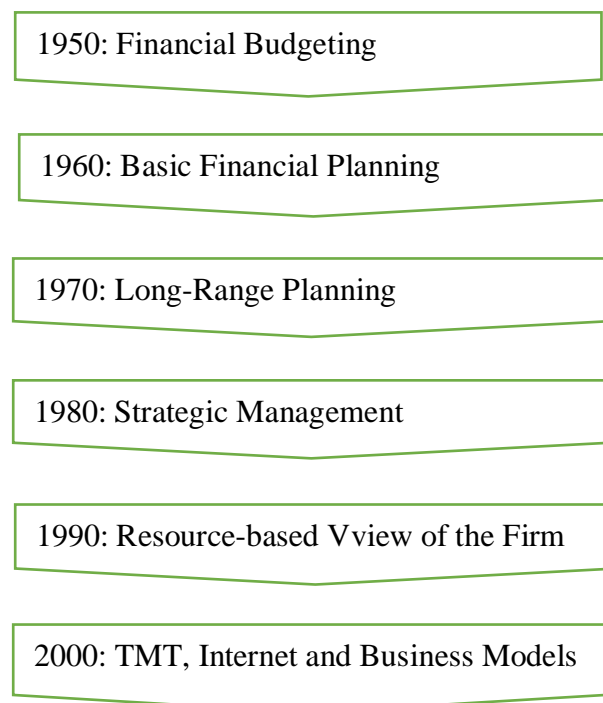


Fig. 1 – The evolution of strategic management

2.2 - Strategic Management: Process and steps

Strategic Management is the compass that guides the direction that each company should take by setting a certain number of objectives, developing plans to accomplish these goals and, after that, assigning the resources to implement the strategies. This management technique is key for any corporation to define its organizational plan. It is not an overstatement if we say that is crucial to see if an organization shine, survive or die because it is the link between an organization and its environment.

Nowadays, the circumstances that surround the business environment is ever-changing. Given this characteristic, one of the strengths that a company must have is to have a fast and effective capacity for change to the vicissitudes that the world presents to us daily. This ability to react can lead to modifications in strategy and is imperative to help to maintain or gain a competitive advantage towards other competitors (Brinkschröder, 2014).

Hamel (2008:3) reinforces that impression stating that *"over the coming decades, an accelerating pace of change will test the resilience of every society, organization and individual. Luckily, perturbations create opportunities as well as challenges. But the balance of promise and peril confronting any particular organization will depend on its capacity for adaptation. Hence the most important question for any company is this: Are we changing as fast as the world around us"*.

While this notion might have won even more logic with the passing of years, it is not entirely recent. Camillus (1997) vision of strategic management can be divided essentially into three parts: first is the firm's ability to make an analysis of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; the second one, is developing synergies within the company, resources and competitive advantages; and the last one, is a focus on flexibility to reply to variations on environment. The helicopter view metaphor, made known by the Royal Dutch Shell, is perfect to represents (Mintzberg et al., 1998) idea that these actions lead to aptitude to see the overall picture of an organization, which is decisive to remain competitive.

Formulation, Implementation and Evaluation are the epicenter of the highly interdependent processes of Strategic Management that can allow the corporation to achieve their goals (David, 2011). These three stages are essential to generate and develop

new opportunities for the upcoming times (David, 2011), but some authors consider another phase as a predecessor of the ones already referenced.

Environmental scanning is considered a fundamental step to a fruitful competitive strategy. By collecting, scrutinizing and providing data for mere strategic intentions, this stage analyses the internal and external aspects that can influence the organism success. Viewed as a vital process in the already talked procedure of constant adaptation that a company must have (Hambrick, 1982), it must identify the threats and opportunities existing in the environment. This helps the administration to decide a path for the organization.

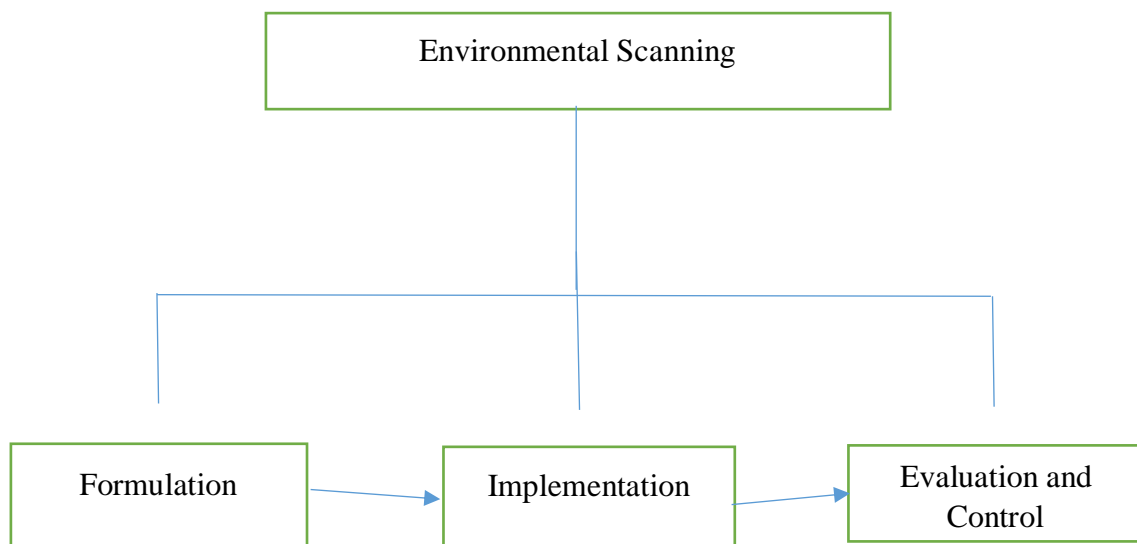


Fig. 2 – Strategic Management Steps

Internal activities are focused on firm’s controllable areas. David (2001:12) makes a solid explanation of it as he states that this analysis “(...) arise in the management, marketing, finance/accounting, production/operations, research and development, and management information systems activities of a business.” Internally, the objective is to eradicate weaknesses and exploit strengths.

However, as business becomes more competitive, information from outside environment adds decisive elements to future plans. The dynamism provokes a need to try to anticipate competitors' moves. External factors, such as socio-economical atmosphere, technological advancements or demographic trends, exercise great influence in enterprises operations – even if they don't control it at all - and are much more influent to the general environment (Elenkov, 1997). Companies should be agile, adjustable to change and create new strategies to take advantage of opportunities and to prevent the impact of threats.

Even if more focused on the educational side, (Molly Linda Poole, 1991) explains why environmental scanning diverges from the old-style data gathering. First, it is the focus on anticipating the future rather than looking deeply to the past, by forecasting into as many areas as a company can. By doing that, it is easier for an organization to predict future demands or to be prepared for the changes in the market. Secondly, this activity provides a wider scope than the traditional method, because the methodology expands itself to political, economical, social and technological terms. The third point in this view is the interface between events and trends and how one of them can amplify or nullify one of them. Lastly, one important impression: the idea that, in a continuous way and not on the one-off type of action, this an integral part of the planning process.

This range of activities that summarizes environmental scanning is the touchstone that composes the basis of the steps of strategic management. Without this stage, the effectiveness of the formulation, implementation and evaluation and control of any strategy would become less solid and accurate. And, nowadays, this is a risk that no company should be willing to take.

2.2.1 - Strategic Formulation

Strategic Formulation is the process in which the company makes a cautious assessment of the firm's environment before making any managerial decisions. The formulation procedure consists in the preparation and of strategies concerning the organization's mission, philosophy, structure, objectives, policies, and methods of achieving the organizational goals (Alkhafaji, 2003).

This process is seen as an absolute core in strategic management by Eisenhardt & Zbaracki (1992). In the words of Quinn (1980) this formation period is an emergent process where everyone in the organization, by living in a sort of learning phase, becomes a strategist. It is a key stage to create and sustain a strategic position for the firm, not only nationally, but also internationally.

According to David (1997), this step can also determine which business to follow, how to allocate funds without hostile takeovers and whether to enter or not in the international markets.

Miller & Friesen (1984) states that the vectors above referred - strategic position, the environment, the organizational structure and the decision processes of the firm – solidly evolve together, even though it is not exactly certain when the companies initiate the alterations.

The involvement of the organizational members is part of a recent method of considering them as responsible for the formulation (Floyd, 1992), opposed to a traditionalist way much more focused on the executive management team (Hart, 1992). Mintzberg (1978) also notes that the conventional idea of having the strategy born in the top, only to be implemented at the lower levels are not true.

The same Mintzberg (1978) highlights the fact that there are three main factors in a group in which strategy formulation reacts: the varying of the environment, the organizational structure and leadership role.

In short, in this step is a progress in which is crucial the importance of being prepared for the constant changes that is already normal in the business world. This would be a fantastic area to develop, but will not be included in this dissertation.

2.2.2 - Strategic Implementation

According to Wheelen & Hunger (2012), strategy implementation is the process in which the development of projects, financial guides and procedures set the tone for future strategies and plans. Sharplin (1985) reinforces that idea by saying that is the implementation phase that initiates activities in accordance with strategic plans. This method might involve adjustments within the general culture, structure, and/or

management structure of the entire corporation. The implementation of a strategy, though, tends to be led by middle and lower-level managers, - even if under the evaluation of top management - except when such drastic corporate-wide changes are required. There is no strategic plan, no matter how good it seems to be, that resists if all levels are not completely committed to the idea and, mainly, with its implementation (Alkhafaji, 2003).

Often referred to as planning or operational planning, strategy implementation can be resumed by the daily basis decisions in resource allocation.

Additionally, Certo and Peter (1991) stated that institutions would be uncappable of relishing the welfares of performing an organizational analysis, establishing organizational direction, and formulating organizational strategy, without a proper strategic implementation.

The implementation phase initiates activities in accordance with strategic plans (Sharplin, 1985). It is important to have in mind that probably most of the individuals in an organization who are vital to effective strategy implementation possibly had little to do with the buildout of the corporate or business strategy. Thus, they might be utterly ignorant of the enormous quantity of data and work that was done in the formulation process (Wheelen & Hunger, 2012).

Implementation is critical to reaching the goals that a company propose, because, in the end, even the best strategy is useless if it is wrongly implemented (Alkhafaji, 2003). Within this problem, the lack of communication is among one of the most sensible issues. So, having that in mind, this study will mainly focus on the communicational barriers in the implementation of a strategy.

2.2.3 - Strategic Evaluation and Control

Strategic Evaluation and Control can be pretty much resumed in two mesmerizing sentences of Fred R. David:

“The best formulated and best implemented strategies become obsolete as a firm’s external and internal environments change. It is essential, therefore, that strategists systematically review, evaluate, and control the execution of strategies”

(David, 2011:286)

This junction of words is symptomatic. Evaluation and control requires monitoring the organization’s performance to ensure that company’s goals are achieved through the selected strategy. The corporation assesses and judges its mission, goals, objectives, strategies, and policies in light of its energetic and ever-changing business atmosphere. Therefore, as an incessant and mundane cycle of vision, planning, implementing, and evaluating, the strategic management process goes full circle. (Alkhafaji, 2003).

The success or failure of administration’s plan is evaluated by this indispensable stage of strategic management. If results are not accomplished, the firm has the chance to alter the strategic proposal and, in case of need, reconsider its path (Alkhafaji, 2003).

According to David (2011:286), *“strategy evaluation includes three basic activities: (1) examining the underlying bases of a firm’s strategy, (2) comparing expected results with actual results, and (3) taking corrective actions to ensure that performance conforms to plans.”*

It is in this phase - Evaluation and Control - that the information on strategic performance is required to compare it with the current standards (Certo and Peter, 1991). Evaluation is also done by reviewing current strategies, measuring performance and taking corrective actions. Strategy evaluation is needed because success today is no guarantee of success tomorrow. This must be a solid and continuous job, as, besides the yielding companies that naturally tend to experiment decrease, reaching success also creates different types of complications and challenges (David, 1997).

2.3 - Strategic Communication and its connection with Strategic Implementation

“I

*I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked,
dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix,
angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in
the machinery of night,
who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high sat up smoking in the supernatural
darkness of cold-water flats floating across the tops of cities contemplating jazz,
who bared their brains to Heaven under the El and saw Mohammedan angels staggering
on tenement roofs illuminated,
who passed through universities with radiant cool eyes hallucinating Arkansas and Blake-
light tragedy among the scholars of war (...)*

II

*What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open their skulls and ate up their brains and
imagination?
Moloch! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness! Ashcans and unobtainable dollars! Children screaming
under the stairways! Boys sobbing in armies! Old men weeping in the parks!
Moloch! Moloch! Nightmare of Moloch! Moloch the loveless! Mental Moloch! Moloch the
heavy judger of men!
Moloch the incomprehensible prison! Moloch the crossbone soulless jailhouse and
Congress of sorrows! Moloch whose buildings are judgment! Moloch the vast stone of
war! Moloch the stunned governments!
Moloch whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose blood is running money! Moloch
whose fingers are ten armies! Moloch whose breast is a cannibal dynamo! Moloch
whose ear is a smoking tomb!”*

(Ginsberg, 1956)

This is the beginning of the first two parts out of three of the poem "Howl" by Allen Ginsberg. Written in 1955 and published in 1956, these lines will serve as the touchstone of the starting point of the subject of strategic communication. But how is this related? Apparently, it might not be directly connected, however, the structure of communicational thinking and the implementation of a strategy, by different reasons, it is not only related – but also can be very well compared - with the business world.

First, to sustain this whole idea, my argument, my comparison, I'll make a short literary and historical contextualization to then, of course, culminate into a communicational context.

After the end of the Second World War, with the victory of the Allies, the United States of America emerged as the leading nation of the Western civilization. But, despite the triumph, the political and geographical plot had another actor, socialist, in the East, under the form of Soviet Union. And this political binomial has a huge influence on a cultural wave later renamed Beat Generation.

Jack Kerouac was the main character of this movement. The author of "On the Road" was also the man who invented and coined the expression "Beat Generation" in 1948, but only in 1952 his friend John Clellon Holmes wrote an article in the New York Times Magazine entitled "This is a beat generation.", where he defined the characteristic of the individuals who were part of it.

"The origins of the word "beat" are obscure, but the meaning is only too clear to most Americans. More than mere weariness, it implies the feeling of having been used, of being raw. It involves a sort of nakedness of mind, and, ultimately, of soul; a feeling of being reduced to the bedrock of consciousness. In short, it means being undramatically pushed up against the wall of oneself. A man is beat whenever he goes for broke and wagers the sum of his resources on a single number; and the young generation has done that continually from early youth" (Holmes, 1952:16). This is a small example of the words employed by Holmes in his article to New York Times to describe this group composed by Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, Gregory Corso and Gary Snyder.

It is necessary to contextualize the moment that America was living. The political and social context in the US from the time of the reckless beginning of the Cold War was quite repressive and conservative. And in the midst of McCarthyism, Beat Generation represented a unique voice within the United States shouting against that policy of government intolerance promoted by Senator Joseph MacCarthy, who authentically encouraged a witch-hunt process in the beginning of the 1950s.

The Beat Generation, mainly against the establishment in public institutions strongly influenced by the dark context of the post-World War II period, was a group of young people revolted by the American value system, enemies of industrial progress, imperialism, and established religions. Poets, with a very personalized and closed style of strategic communication, had a special highlight in this time disseminating the called beatnik poetry.

The truth is that in November 1955, Allen Ginsberg shook the foundations of literature and society by letting out a howl for the country against the conformism of American society in the 1950s and in favor of behavioral debauchery associated with a new meaning for existence and to a denial of Western society and competitive logic.

The venue was not chosen at random, and the reading of the glittering, throbbing verses "Howl", at the Six Gallery, in the lush and bohemian city of San Francisco was a turning point in the non-conformed and ignored voices against the Cold War climate than in force (Raskin, 2004).

This movement also stood out by developing a strong bond of solidarity with the most marginalized sectors of American society - fostering the growth of jazz and Buddhism (Catani, 2004) – and had a huge impact on popular culture. Hemingway's Lost Generation of the Second World Conflict, in its image of anarchy, has, with total effectiveness, a crude, simple, spontaneous, and little-erudite expression.

The Beat Generation opened new worlds to the world and, with its emergence, rocked the status quo and fostered the creation of other cultural movements, which then had a strong influence on future forms of communication.

Ginsberg's Howl, especially the first part of it, strategically, is an example of how to reach a broader audience. The result of it is this organic communication as an object,

discourse and practice that inhabits in the cultural reflection (Sfez, 1994) and, by consequence, in other dimensions of thinking society, like in business.

Rather than functional, hierarchical and too formal, the term organic communication, whether it is in culture or business, from a wider intuition, pretends to be more fluid, spontaneous and collective. (Gonçalves & Giacomini Filho, 2015). The ultimate communicational goal must be the effectiveness of the message of the transmitter, but also the way the receiver gets the ideas. That is one of the challenges for companies, in terms of internal communication.

We are living times where innovation is key to economic survival as it has an encouraging impact in terms of growth and employment (OECD, 2014) and is the utmost main aspects for the success of a business and for the increasing of its probability (Christensen & Raynor, 2003). Yet, communication is normally ignored and is not regarded as part of this process (Zerfass & Huck, 2007). In an era of networked society, companies embedded in rigid formal organizational charts will find it increasingly hard to adapt to this new standard, in which networking is the route to (organizational) accomplishment – which includes, naturally, the flow of communication inside of any corporation.

That is the reason why networking point toward a second organization diagram, sometimes complementary, from time to time contrasting to the formal and hierarchical arrangement of work. In the most possible organic way, this chart does not automatically respect the limits of functions, areas, hierarchies and other tangible and intangible barriers that prevent communication from happening in an integrated and fluid manner.

Maximiano (2007) makes an open comparison between two different worlds, two opposite types of structuring: a mechanical one, with a prominence on rules; and an organic one, with focus on people. The same Maximiano (2007) typifies the mechanistic side as "hierarchical, bureaucratic, specialized and appropriate to stable environmental conditions", while arguing that the organic side has, by definition, more "flexible organizations, with continuous redefinition of tasks and organograms of little use [and is] suitable for dynamic environmental conditions." What is clear is that, in this theme, there is no organization that has a *modus operandi* exclusivity (Maximiano, 2007), since there is an inclination so that, depending on the specific situation of each company, there is an appropriation of characteristics of these two elements (Marchiori, 2010).

With this approach, organizations and their ways of communicating, not only internally, but also externally, can open the door to recovering an organic side that, often, the policies within a company, for a multitude of reasons, tend to block, forming, almost inadvertently, a communicational barrier of relevant importance.

In this exigency that is necessary to create environment changeable, agile, dynamic and ready to react to the procedural changes of the industries that today are designed with such, speed - already considered natural and normal -, the way of expressing or sharing any message can be definitive. For Berlo (2003) an organization of any kind is only possible through communication. It is exactly the communication among the elements that styles an organization rather than section that are apart, isolated and disorganized. Marchiori (2010) states that the view of organizational communication must be widened, being preferably treated as an instrument which can improve the process of managing a specific firm and can outstrip the organization as a whole.

There are two elementary philosophies presented by Maximiano (2007) regarding communication and its connection to any enterprise: the first is communication among people; the second is the integration mechanism in organizations. Thus, this characteristic is a factor for the growth of interpersonal relationships in order to contribute to the development of negotiations, products or evaluation performance, which, for administration, requires a very high level of communication skills. The author clearly points out that communication is the fundamental and crucial bond between work units and its coordination and the effectiveness of the decision-making process.

In today's competitive and ultra-changing world, organization and communication - organizational or otherwise, regardless of horizontal, upward or downstream flows - emerge as inseparable issues in the organizational arena. Basically, based on the idea that that organizations are communicatively constituted (McPhee & Zaug, 2001) and that, fundamentally, they achieve recognition through a strong communicative side (Pacanowsky & Trujillo, 1982), processes and communicative interactions must be endlessly examined to have a real picture of the communication progress stage of organizations. The idea that communication - normally with an area with the same name - is the responsibility and exclusive patrimony of a given area is established - since this makes networking problematic preventing it to a mechanical and not biological vision of the transmission of information.

Therefore, and before we dive into the strategic communication itself, it is imperative to look for the four main organizational challenges, designated by Daft (2008), to continue our guideline:

- transformation to knowledge and information as the most important form of capital of the organization;
- increasing expectation of workers for significant work and opportunities for personal and professional growth;
- perspectives from the past normally do not provide a map to guide current organizations;
- managers who can and should design and conduct new responses to a radically new world;

Now, if human interaction – mainly through communication - is considered to be a central issue in any company, the above aspects reiterate and cement the idea that the human being is the main driver of every event in organizations.

Communication is seen as a process of transmission, with a distinct look at communication as a procedure of knowledge conception, as a stimulator of dialogue, as an influence that helps shape organizational reality. In this matter, we can find two communicative dimensions. Tactical communication is the facts that happened and has an informative and basic function, which is a determining factor that is processed from the heart of the organizations; strategic communication, in which we will dwell, for its part, is the generator of (new) realities, creating contexts and has the function of co-ordinating the future of the enterprise (Marchiori, 2006).

Strategic Communication in its most pure framing is understood as the intentional use of communication by an organization to achieve its mission and goals. The terminology has been widely used in the academic world for many years, even if only now the scholars are starting to dive into the subject – which is something that can be noticed in this document, as we don't see many direct references about this topic, because this never was a theme that captivates the interest of students or even academics.

The essence of strategic communication presupposes a total dedication to a deliberate communicational cause around organizations, social movements and causes of all kinds. From administrative roles to personnel management or mere product and business promotions, their most distinctive functions can be broad and diversified and

their main purpose is that communication is aligned with the goals of a company, group of artists or an individual person. Curiously, Hallahan et al. (2007) shares the idea that strategic communication has been used, during the times, for public relations in much of the literature – what reinforces this subject which was started with the genius of Allen Ginsberg's poem.

As Ströh (2007:199) shapes the same idea advocating that “*strategic means that public relations messages are aligned with organizational goals already decided by the dominant coalitions*”, it is assumable that the organization and its environment makes the journey of faith of strategy". It involves what is core to communicate to the inside and outside of the company, almost since the formation of the firm: what it is, what it wants to be, and what it wants to do. Harmonizing the mission and vision of the organization is the challenge, even if the strategy is often adaptive (Cornelissen, 2011).

According to Hallahan (2004), today there are a growing number of organizations that understand the need of having multiple types of communication, even if they still share equivalent strategies to reach a common goal. To achieve the objective of accomplishing total coordination of the message, firms are making an effort to increase synergies and efficiency and to become accustomed to a constant-changing world – what in communication is especially sensitive. The same author identifies and clarifies specialties generally found within an organization, each and every one of them with particular and complex organization purposes, nonetheless with the identical intent, such as these six titles adapted from Hallahan et al. (2007):

- Management Communication - to ease the arranged operations of the organization. To sponsor understanding of an organization's mission, vision, and goals and to supply information needed in day-to-day operations;
- Marketing Communication Personnel - to generate awareness and encourage sales of products and services;
- Public Relations Personnel - to establish and preserve reciprocally valuable relationships with key constituencies. This tend to include a different range of consumers and customers, as well as investors and donors, employees and volunteers, community leaders, and government officials;

- Technical Communication Personnel - to instruct employees, customers, and others to improve their efficiency by using, for example, the technologies at their disposal to performance central task for the enterprise;
- Political Communication Personnel: - to build political consensus or agreement on important matters linking the exercise of political power and the distribution of resources in society – geographically speaking can be both internally or externally;
- Information/Social Marketing Campaigns Personnel: - to reduce the occurrence of risky actions or to promote social causes imperative to the improvement of the community;

The weightiness is on the way applicative strategic communication and their influence on how an organization works. Strategic communication diverges from integrated communication because its focus is how an organization connects across organizational actions (Hallahan et al, 2007). A plan embraces natural steps to face the challenges to get their target and involve a series of quantifiable tactics to carry out strategies (Botan, 1997).

Traditional methods of communications and their effects are facing a notorious change in recent times, experiencing new boundaries and ways of influence, as some functions are being facelifted. Nevertheless, ideally, the implementation of new processes – in which includes new ways of sharing values and information – are not defined and executed realistically only by the company itself, but they have to be recognized and incorporated by a large number of stakeholders (Zerfass & Huck, 2007). Technology revolutionizes pretty much every single day communication channels, causing a hybrid dimension in which we see the old-style and familiar genres of public communication. Organizations seek to influence what their workers think about themselves, in particular, how they feel, understand and act on them (Hallahan et al, 2007).

In Hallahan et al. (2007) point of view, for the firm, the sum of the experiences of the collaborators is the most faithful image of the public perception, so some say that the internal communicative effectiveness, be it upward or downward, can hardly be measured in isolation. In this way, communication activities must have a strategic and aggregating perspective. Strategic communication has as its purpose the flow of information

throughout the organizational chart and, of course, directly or indirectly, exerting an influence, which is intentional, among those that are reached by it. Adding to that, based on (Grunig & Dozier, 2012), Zerfass & Huck (2007:108) stated that *"it shapes meaning, builds trust, creates a reputation, and manages symbolic relationships with internal and external stakeholders in order to support organizational growth and secure the freedom to operate"*.

The term "strategic" is negatively related to a contemporary approach to management whose communication is perceived to be fundamentally based on the directions and objectives of the company (Deetz, 2001). In this approach, the communicational role is to ensure the slippage of information from the supervisor to the subordinate, ie downstream, to guarantee compliance and networking to ensure the organization's power over their employees and, therefore, ultimately, to the public (Holtzhausen, 2002).

Communication offices and their professionals are governed by ever more precise plans. In these roles, not infrequently, they are responsible for serving as a bridge between management - and their tactical choices, values, or vision - and the rest of the staff. This less positive perception becomes solidified by the rational way the strategic process is executed by firms (Hatch, 1997), part of a peculiar and particular process such as SWOT analysis and its planning, formulation and implementation (Porter, 1985).

However, there is a fraction of authors who reject this unified, asymmetric and negativist view of this standardized view of the communicational strategy and believes that this alternative, more positivist, a way of acting based on previous experiences legitimizes the decisions of collaborators at all levels of an organization. This reveals the ultimate importance of effective daily communication and how this, challenging top-down communication, can affect almost every strategic decision of an enterprise (Quinn, 1978).

There are scholars and writers who argue that strategy is not immune to the society in which it is embedded and to its culture - (Gagliarde, 1986) goes a little further, stating even that if culture and values affect business decisions, the first affects the ability of an organization to change, something that companies try to fight in these times. This perspective opens the door to a deeper connection between culture, communication and the predisposition that an enterprise will have to make a mutation in its characteristics.

As such, if the purest strategic side is seen as the ideas of Siamese's survival and subsequently the effectiveness of a company (Parrow, 1992), the increasingly regular inclusion of the communicational strategy in its rejection of overview, in some cases conscious and in others unconscious, than it was previously a compulsory asymmetric communication (Hallahan et al, 2007).

According to Mintzberg (1990), practice and tactics utilized to put into an effect a plan are related to the term strategic. The emergence of strategic communication, starting from the 1950s and always with a rapid evolution, allows not only to base a critical perspective based on sociology, critical and cultural theory and postmodern theory, as it opens the window to a reorientation of the paradigm of the study of communications, not only within organizations, but also abroad, in the way they present themselves, promote and relate to the public.

The neuralgic point to discuss any question about strategic communication and any effect it may have during the formulation, implementation and evaluation and control phase is the notion of influence (Webster, 1984). And within the idea of influence, organizations or individuals seek to exercise mastery through persuasion - the essence of this theme and strong promoter of the acceptance of points of view, in a directly or indirectly way.

Throughout the process of communicative dissemination, the center of attention is in the flow of information, which tends to be connoted as objective. And even if this pattern was not always respected in organizations, in a first phase the theories were summarized as simplified ways of explaining the procedure between the sender and the receiver (Shannon & Weaver, 1949), later they gained new forms, Lin (1971) explores the ideas that the notion of influence, which can accompany the communicational congener. Hallahan et al (2007) states, though, that communication is no longer an independent arm of influence but has been downgraded to being directly and merely connected with the goals projected by management, marketing, publicity or any other department.

As communication has become more multifaceted and dynamic, both internally and externally, its effectiveness is not only related to the range of success of a public relations action, but with matters relative to consumer satisfaction, competitive choice or media relation (Ledingham and Bruning, 2000) that can be, even with the natural barriers

that may arise, perfectly suitable to improve communication and the implementation of new projects inside companies.

2.4- Barriers to Strategic Implementation

Strategic implementation, in today's complex world, has become one of the foundations of business strategies. The subject has gained popularity in discussions between academics and the business community (Reed & Buckley, 1988), but it is still a subject with little literature and other types of works available. Tan (2007), in a doctoral thesis on implementation barriers at Air New Zealand, whose work, for its quality and depth, will be one of the inspirational headlights for the remaining lines of this work, highlights this prospect.

In its broadest sense, is the process of ensuring that any strategy of a company is aggregated, assimilated and encompassed throughout the organization (Hamermesh, 1986). Kalali (2011) declares that this is the conversion of a plan made for the action of the firm so as the goals proposed are successfully achieved. Strategy and its implementation is a significant part of a fruitful concept (Pearson & Robinson, 2000), otherwise, if not implemented, would become a stillborn (Hussey, 1998). Whatever the rudiments of an action of any company, it remains a mere aspiration until the moment it is performed (Slack, 2015).

If formulating an idea is considered only the launch of all process (Wery and Waco, 2004) but a fundamental step, its implementation is at the same level – in the end, the two stages are two sides of the same coin (Wheelan & Hunger, 2012). An implementation that is not successful is equally a fundamental failure for the ones who formulated the whole development. This makes, even more, logic when the percentage of non-implemented elaborated strategies rounds 50% (Hambrick and Canella, 1989; Mintzberg, 1994).

As an example, Hill, Jones & Schilling (2014) shares an error that many companies, in the eagerness to reach a certain goal too quickly, commit to creating, within the organizational chart, new internal divisions, often well different from one another, so as to spread the risk of failure across various areas, which tends to create huge financial demands. Another shared exemplary experience is when corporate managers, as if lost by

their own mistakes, leave this process to scientists and engineer in order to try to counteract the problems in making extensive advanced planning to ensure that the business model is sound and that contain all the elements capable of guaranteeing the success of an idea or project.

Development and implementation, when a new strategy is being prepared, should be both the target of a very special and precise attention (Shanack, Obeidat & Masadeh, 2012). Strategic failures are often justified by project application problems and companies have experienced some difficulties in implementing some of their plans (Aaltonen & Ikavalko, 2002).

Heracleous (2003) emphasizes how costly can a failure be in the implementation of a determined strategy for a company, not just on fees but also regarding benefits that have been accumulated. The author adds that realizing the reasons behind an unsuccessful execution is not always simple and to make matters worse, often the decisions taken do not consider the degree of difficulty of their applicability, which, with the financial losses inherent to it, puts at risk some companies. Besides the loss in terms of time and money, reputationally, a failed implementation tends to create a negative atmosphere in firms, with employees becoming more unmotivated, management losing some credit together with its employees and, as a defensive form of action, organizational stratification becoming less flexible (Heracleous, 2000). In the end, we must have the capacity to consider that the ability of managers to implement an idea, a project or a strategy, in general, can be very well decisive for the future of an organization (Miller, 1998).

Shannak, Obeidat & Masadeh (2012) reinforces that regarding the importance of strategic decisions, as well as their implementation and effectiveness within a firm, must be at the top of managers' thought priorities (Carr, Hughes, Chow, Jackson, Miller, Sekac, 1996). Grundy (1998) does not point out that companies spend 90% of their time on the formulation and only 10% in the application phase, instead of betting on a balanced and more efficient distribution around 50% for each side. In a cooler analysis, perhaps this is why it should be considered normal that, as many researchers say, not only is there a lack of academic work on strategic implementation, but, as a result, there is also a surprising lack of knowledge about the topic (Miller et al., 2004; Hickson et al., 2003; Judge and Stahl, 1995). Several authors such as Alexander (1985) Nutt (1998) Skivington and Daft (1991) report that most of the literature on strategic decisions focus purely on their development rather than concerns about project's implementation.

In an organization, implementation obtains a diplomatic passport to perform tasks whose main function is to ensure a competitive advantage over competitors, through customer contentment and the efficiency and quality of their processes. The basis of this thinking is supported by the strategic implementation frameworks that, over the years, has focused on the problems that affect this theme (Isaboke, 2015).

In a first phase Hambrick and Cannella (1989), they identified, as factors likely to disrupt the implementation of a strategy, vectors such as culture, structure, people, communication, control and results of the organization. In turn, Awino (2007) emphasized a structure that identified culture, government, society, compliance with international norms and stiff competition as factors that affect the execution of a strategy. Wheelan & Hunger (2012) talk about poor communication, unrealistic synergy expectations, structural problems, missing master plan, lack of top management commitment or unclear strategic fit. As a small aside, one must understand that in many of these themes - in which communication is encompassed - little research has been done on their influence on this issue.

Descriptor	1950's and 1960's	1970's	1980's	1990's	21st century
Environment	Stable	Dynamic, complex	Dynamic complex	Highly dynamic	Hyper competitive
Dominant paradigm of strategy content	Growth, large corporations, control and coordination, production	Strategy as direction of company, production orientation	Core businesses, competitive advantage, production orientation	Core competencies, production, services orientation	Services orientation, learning,
Key to implementation	Fit structure with strategy and context	Resource allocation	Factors along with structure leading to efficiency	How structures are created, adjusted and made to work?	How structures are created, adjusted and made to work?
Research	Processual, longitudinal case studies	Cross sectional, quantitative,	Cross sectional, quantitative,	Processual Longitudinal	Processual Longitudinal
Basis of corporate value added	Skills of general manager	Portfolio planning	Vale based planning	Development capabilities, learning,	Learning and knowledge creation

Strategy logic	What business to be in	Portfolio management	Economies of scale and efficiency	Compete on strengths, synergy	Economies of scope
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Based on Pettigrew et al (2002), Whittington (2002), Gould and Campbell (1993)

In order to analyse the barriers to strategic implementation, despite the fact that it has been worked in several ways by different authors, this dissertation chooses to be based on the framework presented by Okumus (2001). In his paper 'Towards a Strategy Implementation Framework', the professor at the University of Central Florida presents, prominently, key implementation variables that have been presented and identified, albeit not in the same way, by other authors - Hrebiniak & Joyce (1984) about organizational variables; Chandler (1962) on strategic fit; Al-Ghamdi (1998) that relapsed on the unsuccessful interaction between organizational components; and Miller (1997) which presented four variables as being fundamental to a successful implementation.

After critical revisions to different frameworks, Okumus (2001) pointed out ten key variables: Strategy formulation, environmental uncertainty, organizational structure, organizational culture, operational planning, communication, resource allocation, people, control and outcome.

Originally, these variables were simply sorted and tagged into categories called 'content', 'context', 'process' and 'outcome'. However, regardless of their categorization, if these variables, acknowledged by Okumus (2001), which are crucial to the success of an implementation, are not managed in the best ways, they may eventually become barriers to implementation (Tan, 2007). The connection between these two authors will serve as one of the references for this dissertation, that will analyze the possibility of one or more of these variables become an implementation barrier. Identified by Okumus (2001), Tan (2007) organized each one of these variables travestite of barriers:

- Strategy Formulation

The process of strategy formulation is part of the beginning of the development procedure of a plan. If this idea is not executable, then even if you have a great project in mind, it will not come to life (Shannak, Obeidat & Masadeh, 2012). In this way, if this whole process does not have a healthy birth, with the possibility of having sustained growth, it could become a barrier to implementation.

- Environmental Uncertainty

The environment is a trend nowadays, however, this subject was liable as for the necessity to adjust in the organization, as sustained by Ansoff (1977). In this way, the rapid, constant and unpredictable changes in the business environment gain a significant relevance in the understanding of the capacity of a company to react to changes in the world around us.

- Organizational Structure

Organizational structure, which can acquire a centralized or decentralized type, is the form ruled as diverse activities, such as task allocation, coordination or supervision, are projected, delegated and coordinated, to achieve the objectives defined by the companies. This variable determines how information flows between the various levels of the company, so it can be a barrier to strategic implementation. At the limit, this leads us to F. A Hayek's knowledge distribution and how this can influence a firm (Jensen & Meckling, 1992). Waterman (1982) considers a crucial variable for management, while Chandler (1962) adds that every time there is a strategic change, the consequence is a change in organizational structure. The prospect of success will always diverge from the successful perspectives of strategic implementation brought about by a structural organization (Tan, 2007).

- Organizational Culture

Cultural organization are the values and behaviors that contribute to the whole environment lived within a company. This can influence people's personal and professional goals, how they accomplish the tasks they are given and how they manage the resources to achieve them, not forgetting how, in a conscious or unconscious way, they perceive the environment in which they are (Hansen and Wernerfelt, 1989; Schein, 1990). Deal & Kennedy (1992) highlight that specific areas such as performance and commitment are the subject of special influence by this variable given the fact that this helps them to feel more confident in what they do. The challenge of trying to find the ideal point (Morris, 1992), because whoever understand its culture better, the more successful ends up being (Recardo & Jolly, 1997). In the end, still, could be a potential barrier.

- Operational Planning

The operational plan helps an organization in the process of identifying short-, medium- and long-term objectives that a company has, complementing the formulation and monitoring of strategies to achieve the proposed goals. This analysis for the improvement of operations is, ideally, a constant one, and it is also the line of action designed to implement a strategy (Kimbler, 1993). For this to happen successfully, this variable focuses primarily on Efficient Use of Resources, Establishing Goals, Managing Risk and Uncertainty, Team Building, and Creating Competitive Advantages to outperform its competitors.

- Communication

Communication, contrary to what a large number of people think, is not only related to how managers, or any managerial position, communicate with staff, but also by how information flows across all areas of the organization (Tan, 2007). Thus, as this tool is an influential source, job engagement levels tend to increase (Floyd & Wooldridge, 1992), such as the exchange of opinions and ideas within companies (Sadler, 1998). However, as Beer & Eisentat (2000) say, exercising this variable has its particular dynamics and this is the most common and shared Silent Killer Implementation, which proves how significant this barrier can be.

- Resource Allocation

Resource Allocation is the plan developed to analyse and manage the strategic resources - which can be composed of staff, skills, knowledge and finances - to support the implementation of the projects. Normally, even though they are complex decisions (Thomas, 1990), to achieve future objectives, they tend to be short-term plans, notwithstanding the importance they have in implementing strategies.

The resources are varied and their allocation involves a balance between needs and priorities that determine a more effective course of action to leverage existing assets and obtain the best possible return on investment. As such, an adequate allocation of resources is one of the mainstays that underpin survival and, subsequently, the success of a company (Tan, 2007).

- People

The human resources area, both in the workplace and in the commercial sector, is still usually seen as a cost that can be reduced and, as such, a potential source of income (Husselid, 1995). It is important to realize that this variable consists of the existing demographics within an organization and not the individual personalities (Waterman, 1982). Davanna, Fombrun & Tichy (1984) and Gupta & Carroll (1996) emphasizes that people management is the main function of this variable, highlighting the role it plays in the successful implementation of a strategy. If the people are not managed correctly, the employees tend to become unmotivated and this can be a barrier.

- Control and Feedback

Strategic control is the ideal element of command over the actions undertaken by the organizations, verifying if they are having the desired impact, in order to achieve the objectives. This variable, as such, functions as a procedural basis whose function is to ensure that the strategy is implemented with the appropriate methods, with the greatest possible success (Schendel & Hofer, 1979). On feedback, even if important for an organization, it lives in the shadows of its disadvantages, which can cause a tremendously negative image (Scheyrögg & Steinmann, 1987), especially since this happens more after the implementation instead of being before all the process (Lorange & Murphy, 1984). This latter fact, if not contradicted, may end up being a barrier because it did not lose an organization having the necessary flexibility to make any necessary changes.

- Outcome

With the strategy implemented as originally planned, we get the Outcome of the whole process. Results lead organizations to define and use indicators to gauge the quality of the services they produce and the results achieved (Lampkin, 2003). Nutt (1998) notes that positive or negative implementation practices have their final test at this point in the Organizational Framework. However, it is important to reflect that this may not be the ideal stage for an analysis of this type since it is more logical to make an assessment during the process and not after the strategic implementation (Dess & Lumpkin, 2003).

With the use of the Organizational Minefield Framework as an anchor, implementation barriers were recognized. However, in literary terms, it should be emphasized that there is not much research on overcoming barriers (Tan, 2007) - only in

identifying them, as in the following paragraphs - which has led us to use this organizational tool as a guideline for the last part of the dissertation.

Barriers are the multiple factors that contribute to a strategic implementation process being blocked or prevented from continuing to evolve. These elements are an obstacle to development, making it much more difficult to achieve the objectives proposed by the organization. This constraint may be caused by sources internal or external to a company and justify the type of strategy, type of organization or other prevailing circumstances that can be avoided if the formulation and implementation process have the same focus attention (Andrew Lihalo, 2014).

Beer & Eisenstat (2000) specified that barriers blocked strategies and organizational learning. As the backbone of this idea, the authors proclaimed *The Silent Killers of Implementation and Learning*, a document where they shared the results of a study of 12 companies. In this work, the most indicated silent blocks were the following ones:

- Inability of management style - laissez-faire;
- Unclear strategy;
- Ineffectiveness of the leader;
- Clear gap in the coordination between departments;
- Inadequacy of leadership qualities;
- Non-existent vertical communication;

By themselves, individually, these six barriers are already problematic. When combined, they form a vicious cycle whose escape becomes especially difficult. Employees, fundamentally, see the issue fundamentally as a gap in leadership, teamwork and strategic decisions. Strategic implementation, which is essentially an internal administration activity, is a delicate and sensitive process. This relationship has as fuel the creation of a strong connection between the defined strategy, fruit of the organization, motivation and the process of creation of the workers, and the way the organization operates (Andrew Lihalo, 2014).

These barriers are called silent because their public exposure is almost taboo. In this way, the last barrier of this list - lack of vertical communication, where employees were familiar with the issues but were afraid of the reactions of top managers - ends up

gaining a very particular relevance, since, being itself a barrier in itself, it prevents the others, in a certain way, gaining a life of their own in the course of this subject (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000).

To overcome the barriers created by these silent killers, Beer & Eisenstat (2000) believe that they need to be governed by six defining principles of change of action:

- Turn top-down management style into engaged leadership, by creating an open partnership between higher and lower levels;
- Turn unclear strategy and conflicting priorities into a clear and compelling business direction, as a group can be formed to develop a statement of strategy and establishing priorities;
- Turn an ineffective senior management team into an effective one, by engaging the company's highest patents throughout the change process;
- Turn poor vertical communication into an open-fact based dialogue, as everybody feels free to share their view and to receive opinions from other;
- Turn poor coordination into teamwork through realigning roles, responsibilities and accountabilities with strategy, by setting new organizational functions, that make people with certain qualities work together, to implement plans idealized by the company;
- Turn inadequate down-the-line leadership skills into strong leadership with a general management perspective, with special care with coaching, training and specialized recruitment, as well as a clear bet on the evolution of the skills of those who are closer to the base of the pyramid when opening the doors to opportunities to create new opportunities, which may possibly be successful business initiatives in the future;

Based on these six new and modified guiding principles, a top management team has a good chance of making an organization capable of having a strong link between the formulation of an idea, the strategic implementation of it and learning (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000). Of course, not all companies will have the ability and the insight to overcome these difficulties, since, contrary to what should be the norm, there are leaders who cannot fully trust their employees and their organizational mechanism within organizations that allows a more global flow of knowledge - until not long ago, it was believed that information sharing weakened the corporation (Riege, 2005). Today, a leader is no longer considered

vulnerable if he does not have a thorough understanding of all the areas in which he works, but rather rely entirely on his team.

In this way, this document sought, through an online survey, to foment, a little more, the discussion between strategic communication, communication itself, the flow of information within an organization and the barriers that a company faced with implementing a strategy.

3. Survey Methodology

Between the beginning of the 20th century and the 1970s, surveys ranged first through face-to-face interviews (Leeuw, 2005), and then through correspondence surveys. These were the most common methods in that period of time Szolnoki & Hoffmann (2013). Subsequently, telephone surveys emerged, which not only allowed for greater data collection but also meant financial savings throughout this process of questioning people.

But timidly, in the 90's, online surveys start to emerge. Limitations on the speed of data capture thus began to be blurred (Rindfleisch, Malter, Ganesan, & Moorman, 2008). The truth is that since the genesis of the World Wide Web there has been a significant increase in its population, so that, in addition to being fast and profitable, online surveys have become more and more precise. used even by government entities in search of answers to some problem.

Szolnoki & Hoffmann (2013) also adds the advantage that the possibility of random responses exists to solve more delicate problems. However, it is important to note that this type of mechanism may have a problem in terms of reaching high biased standards if one wishes. It should be noted that, however, this dissertation does not use the randomization capability that online surveys can have.

These two authors sustain peremptorily that there are two types of models in online surveys: quota sampling, which ensures the representativeness of the sample, and snowball sampling, which allows effective growth with no associated cost. Adding to this, the two types of research can be added: transversal, used to gather information about a specific population type, at a single point in time, and longitudinal, focused on gathering data during a given time period (Rindfleisch et al., 2008).

This dissertation, by a decision of the author, firstly, by its scope, objective and due to time and cost constraints and in order to guarantee a high number of answers and a diversified sample, preferred to do by an online questionnaire, reaching a large number with a snowball sampling and cross-sectional analysis.

4. Survey Analysis

The purpose of this survey, after a first part of the document dedicated to the concept and all the processes and steps of strategic management and the influence of strategic communication, would be to analyze, through people's responses, the way information flows in companies and, mainly, to understand the main barrier, from the point of view of the respondent to the strategic implementation.

To meet this objective, the first question focused on the age of respondents. The broader scope - under 21 to > 60 - demonstrates the concern to have a multiple number of people, with diverse experiences. As for geography, the choice between Portugal and abroad was a simplified way of analyzing the relative breadth of those who responded to this questionnaire.

The second part of the questionnaire has a more focused focus on corporate issues. The experience of those who respond to these questions are very diverse, so knowing the areas they work in, the size of the company, the length of stay in this company and the level it holds in this organization, seem to be crucial to draw a profile of who approached those questions.

A third phase dedicated to something crucial in the business dynamics of which company: communication and style - mechanical or organic - how information flows (or not) across the most varied areas of the company.

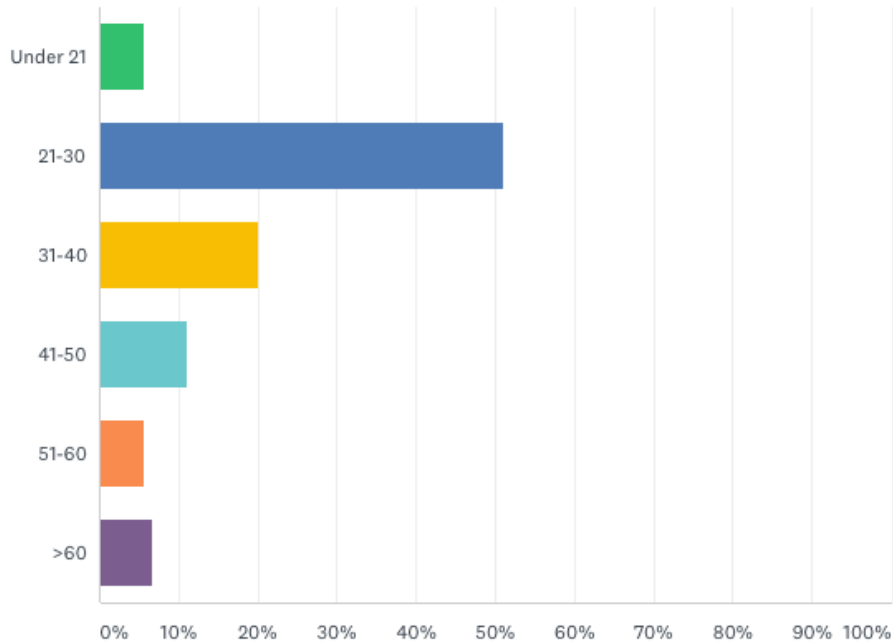
Finally, the joining of river and sea waters, with an approach to possible problems in the strategic implementation of each one's labor reality and, in the last question, the final question on what the main barrier they feel that exists in the companies of each one of the respondents. This would always be the most important conclusion of this entire document.

In the next few lines, we will make a simple and careful analysis of all the questions asked in the survey for the scope of this study, drawing some conclusions that, I believe, may prove interesting and likely to interest others in later years, possibly in some of these variables.

Q1

How old are you?

Answered: 90 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Under 21	5.56% 5
21-30	51.11% 46
31-40	20.00% 18
41-50	11.11% 10
51-60	5.56% 5
>60	6.67% 6
TOTAL	90

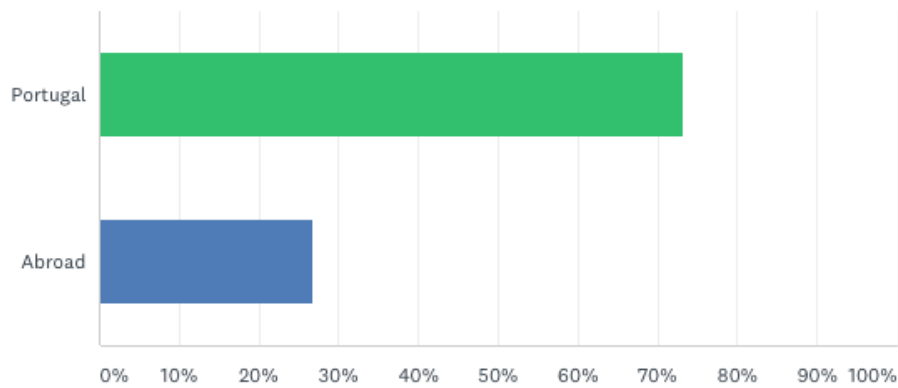
Fig. 3 – Question 1

The type of sampling and data collection method used allowed a significant discrepancy between the ages of 21 and 30 years and the remaining ones, with more than half of the answers given - 51.11%. This is a broader age range than it looks, since a good part will already have a few years of work experience and possibly has already risen in the hierarchy of their companies. Among the 91 respondents, the age ranges from 31-40, with exact 20%, and the range composed by 41-50-year old with 11.11%. The sample is smaller between those who are over 60 years old, with 6.67%, and amongst the under-21s and those between the ages of 51 and 60, with a percentage that rounds 5.56%.

Q2

Where do you work?

Answered: 86 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Portugal	73.26%	63
Abroad	26.74%	23
TOTAL		86

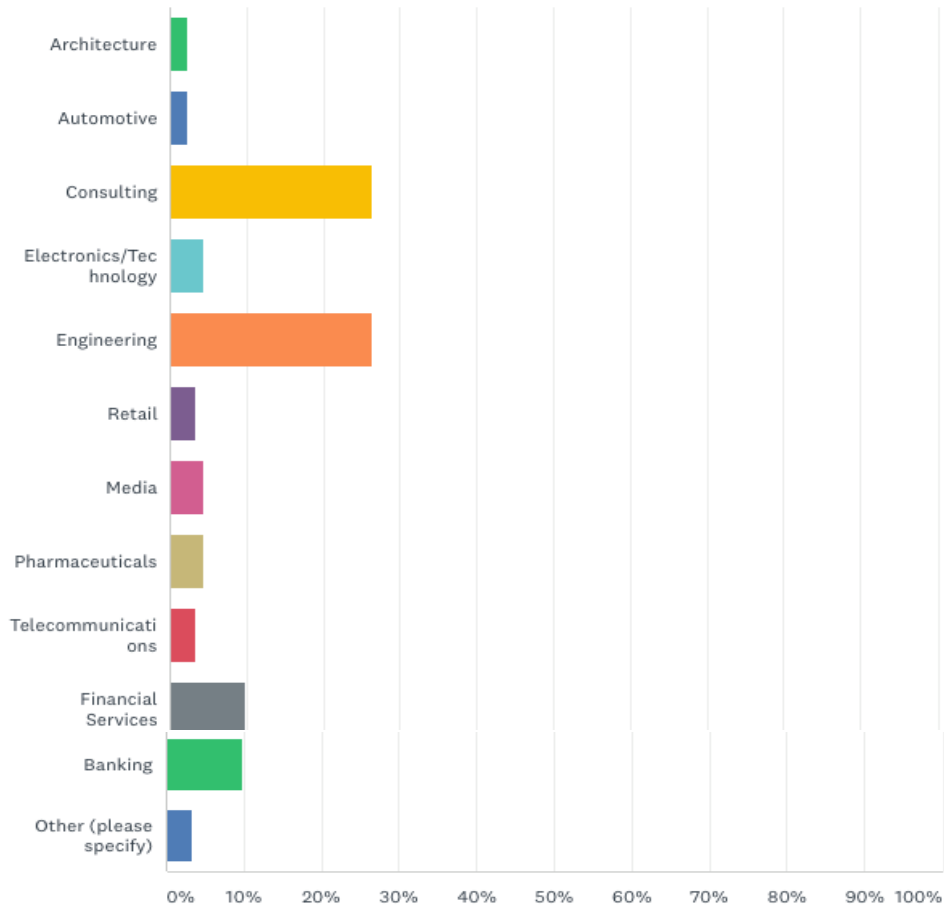
Fig. 4– Question 2

Among the 91 respondents, the author of this dissertation assumes that, by distraction, forgetfulness or other anomalous situation, only 86 answered this question. Of those who retorted the question, between the two options, designed to simplify the problem and to understand where the majority of people practiced their professions, 63 people work in Portugal, corresponding to a percentage of 73.26%, while 23 individuals, corresponding to a percentage value of 26.74%, work outside of the national territory.

Q3

What is your organization's business?

Answered: 91 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Architecture	2.20%	2
Automotive	2.20%	2
Consulting	26.37%	24
Electronics/Technology	4.40%	4
Engineering	26.37%	24
Retail	3.30%	3
Media	4.40%	4
Pharmaceuticals	4.40%	4
Telecommunications	3.30%	3
Financial Services	9.89%	9
Banking	9.89%	9
Other (please specify)	3.30%	3
TOTAL		91

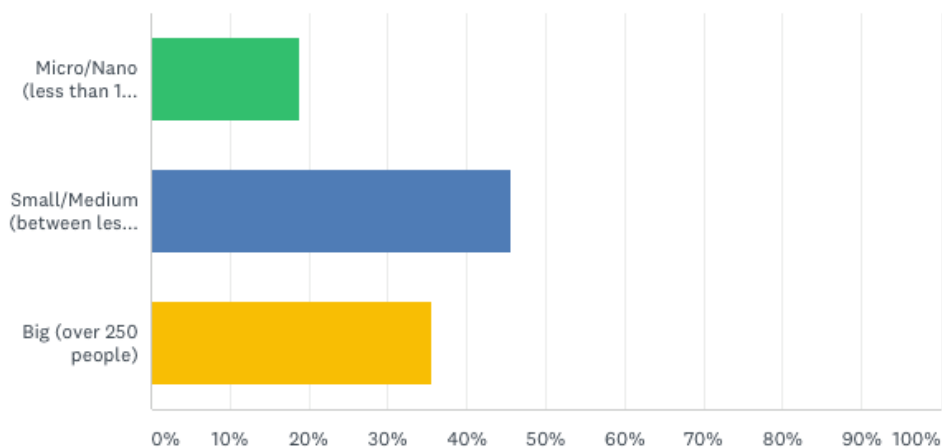
Fig. 5 – Question 3

Figure 5, which consists of the third of ten questions in this questionnaire, have a particular relevance in the context of this study and this inquiry. They were given a choice of twelve distinct (and optional) areas of activity, comprised of Architecture, Automotive, Consulting, Electronics / Technology, Engineering, Retail, Media, Pharmaceuticals, Telecommunications, Financial Services, Banking denominated Other). Within this group, it was clearly shown that the highlights are for the sectors of activities composed of Consulting and Engineering, both with 24 respondents, or 26.37% each. Financial Services and Banking, with 9 respondents, corresponding to 9.89% complete, ex-acquo, the podium.

Q4

What is the size of your company?

Answered: 90 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Micro/Nano (less than 10 people)	18.89%	17
Small/Medium (between less than 50 and 250 people)	45.56%	41
Big (over 250 people)	35.56%	32
TOTAL		90

Fig. 6 – Question 4

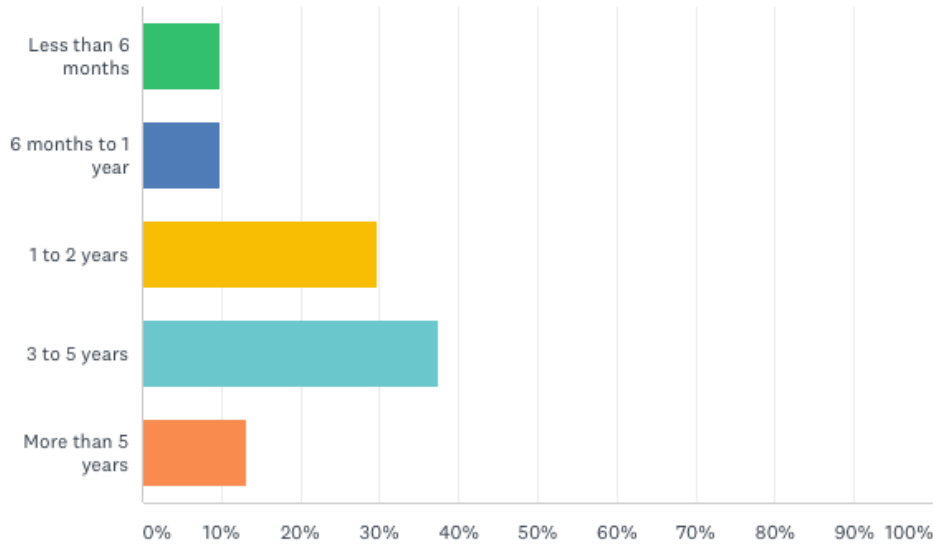
Question number four focused essentially on the size of the companies in which the respondents currently work. This is a question that may have its value, since it could possibly have some influence on the answers to the previous demands. 45.56%, that is, 41 people are in firms of considered medium size (between less than 50 and 250 people);

32 people, 35.56% in large companies (over 250 people); and lastly, 17 people (18.89%) work in micro/nano companies (less than 10 people).

Q5

How long have you worked at your organization?

Answered: 91 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 6 months	9.89%	9
6 months to 1 year	9.89%	9
1 to 2 years	29.67%	27
3 to 5 years	37.36%	34
More than 5 years	13.19%	12
TOTAL		91

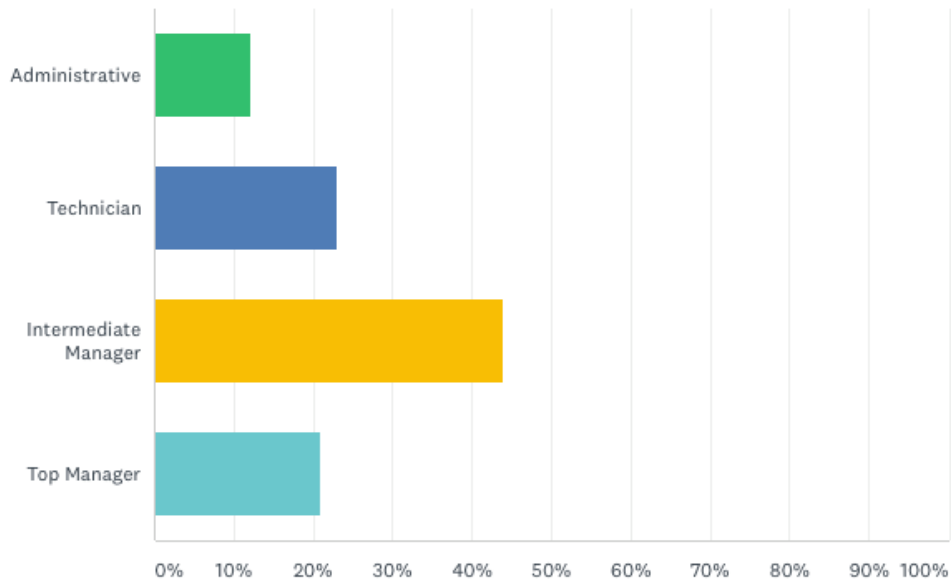
Fig. 7 – Question 5

The length of stay in an organization can affect consciously or unconsciously and in a positive or negative way, the perception that people have of their employer. In fact, in a more globally flexible world, we live in today, the likelihood of long stay is shorter. And that, to a certain extent, in part, was confirmed in the answers to this question. 37.36%, that is, 34 people are in their companies in a period between 3 and 5 years, while 27 individuals (29.67%) have been in their firms for a relatively short time - 1 to 2 years. The rest is the opposite of the previous answers: 9.89% less than 6 months and 6 months to 1 year and 13.19% have been in the same employment record for 5 years.

Q6

What is your job level?

Answered: 91 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Administrative	12.09%	11
Technician	23.08%	21
Intermediate Manager	43.96%	40
Top Manager	20.88%	19
TOTAL		91

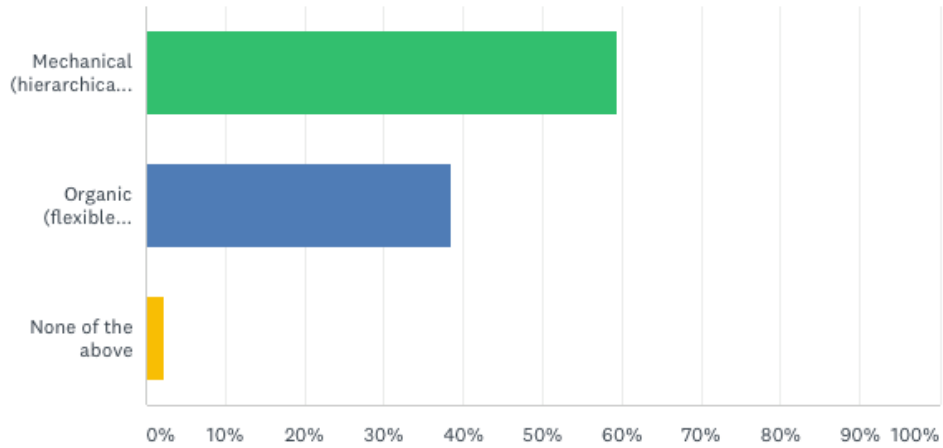
Fig. 8 – Question 6

One of the consequences of the current labour market volatility, apart from the change of company, is often the change in the job position. This reality is an integral part of the mentality of the employees themselves, who are increasingly ambitious and eager for a more pressing upsurge in status - a balance that is difficult to achieve because, often, managers do not or do not want to respond quickly to this desire. Thus, in this survey, there is a clear highlight for those holding Intermediate Manager positions with 43.96%, which corresponds to 40 people. Technician and Top Managers are around 20% - and with a difference of two people in favour of the first - and Administrative positions are occupied by 12.09% of the respondents, 11 people.

Q7

If you had to choose between these options, how would you consider the communication style in your company?

Answered: 91 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Mechanical (hierarchical, bureaucratic, with prominence on rules)	59.34%	54
Organic (flexible organization with focus on people)	38.46%	35
None of the above	2.20%	2
TOTAL		91

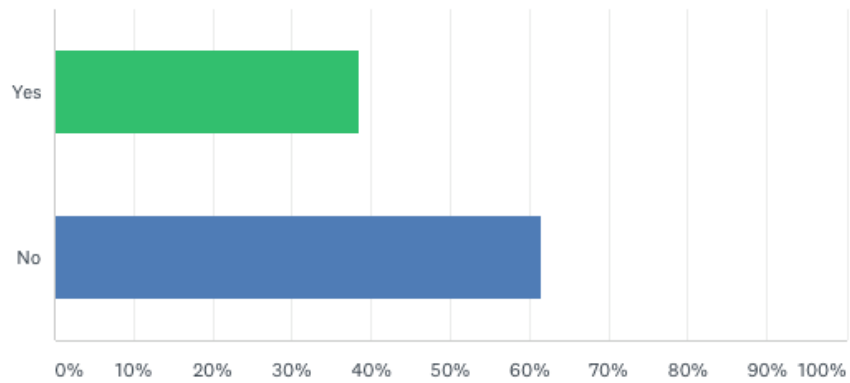
Fig. 9 – Question 7

The organizational dynamics within a company are always quite peculiar and difficult to compare, in a fair way, between. Granted that perhaps it may not be entirely logical to reduce to just two types of styles, the truth is that this was the way to try to get respondents to respond as clearly as possible. However, the fact that there are only two people who did not identify with the hypotheses offered, legitimizes the option made. Among the other two, practically 60% of the people (54) feel that the communication is Mechanical, while 38.46% (35 people) chose the other alternative, that is, the organic one.

Q8

Do you consider that your company has a good flow of communication between the highest level of management and the rest of the employees?

Answered: 91 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	38.46%	35
No	61.54%	56
TOTAL		91

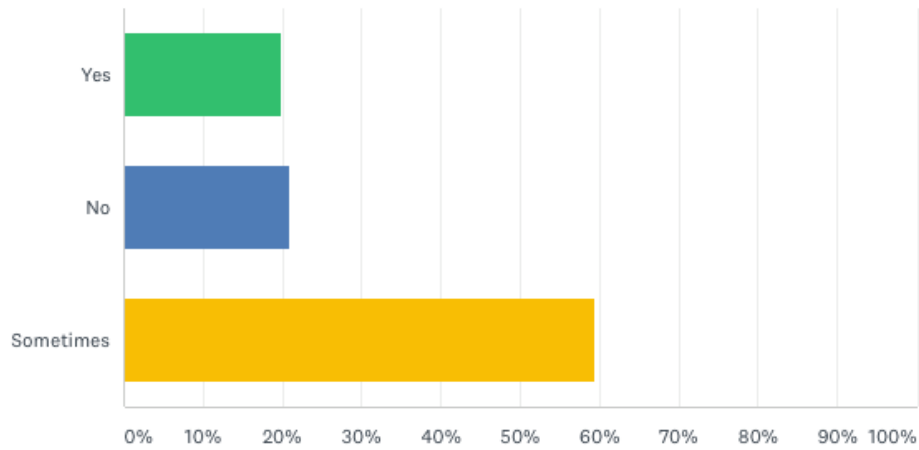
Fig. 10 – Question 8

Communication is one of the main factors, if not the greatest, in the process of building a human relationship - whether in a more personal and intimate register or in a professional perspective. In the work world, the relationship between managers and the rest of the employees is more and more tried. While there is recognition of the benefit that this brings them, the truth is that leaders sometimes not only do not want to change, but still force the bet on the strength of the hierarchy. This is confirmed by the responses to this survey: if two people did not identify with the options, 54 individuals (59.34%) recognized that the communication in their company is mechanical, while 35, corresponding to 38.46%, feel that your organization has a more organic informative flow.

Q9

Do you consider that your company has difficulties in its strategic implementation?

Answered: 91 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	19.78%	18
No	20.88%	19
Sometimes	59.34%	54
TOTAL		91

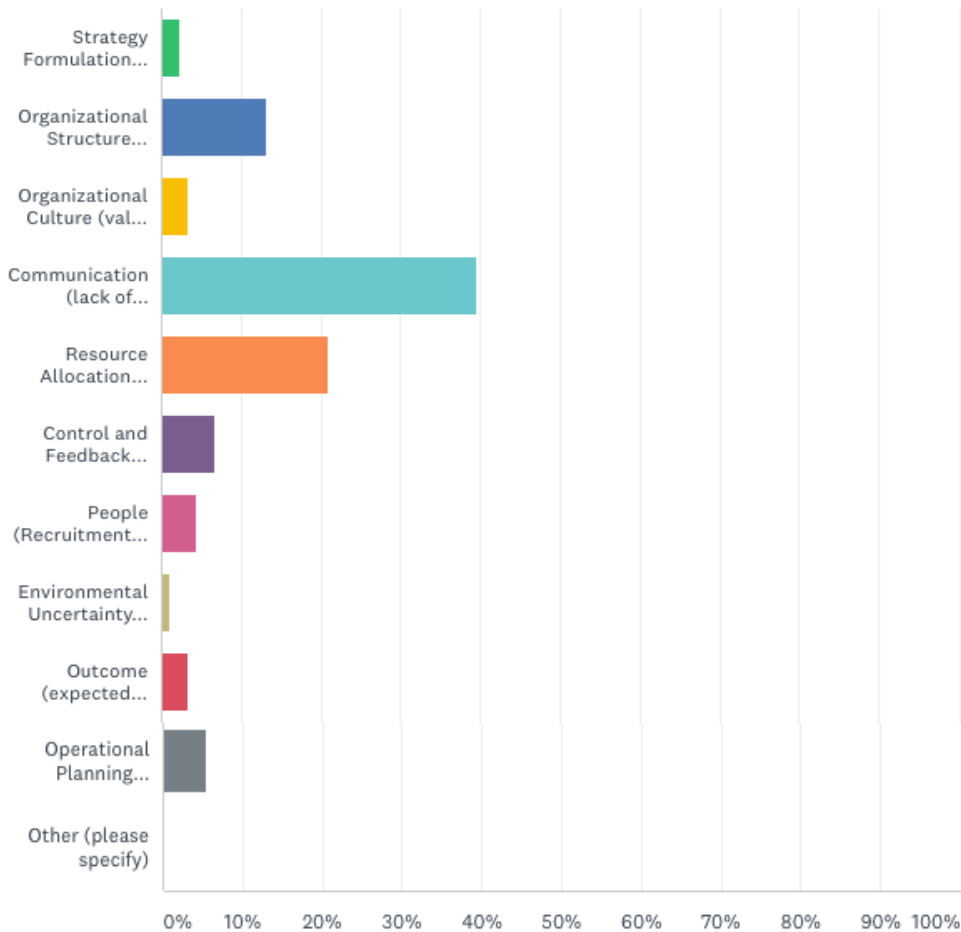
Fig. 11 – Question 9

Throughout this dissertation, I have done a deep analysis on the strategic implementation and its particularities regarding the impediments of its application. Once again, it is always difficult to transpose a concrete reality into a general business landscape, but it is not absurd to assume that there are several firms with different types of difficulties to execute the plans. If Yes or No responses were similar (19.78% vs 20.88%), it is absolutely symptomatic that 54 people (59.34%) from a universe of 91 have responded that sometimes their companies have difficulties in implementing their strategies.

Q10

Which of the following is the biggest barriers to strategic implementation in your company?

Answered: 91 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strategy Formulation (the process of developing a strategy to achieve its defined goals)	2.20%	2
Organizational Structure (system used to define a hierarchy within an organization)	13.19%	12
Organizational Culture (values and behaviors of an organization)	3.30%	3
Communication (lack of communication between departments)	39.56%	36
Resource Allocation (lack of resources to implement a project)	20.88%	19
Control and Feedback (monitor and giving his thoughts about the work of the employees)	6.59%	6
People (Recruitment, Training and Incentives)	4.40%	4
Environmental Uncertainty (relationship between organization and its environment)	1.10%	1
Outcome (expected results of the initiated strategy)	3.30%	3
Operational Planning (process that predetermines the day to day activities of a business)	5.49%	5
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
TOTAL		91

Fig. 12 – Question 10

The whole questionnaire, like a river that flows into the sea, was made to think about this last question. Respecting a natural harmony between the theme of the dissertation, the way it was addressed throughout the document and the conclusions to be drawn from it, the tenth question in this survey focuses mainly on the barriers to strategic implementation: Strategy Formulation, Organizational Structure, Organizational Culture, Communication, Resource Allocation, Control and Feedback, People, Environmental Uncertainty, Outcome, Operational Planning and an open option. Within this wide range of options, communication was the barrier most emphasized by respondents, with 39.56% (36 responses), followed by Resource Allocation, with 20.88% (19 replies) and Organizational Structure, with 13.19% (12 answers). The remaining options were all well below values as 10%, which clearly says how the main fence to strategic implementation was chosen. Since communication was the most voted barrier, this will be the subject of further analysis in the conclusion.

5. Conclusion

The general objective of this dissertation was to understand and to make a wide analysis on what are the barriers to strategy implementation, making a bridge with the whole strategic management process and as well as the role of the strategic communication.

In fact, there are several fences to implementing a strategy in a company. The realities among firms do not, of course, allow the analyses on this question to be standardized. Ideally, at this stage, the organizational logistics of this process should be fluid, but as mentioned in this document, on average, only 50% of enterprise projects reach this level.

For organizations, the challenge is tremendous, as this step, although difficult, is extremely important, since the activities related to implementation are more time-consuming than the formulation, involve more people, assume a complexity of deeper tasks and it needs continuous monitoring by the managers or board of director who lead this process.

With such a high number of processes that are not implemented and with a completely unbalanced task division between the formulation phase and the implementation phase - authors speak of data ranging from 90% to the first and only 10% to the second - it cannot be considered strange that not only are there glaring shortcomings in the modus operandi of this methodology but, in connection with the academy's studies, there are so few dissertations on how to overcome the barriers.

Many authors, as it is stated on this document, identified and analysed different fences to implementation strategy. In this dissertation, we opted for a slightly diverse approach, since, before deepening the problem of implementation, we approached themes such as strategic management process - where in addition to the phase under study, there is, before, the formulation, and then the evaluation and control - and strategic communication, where, through a poem by Allen Ginsberg, a journey began on the importance of this phenomenon and how the information and messages to be shared can reach the intended recipients.

Regarding the survey, many conclusions can be made about the results presented above, so I decided to go further in the discussion about communication as a barrier to strategy implementation because it was the most voted option on the question about this subject.

The communication link between employers and employees is still, in most cases, in the eyes of today, a little archaic. In companies and their organizational charts, the information is very focused on a mechanistic, ie, hierarchical, bureaucratic stance and with a prominence of the rules reminiscent of the "Law and Order" so often referred to in the United States of America. Communication is seen as a mere process of brainstorming, instead of fostering an information flow, capable of creating knowledge, stimulating dialogue, and helping to build a more dynamic and complete organizational reality.

As communication is one of the first and foremost human linkages, it is no wonder that there are a number of studies that show that people with a high level of engagement and performance invariably have good relationships and more positive interactions with their managers and colleagues. A happier employee is better able to do a good work and is more prepared to deal with current situations in today's workplace, such as stress and constant change.

The results of this survey follow the focus of some studies on the relationship of companies with their employees and other stakeholders and the issue of communication as the main focus. The problem, of course, is deeper in large companies, whose dynamics, because of their size, making them much less flexible, so the flow of information is less or too long, given the distance that separates, in the real pyramid, the managers of most officials.

In an organic company with a stated focus on the people who make it up, its flexibility would allow important information to arrive in the necessary doses, impacting daily decisions and in the organization, itself, with no conflicting messages to the market and simplifying the process of an implementation strategy. This is simplified ideal version. The problem is that this is not the communicational and organizational matrix of most companies.

The major challenges for communicating with employees, and therefore for better strategic implementation, are fundamentally a concern that all employees, through frank and open dialogue, will tend to facilitate the implementation of a plan, are aligned with

the existing strategy in the business; communication management by managers so as to make their leadership more engaging; managing the excess of information: we live in a world absorbed in much knowledge, so it does not make sense that employees are bombarded by irrelevant and non-integrative emails; being critical, having a more effective internal communication with a measurement of its performance and value for the company.

In this way, since there is a clear and assumed but little-solved deficiency in the relationship between communication and organizations, it is understandable why this variable was the most voted as a barrier to strategic implementation. It should be noted that, for example, a better idea transmission can be the motto for something as important and common as defining the groups of works appropriate for the application of a given project. The key to communication is to align the values and principles outlined in your internal policy with the approaches to implementing the formulated plans.

Naturally, during this dissertation, some difficulties and limitations arose during the process of the study that I proposed. First, despite the popularity of the subject in the academia and business community, there are not many works of literature about this topic.

Secondly, it is curious how the overwhelming majority of the few works on strategic implementation focus on their identification, but they do not deepen many of them. Here, in the conclusion, we tried to contribute a little more to the discussion of communication as an impediment to the realization of a project.

Lastly, there is no common and agreed framework for implementing the strategy. There is no common and agreed framework for implementing the strategy. Granted that, theoretically, it may be good to have a diversity of views, in a subject such as this is little beneficial this dispersion of methodology. In this dissertation, I used the Organizational Framework originally made by Fevzi Okumus, because it seemed to me the most balanced, but I cannot fail to notice this lack of uniformity.

Regarding the contribution for the area and for a future research, I believe that anyone who delves into the subject can, in the first instance, take another barrier and deepen their analysis, or, if they have the time to do so, make a very complete dissertation and work out solutions to all communication barriers. For that, in my opinion, and although my survey has a respectable number of responses, I think I should proceed with a larger and more comprehensive questionnaire, in order to have a more extensive study.

Finally, I think it could be very interesting to extend this discussion about barriers to other domains of strategic management because even if the fences are diverse and, apparently, less impacting, it would be a good complement to the topic discussed in this dissertation.

All in all, there are several proven barriers to strategic implementation, with communication being more identified by people as the one that causes the most trouble to this process within a company.

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7. Attachments

Survey on Strategic Communication and Barriers to Strategy Implementation

My name is Tomás Durão, I'm a Business Administration student of ISCTE Business School, and I'm doing this survey as part of my dissertation about Strategic Communication and Barriers to Strategy Implementation. Thus, with your answers, I try to find the most common factors that prevent the implementation of a strategy to be successful. If you need any clarification, do not hesitate to contact me through my e-mail address - tbgpd@iscte.pt

Q1 – How old are you?

- Under 21
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 50-60
- >60

Q2 – Where do you work?

- Portugal
- Abroad

Q3 – What is your organization's background?

- Architecture
- Automotive
- Consulting
- Electronics/Technology
- Engineering
- Retail
- Media

- Pharmaceuticals
- Telecommunications
- Financial Services
- Banking
- Other

Q4 – What is the size of your company?

- Micro/Nano (less than 10 people)
- Small/Medium (between less than 50 and 250 people)
- Big (over 250 people)

Q5 - How long have you worked at your organization?

- Less than 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 1 to 2 years
- 3 to 5 years
- More than 5 years

Q6 - What is your job level?

- Administrative
- Technician
- Intermediate Manager
- Top Manager

Q7 - If you had to choose between these options, how would you consider the communication style in your company?

- Mechanical (hierarchical, bureaucratic, with prominence on rules)
- Organic (flexible organization with focus on people)
- None of the above

Q8 - Do you consider that your company has a good flow of communication between the highest level of management and the rest of the employees?

- Yes
- No

Q9 - Do you consider that your company has difficulties in its strategic implementation?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

Q10 - Which of the following is the biggest barriers to strategic implementation in your company?

- Strategy Formulation (the process of developing a strategy to achieve its defined goals)
- Organizational Structure (system used to define a hierarchy within an organization)
- Organizational Culture (values and behaviors of an organization)
- Communication (lack of communication between departments)
- Resource Allocation (lack of resources to implement a project)
- Control and Feedback (monitor and giving his thoughts about the work of the employees)
- People (Recruitment, Training and Incentives)
- Environmental Uncertainty (relationship between organization and its environment)
- Outcome (expected results of the initiated strategy)
- Operational Planning (process that predetermines the day to day activities of a business)