Improvement of the Strategic Alignment for Ecoratio

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Ecoratio
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Executive Summary:

With a more globalized environment, small and medium sized enterprises are seeking for opportunities in different markets around the world. This is the case of Ecoratio, a Dutch company that commercialize biodegradable release agents in the concrete industry around the world. However, the company is not internally well aligned and the risks of entering to new markets can harm the sustainability of the company on the long term. For this reason the aim of the present Master Thesis is to improve the strategic alignment of Ecoratio.

According to the design of the research used a qualitative approach, with a Business Case methodology. The methods to collect the data that were chosen for this research were Reports (documents, email, presentations, reports, etc.), Interviews (13 out of 14 employees were interviewed taking into account that the sampling system that was used was non-probability sample), and observation (observed the behaviour of the employees in the Rotterdam office). By using together these three methods, the research achieved the four quality criteria that a master thesis must have (Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Conformability).

According to the structure of the thesis the Theoretical Framework was handled by researching strategic alignment and the important aspects, theories and models that surround the term and meaning. For this research, strategic alignment is a situation when the stakeholders of a company understand and act in the same way and are going to the same direction regarding the corporate strategy (mission, vision, objectives, core values and strategy of the company), which is the ideal state of balance according to Simons (2000) tensions.

There are some requirements in order to achieve the alignment of the company according to the corporate strategy. In fact, it is required effective communication process (which is described using the Hierarchy of Effective Communication), and a performance management in order to collect and analyse the data by controlling the four levers of control of Simons (1996). Both aspects lead to have more information (feedback as well as measurements) that help the head-office to make better decisions and to have a better performance.

While doing the Theoretical Framework it was noticed the importance of choosing the aspects that are directly related to the strategic alignment. The aspects that were chosen were: corporate Strategy of Ecoratio, the process of Communication of Ecoratio, strategic training and the control of Ecoratio within the company and employees.

These four aspects helped to find the Strategic Situation of the company, to understand the corporate strategy of Ecoratio, to know the process of communication, including channels and languages that company uses. Also understand what the company is doing for strategic Training. And finally, the control used by the company.

The information collected in the Theoretical Framework and the findings of the research were compared in order to know the gap between each in a strategic focus. For the case of the first aspect (Corporate strategy), Ecoratio do not have a defined vision, it also do not have a unified mission. These means that Ecoratio do not have a well-established corporate strategy. For the second aspect, the internal communication of Ecoratio is being blocked by barriers, such as, different language, overload information, different cultures and inadequate communication. The third aspect, training, which is part of communication, Ecoratio have not established a formal training program for the strategic subjects. Finally, the fourth aspect, control, Ecoratio is using a simple and elementary system of control, because the company is only measuring the financial perspective and sales managers, these means there is no control of the rest of the perspectives (Internal, Customers, and Innovation and Learning perspectives). For these reasons, it was conclude that the company is not well aligned because there is not a proper corporate strategy, there is not a formal process to communicate, which affects the feedback from the top to the bottom and vice versa, neither a formal strategic training program, and finally, because there is absence of management of control taking into account the four perspective of the Balanced
Scorecard (Financial perspective, Internal perspective, Customer perspective and Innovating and Learning perspective), which are the foundation of a continuous improvement company, and which helps to align the mission and vision by lowering them to different levels of the company.

Finally, the Master Thesis recommends a six step strategies that the company must follow in order to improvement strategic alignment. These steps are: Step # 1 - Establish a belief system (Corporate strategy), Step # 2 – the process to Enable Effective Communication, Step # 3 – how to achieve Effective Training, Step # 4: Improve the Diagnostic Control System by implementing Balances Scorecard, Step # 5: Implementation of the Boundary Systems (Risk analysis), and finally Step # 6: Implement Interactive Control System (improving and creating strategies).
1. Problem Context and Problem Definition

1.1. Context:

This research focused on the strategic alignment of the company Ecoratio. Ecoratio is an organization involved in the concrete industry, dedicated to sell biodegradable release agents all around the world. With the sale of this product, the company includes a technical support service adding value to clients and partners, as it is focused in helping and teaching them the correct way of using the product effectively. This service avoids clients to incur in higher costs because it decreases the possibility of reworks.

In the last few years, European governments have seen the necessity of including more standards to protect the environment. One of these policies is the GHS (General Health Services) that will be included in 2015 and it promotes the non-use of mineral oil in products. This will be a huge opportunity for Ecoratio to increase the number of clients, because the product the Company sells do not have mineral oil.

Since Ecoratio was founded (2005), the business has produced positive results. In fact during the last 6 years Ecoratio profits have increased 66%. However, Ecoratio wants to keep growing in profits and sales, by entering to new and more complex markets. For this reason, the headquarters of Ecoratio decided to apply a new organizational structure that will help to improve the performance of all levels of the Company. Taking into account that the company is in the second phase of the growth model of Greiner, to ensure that the company is prepare to manage and to achieve the objective of increase sales and enter new markets, it will be convenient to give the step to the third phase (Delegation) of the business life cycle of Greiner (Greiner, 1998),

However, there are some issues that are affecting the growth and expansion of the company. For instance, in the last year most of the partners working with Ecoratio ended their relationship or were changed for new ones, making Ecoratio waste time and money. This situation was triggered by the fact that the partners did not have the appropriate knowledge of the company and its products so they were not able to transmit accurate information or did not sell the products or offer them to the final customer. Furthermore, partners were not able to transmit to Ecoratio the customer needs, as well as information of potential customers. Something similar is happening with the information of customers and clients. There is a loss of relevant information of Ecoratio customers and clients, due to the fact that there is not an adequate information system and there is not much contact or communication between managers and the sales force.

Finally, even though Ecoratio has increased its sales and profits during the last couple of years in terms of organization there is still an inadequate flow of information and resources, making it difficult for the company to move forward in order to accomplish its goals. In fact, a recent internal diagnosis that was done by a master student of RBS about the company shows that Ecoratio is still positioned in the second phase (Direction) of the growth model of Greiner (Greiner, 1998) when it should be in the third phase (Delegation).

One of the reasons that Ecoratio had not given the next step is that the flow of information between Ecoratio and the stakeholders, especially the employees, clients and partners is not effective neither efficient. This flow of information affects the result,
as well as it causes a bigger gap between what the corporate strategy level wants with what the business and functional strategy level is doing.

The lack of information also affected the new organizational structure that was implemented at the beginning of 2014, taking into account that there is absence of communication between the stakeholders, because there is not a formal process in which they have to communicate with each other.

1.2. Problem Definition:
The corporate level of Ecoratio is willing to entry to new markets and increase the actual market share taking advantage of the new policies GHS (General Health Services) that will be implemented in 2015. With the current situation of the company (which was explained in the context), it is clear that Ecoratio, during the last couple of years, has not been able to develop the administrative strategies affecting the growth and expansion of the company. In few words, regarding the strategic issues, there is a gap between the activities performed and the strategies established to accomplish the existing objectives. Therefore, in order to be able to fulfill the Company’s objectives, all the levels have to be aligned towards the same target.

As a result, this research will be focus on the strategic alignment of the company, taking into account the three strategic levels (Corporate, Business, and functional), as well as the stakeholders of the company.

1.3. Research Objective:

- The aim of this research is to provide recommendations to Ecoratio on how to improve the alignment of the three strategic levels (Corporate, Business, and Functional) and its stakeholders towards the same goals and objectives in order to follow the mission and reach in an efficient way the vision of the company and be sustainable in the future.

1.4. Research questions

1.4.1. Main question

- How can Ecoratio improve the alignment of the three strategic levels (Corporate, Business and Functional) and stakeholders towards the same direction in a sustainable way, in order to be able to accomplish the objectives established for the future?

1.4.2. Sub-questions:

1.4.2.1. Rhetorical

- What is strategy?
- What is Alignment?
- What is Management Performance?

1.4.2.2. Practical

- In which way Ecoratio is promoting and communicating the corporate strategy to the stakeholders?
How Ecoratio is managing the internal information?
How Ecoratio is using the internal collected data?
In which way Ecoratio is controlling the three strategic levels?
How Ecoratio should improve the communication of the corporate strategy to the stakeholders?
Which approaches/methods can be used to improve the flow of information inside the company?
2. Theoretical Framework:

2.1. Concept of Strategy and Alignment:
“Humans nature insist on a definition for every concept. The field of strategic management cannot afford to rely on a single definition of strategy”. (Mintzberg, H., 1987)

Strategy: In the last couple of decades, strategy has been one of the most important topics of the business world. Different authors have diverse ways of understanding and perceiving strategy. For example, Alfred Chandler understood strategy as “the determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise, and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals” (Chandler, 1962). Henry Mintzberg has another definition that is simple and straight-forward, he defined as “a carefully devised plan of action to achieve a goal” (Mintzberg, H., 1994). On the other hand, Michael Porter includes more details and defined strategy as “the direction and scope of an organization over the long term, which achieves advantage in a changing environment through its configuration of resources and competences with the aim of fulfilling stakeholders expectations” (Porter, 1996).

For Alfred Chandler, strategy is the way in which an enterprise achieve the goals and objectives that were adopted for the long term, takes into account important elements, such as goals, objectives, resources, and period of time, making it a good definition for this research. However, it does not include the people that are involved in the strategy, as well as the capabilities and/or advantages that the company can use, etc. In the case of Henry Mintzberg, the definition is too vague and open to different interpretations, because is missing the period of time, the resources, and objectives. However, Henry Mintzberg have a more complex and detail definition of strategy in the article “The Strategy Concept I: Five P’s for Strategy” by defining strategy as the five P’s, which are:

- Strategy as Plan: The strategy is done in advance of an action that the company will undertake, in a consciously and purposefully way. (Mintzberg, H., 1987)
- Strategy as Ploy: Is an action to beat the competitor. (Mintzberg, H., 1987)
- Strategy as Pattern: Is based on results behavior.
- Strategy as a Position: Is the link between the organization and the environment. (Mintzberg, H., 1987)
- Strategy as Perspective: When a strategy is chosen according to a way of understanding the world. (Mintzberg, H., 1987)

For the strategy as five P’s, each P can complement the other one, making a strong and meaningful definition. However, it is also possible that the P’s compete between each other as a unique meaning of strategy. In few words, it is a complex and flexible way to understand strategy.

Nevertheless, for this research the most appropriate definition of strategy is the one used by Michael Porter because it includes two of the most important aspects for this research. On the one hand it takes into consideration the direction and scope of the organization, to which this research refers as Vision (direction) and Mission (Scope). And on the other hand, it includes the people that are involved in the strategy (stakeholders). For these reasons, the definition suit ideally with the research topic and purpose.

Alignment:
“An institution is like a tune; it is not constituted by individual sounds but by the relations between them” (Peter Drucker, 1946).

The term alignment has been defined by different author in different periods. Michael Porter wrote that alignment “fit” is important for a company because different activities affect each other, for instance, it does not matter how discrete or important the activity is (Porter, 1996). In addition, he includes three different types of “fit” which are: Fit is a “simple consistency between each activity (referring to the function) and the overall strategy” (Porter, 1996) that lead to a better communication between the stakeholders, as well as the improvement of the implementation of the strategy. “Fit” when there is a reinforcement on the activities (Porter, 1996), this means a coordination between activities that support each other (Shavarini, Salimian, Nazemi, & Alborzi, M, 2013). Finally, fit as “optimization of effort” (Porter, 1996), which aims to improve each of the activities making them more efficient and effective.

On the other hand, Boyer and McDermoott (1999) refer to alignment as a “strategic consensus”. They defined it as the situation when members inside “an organization agreed on primordial subjects, such as cost, quality, delivery and flexibility” (Boyer and McDermoott, 1999), which will lead the company to succeed. They also specified the level of the organization (functional or operational) where the alignment or strategic consensus should exist.

Finally, Newport, Dess and Rasheed (1992) used the term alignment also as “Fit”, and they stated as the “consistency and compatibility among strategies and their implementation within and between corporate, business, and functional levels in an organization” (Newport, Dess, and Rasheed, 1992).

When these definitions are compared with each other it becomes evident that there are some similarities. However, there are still difference such as: For Michele Porter, the essence of strategy are the activities that have to be aligned with each other, also that there must be a continuous improvement of each activity in order to obtain better results in the future. For this research the main issue is not to align activities, is not suitable for this research. For both, Boyer and McDermoott, and Newport, Dess, and Rasheed, it is necessary to have an agreement on behalf of the workers. However, Boyer and McDermoott focus on specific operational terms, which are not part of the main concern of the research. But, the definition of Newport, Dess, and Rasheed is suitable and make sense with the purpose of the research, first of all because it stress the importance of the direction of the strategies, as well as the implementation of it regarding the three strategic levels.

2.2. Concept Strategic Alignment:

“To achieve strategic fit, organizations must identify, prioritize, communicate, achieve commitment to and implement strategic initiatives” (Stepanovich and Mueller, 2002)

The result of putting together both definitions (Michael Porter definition of strategy and Dess, and Rasheed alignment definition) is the definition of strategic alignment, which is: the consistency and compatibility between strategies (the direction and scope of the organization in the long-term that will lead to achieve advantages while the environment change), and the implementation of these strategies between the corporate, the business, and the functional levels inside the organization that aims to fulfil the stakeholders expectations. In this definition there are two main activities, the first is the congruency of the strategy with the goals that comes from the vision, mission and objectives in order to satisfy all the stakeholders, and the second one is the implementation of the strategy in the different strategic levels.

There are others authors like Fonvielle and Lawrence (2001) that define strategic alignment as “having a common agreement about goals and means. Alignment is the achievement of a goal, moreover, all parts and functions of an organization’s value chain work toward the same purpose” (Fonvielle and Lawrence, 2001). They go one step further by including personal
objectives of the employees into the alignment of the company and creating an ideally situation for the firm.
The importance of a strategic alignment: By being aligned in a strategic way the company will be able to “focuses energy, eliminates redundancy, eliminates conflicting work and defines the capabilities and competencies which provide competitive advantage to the organization.” (Knowledge Compass, 2006).
For Simons, alignment is the balance of variety of forces. There are five main forces which are: Balancing profit, growth and control; Balancing Short-Term against Long-Term capabilities and Growth Opportunities; Balancing Performance Expectations of Different Constituencies; Balancing Opportunities and Attention; and balancing the motives of Human Behavior. This balance is according to the main strategy of the company, and by balancing each of these aspects, the company is able to know the corporate strategy. For instance, by balancing the profits, growth and control the company is letting know one of the purpose of the company (mission). The balancing between long and short term shows which aspects are important in for the company and what they expect for the future (vision), Balancing performance expectation is all about the objectives and goal of the company (objectives). Balancing Opportunities and Attention, in this case the balance refers to the strategies that the company should undertake according to the productive organizational energy released versus the management of time and attention invested. Finally, the Balancing the motives of humans h=behavior is related to the core values of the company. (Simons, 2000). These five balance are the way of creating a corporate strategy that it is created according to the expectations of the stakeholders. Taking into account Fonvielle and Lawrence, there are several forms in which misalignment can be present in a company, there are
- Employees have different goals or share goals, however they “have unstated disagreement about how to those goals should be reached.” (Fonvielle and Lawrence, 2001)
- There are some aspects of the company that are not balance, therefore, the overall commitment to any chosen strategy is weak.” (Fonvielle and Lawrence, 2001)
- It is possible that some employees are not sure of the proposed action.
- Finally, the employees do not know which are the company purpose and goals are
There are barriers that can obstruct the strategic alignment inside a company, such as:
  a. If there is not a clear understanding of what the stakeholders needs.
  b. A corporate strategy that is not clear and that the company is unable to measure strategies, objectives and performances.
  c. Processes, channels, systems and tools that enable the flow of communicating the strategy in an appropriate way to the whole company. (FSN & Oracle, 2008)
  d. The capabilities and skills that the workforce has in order to develop the work. Not proper training.
  e. Feedback top-bottom and bottom-top that helps to identified opportunities, improvements, threats, etc. (FSN & Oracle, 2008) Control system.
These five barriers are the main criteria of the research; however in the research are described as:
- Understanding the Corporate Strategy = barrier a
- Communication = barrier c
- Training = barrier d.
- Control = barriers b and e.
Taking into account the Figure 1, this research understand and use strategic alignment as a stage of the organization where that stakeholders of a company understand and act in the same way to the same direction, this definition is in line with the balance of the organization according to the tensions that Simons tale about. For instance, it is necessary to balance the company in order to achieve the corporate strategy.

In order to achieve this consensus, fit, or alignment, it is important to include a cycle process of several steps. The first step is to create and establish a unique and define corporate strategy (which includes the mission, vision, objectives, core values and strategy of the company). The corporate strategy should be communicate in an effective way to the employees and stakeholders of a company. The third step it give to employees’ goals and objectives that are interrelated with the big picture of the company (corporate strategy). These goals and objectives are detail and straightforward in order that the employee can achieve them. The next step is the bottom-top communication that is dived into two, which are the measurement of these goals and objectives per employee, and the feedback from the employee to the headquarters. The aim of the feedbacks and measurements of the goals and objectives is that the head office and managers are able to compare the actual situation of company toward what it had been planned (real results versus expected ones), in order to adjust the strategy, or reinforce the strategy by communicating, training, etc. This process is a cycle that aims a continuous improvement of the company and of the employees.

2.3. Concept: Corporate Strategic Level:
Is the highest level of strategy and is focused on setting the direction of the company for the long-term. The corporate strategy can be expressed in the form of the vision and mission of the company. It is in charge of establishing the scope as well as the expectations of the company for the future (Ogbechie, 2013). A company should include in the corporate strategy the position of the company, the way in which the company creates competitive advantage, and the way of allocating resources for the key activities of the company.

Concept of Vision

Miller and Dess defined Vision as the aspiration for the “future that appeal to the emotions and beliefs of organizational members” (Miller and Dess, 1996, cited by Denton, 2001). A shorter definition is the one that Collins and Porras used in their article “Building your Company’s Vision” (1996), they exposed that “a well-conceived vision consists of two major components: core ideology and envisioned future” (Collins and Porras, 1996). Core ideology is responsible of enduring the personality and character of the organization, while the envisioned future is the aspirations of the company in order to achieve, create, etc. (Collins and Porras, 1996). When comparing both definitions, both authors includes aspirations for the future and beliefs. Regarding the similarity, both authors definition can be applied to the research.

Nevertheless, to have a deeper understanding of vision, Thompson and Strickland argue that a vision should have three elements, which are: A mission statement responsible of defining the business in the present including “who is the company, what it does, and in which place the company is located” (Thompson, Strickland, 2004). The second element is that the mission statement is the basis for deciding the long-term course, and choosing where does the company want to be in couple of years. Finally, the way in which the vision is transmitted should be clear, and should include motivational terms that can create commitment within the organization. (Thompson, Strickland, 2004).

Concept of Mission
One clear and basic definiti on of mission is given by Levin from Ernst and Young, who defined it as the description of who is and what does the organization do. The mission should state the industry in which the organization is competing, the way in which the business is been undertaken, the segments and clients that attend, and how the company contribute to the society. (Levin, 2000) Another similar definition given by Piercy and Morgan (1994) refer to the statement of the organization that includes the purpose or philosophy of the organization, the market where the organization work, the core values, and, finally, the success factors in order to succeed in the market or industry. (Piercy and Morgan, 1994)

Finally Thompson and Strickland refers to Mission as the Starting point to create a Strategic Vision. However it is required the aspects that the company will satisfied for the customer, the segment and customers that are going to be satisfied, and the add value that the company is going to create in order to satisfy customer needs.(Thompson, Strickland, 2004)

The three definition can be used in the research because they have a similar meaning.

2.4. Definition of Organizational Communication:
Communication is understood “as the process of sending and receiving messages.” (Bovee & Thill, 2000) A similar definition is given by Guffey and Loewy, that communication “is the transmission of information and meaning from one individual or group to another.” (Guffey & Loewy, 2013) To achieve communication it is necessary that the receivers understand the message in the same way that the sender mean it. Moreover, the receivers of the message should act, and think according to the meaning of the message. When both aspects happen, it is possible to achieve effective communication.

When a company have a good internal communication, it is able to increase productivity, taking into account that effective communication will help the company to anticipate issues or problems, make better decisions, coordinate the work flow, improve relationships, etc. (Bovee & Thill, 2000).
There are two basic types of communication, the first type is non-verbal communication, and the second type is verbal communication. For instance, non-verbal communication is all about the "cues, gestures, facial expressions, spatial relationships, and attitudes which enable people to communicate without using words" (Bovee & Thill, 2000). Meanwhile verbal communication is the use of words in a logical way, these words could be communicated in a written or oral way. For both types of communication the next figure shows the process of communicating:

![THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS](image)

**Figure 2: Communication Process (Bovee & Thill, 2000)**

However, to achieve an effective communication there are five stages that the employees have to undertake, they are: In the first step the employee should be “Aware”, of the existence of the information, then the employee have to “Understand” and “Accept” the message. Which will lead to the employee to “Commit” according to the information received. Finally, the employee is able to take action in order to achieve the meaning and purpose of the information. (Yates, 2006) To have a better understanding of this process, it is required to divided into several aspects that help the company to achieve effective communication.
However, there are barriers that can obstruct effective communication. These barriers are:

- The amount of information that employees can receive in one day (emails, phone calls, SMS, etc.)
- Communication can pass through a chain of persons and the meaning of the message can be changed according to the perception of the persons of the chain. In this case the message will be distorted.
- Communication could be affected by the climate of the organization.
- Different Languages
- Different Cultures:
- Information overload
- Closed or inadequate communication climate

2.5. Definition of Management Performance

“It is always necessary on management to evaluate the organization’s performance and progress”. (Thompson & Strickland, 2004)

For a company it is necessary to follow the evolution of the strategy, seek for inconvenient and/or issues in an early way, be aware of the possible change that can occur in the market and with the customer, etc. (Thompson & Strickland, 2004).

Measurement and control systems “are the formal information-based routines and procedures managers use to maintain or alter patterns in organizational activities.” (Simons, 1995) According to Simons there are four aspects in performance measurement. The first one is the collection of data for the decision making that can be financial or nonfinancial. Second, the performance measurement should be established in a routinely and formal way. Third, the information that is collected should be used by the managers. Finally, manager should use
“performance measurement to maintain or alter patterns in organizational activities.” (Simons, 1995)

The performance management is foundation of a healthy company, because when managers know that the business is under control, they can focus all the energies and resources to create profits, expand and grow. “Business cannot grow if they are not profitable”. (Simons, 2000). That is why is necessary to balance profits, growth and Control.

Moreover, Simons introduce four levers of control that when they are integrated, the company enables the implementation of strategies by creating a dynamic tension. These four levers of control are:

- Diagnostic control: Are management tools that focus on whether the employee achieve or not the goals.
- Interactive Control: “Are formal information systems that managers use to involve themselves regularly and personally in the decision activities of subordinates” (Simons, 1995)
- Belief Systems: Vision and mission of the company.
- Boundary Systems: Ensure that the business occurs in a defined product market with acceptable levels of risks. (Simons, 2000)

“A performance measurement system linked to strategy can provide the basis for aligning an organization around both goals and means.” (Fonvielle & Carr, 2001)

There are tools and models which enable the collection of data in a systematic way for the decision making process. These are:

**360 Degree Performance**: Is a tool that helps to evaluate the performance and the development of the employee. It is the perception of the organizational leader in a 360 degree in order to enable the company to become a continuous learning organization, as well as to promote the development of the employees by giving them a 360 degree feedback. (Alexander, 2006).

This tool supports the company in several ways, such as:

- To transform the mission of the organization into goals
- To manage performance, different from react to performance.
- To reduce activities that are not worthy and to help employees to use in a efficient way their skills.
- Feedback (information and ideas from employees)
- Improve employees' skills and promote career development (Alexander, 2006).

**Six Sigma**: It is a powerful methodology that produces improvements in processes in order to enhanced customer satisfaction, increased productivity, increased market share, business profitability, etc. Six sigma is used most of the times for quality and process improvement. (Antony, Antony & Kumar, 2007)

**Balanced Scorecard Model**: It is a “conceptual framework for translating an organization’s vision into a set of performance measures...” (Dror, 2008). The Balanced Scorecard allows the
company to have an overall understanding of the business from four different perspectives. Which are:

- Customer perspective: How do customers see the company? (Kaplan & Norton, 1992)
- Internal Perspective: (What must the company Excel at?) (Kaplan & Norton, 1992)
- Innovation and Learning Perspective (Can the company continue improving and creating value?)
- Financial Perspective: (How do stakeholders see the company?)

When comparing each of the tools and models that can be used in order to undertake the performance management there are differences between each other. In fact, the 360 degrees performance is a tool that focuses more on the development of the employee rather on the company. Furthermore, for a company that is too small the 360 degrees feedback can become problematic and can carry out internal issues. On the other hand “Six sigma” is a tool that is focused on the improvement of process, moreover is a tool that was created for companies that are in the manufacture industry and have production processes and not with the ones of the service industry. Finally, Balanced Scorecard has a wider scope of the company by taking into account financial and non-financial information. Furthermore, it has four perspectives that allow the management of performance. For these reasons, the Balance Scorecard is suitable for this research.

2.6. Theoretical Framework Summary:

The aim of this chapter is to give a clear explanation of the theories and models that the research includes.

The first subject that this research undertake is the definition of Strategy, which for this research is defined as the direction of the company for the long term, in order to achieve advantage by using resources and competences to fulfill the expectations of the stakeholders. (Porter, 1996)

To implement a strategy in the correct way, the company has to be aligned (from the corporate point of view) in aspects like vision, mission, objective and core values. It is important to have a statement or a company can work with a mission and be successful and sustainable?

According to Simons there must be a balance between some forces that affect the company internally, these forces or tensions are: Growth Opportunities; Balancing Performance Expectations of Different Constituencies; Balancing Opportunities and Attention; and balancing the motives of Human Behavior. This forces, in this research, are linked to each of the elements of the corporate strategy.

On the other hand Fonvielle and Knowledge compass are introduced in order to know which aspects are important in when aligning the company. These are:

Communication because is the channel that the company uses in order to make stakeholders understand the corporate strategy of the company. Therefore, the process of effective communication (Awareness, Understand, Accept, Commit and take Action) and the barriers (amount of information, distorted, climate of the organization, Difference Language, Different Cultures, Information overload, and inadequate communication climate) that obstruct the process of communication are explained in the research. How to know if the company is aligned? How to know if the company is using effective communication?
Finally, it is introduced the management of performance, as a four step process which consist in: collecting data (financial or nonfinancial) for the decision making, establish a routinely and formal process, the analysis done by the managers in order to maintain or alter strategies. In order to know the different types of controls it was introduced the four levers of controls of Simons (Belief system, Boundaries System, Interactive Control, and Diagnostic Control). In order to measure the performance it was necessary to choose and introduce a model (Balanced Scorecard).

During this research, the study of each of the concepts is applied and linked to the company in order to understand the situation, the opportunities and the improvements in the moment of aligning the company in a strategic way.

**Figure 4: Theoretical Framework Summary**
3. Research Method

3.1. Research Approach

There are two different approaches that can be used in order to undertake the research, the first one is qualitative approach, and the second one is quantitative approach.

Qualitative research starts “with assumptions, a world view, the possible use of theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2007), this allows the researcher to inquire, collect data from people and places related to the subject under study, and analyze the information.

On the other hand, Quantitative research is used to generate numerical information, which can be turned into numbers, by counting and dividing the different types of characteristics, which will be used in statistical models and figures to explain the observations that has been done (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012).

The approach that suited and applied to this study was the qualitative research, because it allowed to answer the main question, sub-questions, as well as to achieved the research objective. Moreover, because was necessary to have face-to-face interaction with the people (participants), to observe their behavior in their natural context. The data that is collected in a qualitative research is open to interpretation (Brassington, 2009). Finally, considering the subject under study that focused in finding ways to improve the alignment of the company’s strategic levels, it was necessary to collect data from reliable and multiple sources of Ecoratio, investigate the context, analyze the data and convert the observations into representations in order to get reliable results. For this research the qualitative approach was more appropriate.

3.2. Research Method:

For a Qualitative approach there are different research methods that can be used to undertake the research, these are: Narrative Research (a spoken or written text that in a chronological way account an event), Ethnography (describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group), Grounded Theory (when the theory is not developed of the shelf, but is grounded from the participants that had experienced the process), and Case Study (it is when the researcher explores a case over time) (Creswell, 2007). Each of these types has its own focus, and its own characteristics. Despite the different research methods, for this specific research, the most suitable research method was the Case Study Research, because the researcher explored bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detail, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2007). Regarding the company, case study fits because it was fundamental to understand in depth the case of Ecoratio (strategic alignment) and the boundaries. Finally, because the Case Study method contemplates the use different sources (multy-sources) that will give the research much more depth and detail that helped the report.

3.3. Research Data Collection

This research used three ways of collecting data, they are: interviews, observation and documents. It was necessary to get access and to gain confidence with the stakeholders (employees, directors, partners, etc.) of Ecoratio that were included in the data collection. The type of interview that was used in the research was the Semi-structured interview, where the “interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview schedule but is able to varied the order of the questions” (Bryman & Bell, 2011).
This type of interview was suitable because the questions are general and because there was space to ask more and depth the information that can become insights. In the case of Observation, the type that was used in the research was the participant observation, (the best known methods of data collection in business management research). It takes place when the observer immerse in a social setting in order to observe the behavior of the participants. (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Regarding Documents, this research took into account documents like: internal reports, emails, organizational documents, charts, excel sheets, minutes of meetings, company regulations, norms, code of conduct, etc.

In conclusion most of the data collection is primary data, however there was also secondary data which refers to the data that has already been collected for some other purpose including commercial sources, government researches, academic researches, etc. and internal databases (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, 2012).

3.4. Sample:
To undertake the interviews and the observation techniques, it was necessary to choose the way in which the sample was going to be selected. Taking into account that the research is focused on the three strategic levels, the sample had to be one that allowed the selection of participants, inside the company, according to the level to which they belong. This means that a probability sampling (a sample that has been selected using random selection (Bryman & Bell, 2011)) was not useful for the research because the sample could not be selected in a random way. However, the Non-probability sample, which refers to a sample that has not been selected using random selection method (Bryman & Bell, 2011), worked better because this type of sample allowed to choose according to the specific strategic level, and because some participants were more likely to be selected than others.

The next chart, which was done to undertake the data collection, shows the way in which the three strategic levels are divided. It also includes the job position according to the strategic level of the stakeholders that were interviewed and observed during the research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-questions</th>
<th>Strategic Levels</th>
<th>Position inside Ecoratio</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The way in which Ecoratio promotes and communicate the corporate strategy to the stakeholders</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Chief Operating Office</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How Ecoratio is managing the internal information?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Head of R&amp;D and the head of Finance</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How Ecoratio is using the internal collected data?</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Internal services Representatives</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. In which way Ecoratio is controlling the three strategic levels?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Finance and Back office representatives</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How Ecoratio should improve the communication of the corporate strategy to the stakeholders?</td>
<td>Functional</td>
<td>General manager</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Which approaches/methods can be used to improve the flow of information inside the company?</td>
<td></td>
<td>sales manager</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Technical support</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Partners</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Methods and Sub-Questions

3.5. Quality Criteria
To develop a good research that meets the criteria of a master degree, this research addressed four criteria that are applicable for qualitative research (Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability). To achieve the quality criteria, it was
necessary to included strategies that lead to a better quality of the work. These strategies are:

- **Credibility**: is the criteria that seeks that the insights of the research are as similar as possible as reality. In few words the researcher attempt to demonstrate the true picture of the phenomenon under scrutiny (Shenton, 2004). One way of obtaining the real insights while undertaking the data collection was by using triangulation (“which is the use of different methods, especially observation, focus groups, and individuals interviews, which form the major data collection strategies for much qualitative research” (Shenton, 2004)). For this reason, in order to collect data it was used three methods that are interviews, observation, and documents. Also, the researcher had the support of the supervisor that bring to bear his/her experience and perception (Shenton, 2004). Finally, there is a detail (thick) description of the situation under scrutiny.

- **Transferability**: is concerned of the applicability of the findings to other studies. In this case, the insights are transferable to other similar situations, but, the context and situation have to be similar to Ecoratio’s situation. To ensure this transferability there is a detail description of the situation and context of the company Ecoratio. This means that in the case that a company is similar in context and situation it may use the insights of the research for their own purposes.

- **Dependability**: refers to the fact that the researcher is aware of the study process to avoid issues or mistakes while undertaking the research. To avoid these issues or mistakes, it was important to have a detailed research design and implementation (just as the one that is included in this proposal). Also, to include an operational detail of the data and evaluate the effectiveness of the process (Shenton, 2004). The use of these strategies in the research helped with the dependability criteria.

- **Confirmability**: it is when the insights are the result of the experiences of the participants, and not the ones from the researcher. To ensure Confirmability it was also necessary to use the role of triangulation, as well as the detail description of the research design.
4. Findings:

As it was mentioned in the methodology chapter, in order to undertake the research in a credible and confirmable way, it was necessary to use three different methods, which are Observation, Reports and Interviews. For each of these methods it was required to follow some activities inside the company in order to search valuable findings according to the research topic (Strategic Alignment).

The reports, the observations, and the interviews were undertaken in order to find information about strategic alignment, which focus on the four aspects that were chosen in the chapter of Theoretical Framework as essential for the research. This means the collected was focused on the corporate strategy of the company. How this corporate strategy is communicated (conversation, meetings, and training) across the stakeholders. How the company is measuring and controlling the stakeholders in order to ensure the acknowledgement, beliefs and activities that the employee have to know and to undertake in order to work towards the corporate strategy.

4.1. Observation:

To use the method of observation, it was necessary to go to the Rotterdam office of Ecoratio at least 12 times in order to observe employees in their daily work. While the observation was been done, the employees did not realized that they were been observed, which it was required in order to avoid an uncomfortable feeling form them, as well as a different way of acting that could change the results.

In addition, it was necessary to choose the most important subjects in which the observation was focused on regarding the strategic alignment. These subjects were: Working style (schedules, individual work, group work, power distance inside Ecoratio, etc.), and Communication (how they communicate, which channels they use, with who they communicate, in which language, etc.).

For the first subject, “working style” it was found that 7 out of 14 employees works in the Rotterdam office, and that most of the time there where only and average of 3-4 employees in the office. This means that during a work day, there were 50% of the employees in the Office. Furthermore, in the afternoons there were less employees working, it seems like if the office work can be done in the mornings. What is more important is that most of the times the CEO and COO were not present in the company, the only one that was all the times was the CFO. The office is made up by five big rooms and almost all of the rooms the mission of Ecoratio is hook-up, so that everyone can read it.

Another aspect that was found, was that the employees did not use formal clothe to go to work, it was more the informal style, which links also with the finding of a low hierarchy levels inside the company. The environment is not too stressful and people seem to be friendly with each other. However, the work they develop is more individual than in group taking into account that during the time of the observations they only had one meeting, between 3 members of Ecoratio.
The rest of the times they were working by their own, with exception of the Financial Department. Then how they communicate or interact with each other?

On the other hand, for communication, it was found that most of the times the employees from the office talks in German and in Dutch, and most of the times the communication is done by phone. In fact, every employee of the office have a system installed in the computer which is connected to the phone, they received and make calls via the computer. They must be login in their computer, otherwise it is impossible to communicate by phone. Finally, it was also found that when employees from the office communicate between each other inside the company they have informal small talks in different languages, almost never in English.

4.2. Reports:
To undertake the report method, it was necessary to have access to the documents and reports of the company. For this reason the company gave free access to the CRM system (Customer Relationship Management) where all the information of the company toward the customers is uploaded. In addition, it was also researched the mission statement and vision statement of the company.

Mission and Vision: The first aspect that was noticed was that there is a mission statement but not a vision statement.

In the case of the mission, Ecoratio have a well written statement which includes a main purpose: “Ecoratio’s drive for perfect customer service, our honest approach and our long term commitment to our markets excites all our main stakeholders and turn them into fans.” (Appendix # 1: Mission Statement) which also includes detail explanation of the expectation that the company is willing to fulfill for their stakeholders (regarding customers, employees, shareholders, suppliers, and community). It also includes the three core values of the company which are “Enterprising, disciplined and transparent” which represents and allows the company to undertake the purposes and expectations of the stakeholders. (Appendix # 1: Mission Statement).

CRM System: The CRM System have three different type of documentation included, which employees can access when they have a devise and network, because the system works only with internet. The types of information that can be found in the system are: Daily information, contact information (is out of the scope of the research) and Documents (emails, presentation, contracts, etc.).

- The daily information is where employees can take a look to the news of the company. However, no one read it, or the company do not have news to communicate, because since the last year there are no posts. It also shows the activities that the employee has to do that day.

- Finally, in the documents it is possible to find all the information that is related to the relationship between the company and the customer (email, documents, and presentations). This information is, most of the times, in English and in German, however, the ones that are in German do not include summary explaining in English what they are talking about or reporting. These give the idea that if an employee do not knows German he or she will miss the information that could be relevant for the work. Employees can search for financial reports, sales reports, the organizational structure of the company (which still is the old organizational structure, not the new one), IT documents, policies and insurances, information of the team meetings (presentations). It is also includes information about the products (technical cards) as well as healthy and emergency cards (describe what to do in some cases).
Finally, there are some activities that can be done in this system, like campaigns, which are strategies to reach new customers or to develop a specific activity with old customers. Also, to include the whole process of selling the product (from the instant the customer is a possible client to the moment it becomes a client). However is empty, no information at all.

4.3. Interviews:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees in Ecoratio</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Employees Interviewed</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head Office</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.43%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotterdam Office</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Managers &amp; Technicians</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>92.86%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Employees Interviewed

The last method used was interviews. The interviews were done 13 out of 14 employees of Ecoratio. And six (6) were face to face, two (2) via email, one (1) was done by Skype and the rest (four (4)) by phone. (Appendix # 2: Ecoratio Interviews)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Channels</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Dutch&amp;German</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Channels used in the Interviews

During the interview the employees were asked several questions about four main topics that are related to the aspects that are under research. These topics are: Strategic Situation, Communication, training, and control. What was found was:

- **Strategic Situation:**
  - Mission: When employees were asked if they know Ecoratio’s mission, 12 out of 13 answered they knew the mission of Ecoratio. However it was understood that at least 5 employees did not know the real meaning of the company vision, because the mission statement have words (stakeholders, or fan) that they do not understand. Finally, Marketing department answered that the mission which is hook-up in all the offices was not the real mission of Ecoratio, that the real mission was under construction. Moreover, the mission was created and was taken out from a book of how to create fans.
Table 5: Interview - Mission Statement

Table # 4
- Vision: Taking into account that there is not a vision statement, it was asked to the employees what they think the future of Ecoratio will be. Most of the employees (84%) answered that Ecoratio will grow and expand in the next years into new markets all around the world. The rest (16%) thinks that the future of Ecoratio is uncertain.

Table 6: Interview - Vision of Ecoratio
- Objectives: All of the Employees know what they have to do, and is written in a formal document (job description). On the other hand, the sales managers are the only ones who have targets to achieve, the rest of employees have activities to develop but they are not measured. This means that more than half of the company is not being measured at all. Furthermore, when the COO was asked what he was doing in order to control the employees of Ecoratio taking into account that most of them do not have any goal or objective to achieve, he answered that it was a matter of trust. That he trusted in the people that work for Ecoratio.
- Strategy: The strategy of Ecoratio is to expand and grow all around the world. First Australia, France, then USA and New Zealand (see Market Entry Kotler & Keller., 2012). All of the employees are supporting the idea of growing and expanding to new markets, however 4 out of 13 thinks that the way in which the strategy is being implemented is not the best way. Complains such as: the company is not performing any risk analysis when entering new markets, neither developing a plan which indicates the step by step they have to follow, which should be included in the business plan. Finally, “there is too much work in the office, so by entering new markets the work will double”. This means that actually there are not so many resources, or time to do the work when entering new markets.

It was noticeable that the strategy they are using is customer intimacy (see Treacy & Wiersema, 1992), because of the importance they give to the customers, how they treat them and because they offer a unique product that

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>Know the mission</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>92.31%</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belief in the Mission</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>76.92%</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th># Employees</th>
<th>% Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision Of Ecoratio</td>
<td>Growth &amp; Expand</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>84.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncertainty</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
adds value to the customer by including the technician service support. This mix between the product and the friendly relationship between customer, and the technical support service, makes Ecoratio a unique enterprise in this Industry.

- Communication: The main language of is English. However there are two employees who do not manage well English language, in fact both interviews were done by email (Table # 3) in their own language (Dutch and German).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees who Managed English</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>84.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 7: Employees who Speak English**

The way in which Ecoratio communicate is by phone and email. Employees use more phone than email. Since the last year, they started having three meetings per year, one big meeting and two (2) small ones. During the big meeting they discuss the work done in a specific period of time, and they also use this meeting in order to know each other more, to share and to create culture inside Ecoratio. However, as the CEO commented, during these meetings employees do not give feedback to the top line, which is a shame because this is the only time they are all together. Moreover, that out of this meeting there is no other process established to give feedback in both ways, top-bottom and bottom-top. In addition, it was found that Ecoratio is using two systems (Maximizer and Account View) to store and manage information. When the employees were asked about these two systems they answered that they were happy with Account view, however all the employees (with the exception of the CEO) are not happy with Maximizer (CRM System). The reasons of the negative answers were:

- The software is too slow.
- It is required to be connected to internet (Sales managers and technicians do not have access to internet in their daily day).
- Difficult to search information.

Finally, it was asked if they measure the satisfaction of the customers. They answered that two years ago they were doing it, however they decided to stop because of the low reply from customers. Moreover, they said that they know the customer’s perception of the company and what Ecoratio have to improve.

- Training: Employees said that Ecoratio was creating a new program to train new starters. Moreover, they implemented a new policy were employees can select courses that are related to their job and Ecoratio will sponsored them. On the other hand, employees were asked if they received corporate strategic training and all of them answered “No”. Finally, it was asked to the responsible of the trainings how the training was measured, and they said that it was not measured, only on a subjective way.

- Control: When employees were ask about where they can find the information they used in order to develop their work, they answered that in the CRM system (For people who works in the office, in sales, and in technical support) and Account View (Finance
Department and orders). In the case of the Account view, the finance department was asked which type of information Ecoratio is collecting for financial matters, and the head of the financial department said, Ecoratio is collecting data in order to generate Figures like Sales by customer / by sales manager / Full area financial management information Quarterly: Gross margin / cost / profit contribution per customer financial closure quarterly balance sheet and income Results by profit - center / sales manager Per Year: Complete Annual serving shareholders. It is information that is helping the business to keep ongoing. This type of information is purely quantitative and it shows the picture of the results and profits of the company, etc. On the other hand, the employees that are using CRM system are uploading information from the customer, such as: prices, presentations reports, etc. They also include information of meetings, and in the case of sales managers and technicians, they include what they have done in the week, because with this information the office can control their expenses and the time worked. However with the rest of the information that is uploaded in the CRM system, they said that the company do not any analysis it at all.

4.4. Findings Summary:

The research methods used were Observation, Reports, and Interviews. Each of them followed the aspects that were chosen in the framework of the research. For the observation method it was observed two main aspects: working style and communication. With working style it was possible to observe the company with more detail. This information helps to perceived if the company is focused on control or not. On the other hand, for the case of communication, it was observed different aspects that give and overall understanding of the process, channels and ways of communicating inside the company. With the aspects it was possible to have a picture of how the company works in order to understand the way in which the corporate strategy is communicated and how employees implemented. Taking into consideration the reports, the company gave free access to CRM system where all the information is uploaded (almost all), additionally it was possible to develop a detail study of the mission of the company. In the CRM system was found activities that the employees are not doing, as well as pitfall of the system. With the study of the mission it was possible to understand what the company is doing and which are the expectations regarding each of the stakeholders. These two criteria’s keep the same direction of the research, because the mission is one of the most important aspect of the corporate strategy, and because the CRM is the system where the company have all the information, including emails, presentations, etc. that are essential in the internal communication of Ecoratio. Finally, the last method was Interviews, were most of the employees were interviewed. Following the aspects that were chosen in the framework regarding strategic alignment, the interviews were focus on:

- The Strategic Situation of the company: the understanding of the corporate strategy that is still under construction.
- Communication: the process of communication, as well as the channels and language. The barriers that the company have and that block the effective communication.
- Training: How they were trained, especially in strategic issues. There are not strategic trainings at all.
Control: The control inside Ecoratio, which is only focused on the finance measurement (perspective).
5. Discussion:

The triangulation used to collect data ensure the quality of the research because it give an overall picture of the situation of Ecoratio in the criteria that were chosen in the chapter of “Theoretical Framework” (Corporate Strategy, Communication, Training, Control). Moreover, by collecting data from three different methods, the research is supported by different perspectives which lead to a credible research as well as confirmable. In addition, the used of these three methods give enough information to answer each of the sub-questions, as well as the main question of the research.

On the other hand, the detail of the findings, of the context and of the situation of the company enables the research to be transferable to companies with similar situations. Finally, the way in which the research was implemented regarding the structure that follows the detail research design, allows the research to achieve the quality criteria of dependability. (Appendix # 3: Plan design of the Research)

The achievement of these four quality criteria’s leads to accomplish the main purpose, which is to answer the main question and sub-questions.

5.1. Promotion and communication of the Corporate Strategy in Ecoratio

There are three aspects of the promotion and communication of the Corporate Strategy that are relevant for the research (Figure # 1: Communication Process (Bovee & Thill, 2000)). The first aspect is the idea of the sender. The second is the way, the channel, in which the idea is transmitted. Finally, the third aspect is the feedback that the receivers give to the sender. For the purpose of this research, the first aspect is linked to the idea of the corporate strategy. The second aspect is linked to the way in which the corporate strategy communicated including barriers of the process of communicating and training. The third is how the employees give feedback which is linked to control.

Corporate strategy:

Before communicating an idea, information or a message it is necessary to know what is going to be transmitted, to have a clear understanding of the idea. For this research the idea is the corporate strategy (Mission, vision, objectives and strategies).

As it was mentioned in the chapter of Findings, it was found that the corporate strategy of Ecoratio do not have a vision, which means that company do not have a clear direction of where it want to be in a couple of years (5 years). On the other hand, the mission that is hook-up in all the rooms of the office of Ecoratio (English and in German language) is not the final version, according to the marketing department.

Peter Drucker suggest that the “challenge for every business has three dimensions: (1) to make the present business effective, (2) to identify and realize its potential, and (3) to change it into a different business for a future that will inevitably be different. All three challenges have to be faced, simultaneously, in the present.” Hutchinson, C., (1992), the implications of having a mission and a vision will be shown in the future business.

Communication

Regarding the way in which Ecoratio is communicating the corporate strategy, it was found two elements that enable the understanding of the process of communication used by Ecoratio. These aspects are: the barriers of communication and the strategic training.
Taking into account the barriers of communication of Bovee and Thill, it was found that in the process of communication of the company there are some barriers that harm the correct process of communication. These barriers are: Different language, Information Overload, cultural difference, and communication climate. (Figure # 3: Barriers in the process of Communication)

- **Difference in language**: First of all it was observed that in the daily day employees used German and Dutch, instead of English. Moreover, during the interviews it was not possible to undertake two interviews in English because those employees did not manage English and did not understand. Finally, it was found documents (in the CRM system) in German or Dutch without any explanation in English. However, according to the head office the official language of the company is English. This means that the official language of the company is not being used as it should be.

On the other hand, in the study of the mission statement it was found technical words that employees did not understand well. When employees were asked about the mission they say they understand, however when they were asked about what does fan means, each of the employees have a different understanding. Also, when they were asked about the stakeholders, they only refer to stakeholder as customers, ignoring the rest of stakeholders (employees, shareholders, community) which are also included in the mission statement. Finally, when the employees where asked about the mission, they said that it was making a better world instead of: “Ecoratio’s drive for perfect customer service, our honest approach and our long term commitment to our markets excites all our main stakeholders and turn them into fans” (Appendix # 1: Mission Statement). All these findings lead to a misunderstanding of the corporate strategy of Ecoratio.

- **Information Overload**: The mission statement that the company is using is an overload of words and of information that makes it difficult for employees to remember it and to understand it. (Appendix # 1: Mission Statement) like Simons says: “A firms mission provides an overarching perspective to all its activities. Rooted in a business’s history, its culture, and the values of its senior managers, a mission statement provides the guideposts that allow all employees to understand how the firm responds to opportunities.” (Simons, 2000) This means that the mission should include the business history, as well as the culture of the organization. If the mission statement was straight forward and in addition includes the culture and the core values of the company, then it will be easier to communicate to the employees as well as to remember it because is part of them.
✓ Cultural difference: (This barrier is not part of the scope of the thesis, is a limitation).
✓ Inadequate communication climate: There is not a proper process of communication. People communicate only when they need someone otherwise they won’t even communicate (there are only three meetings). Moreover, most of communication is done by phone which means that all the information is in the head of the employees. This means that the knowledge is intangible and that there are not tangible documents that express all the information of the dairy phone calls. Finally, when they are communicating, they can communicate in the same conversation in two different languages, they can jump from one to another one, but most of the time not in English.

Training is one of the ways to communicate the corporate strategy. However none of the employees had received strategic training. Taking into account that the new training program is focused on technical aspects of the product, as well as in its applicability. Finally, when employees take the training program they must present a test that evaluate the technical aspects, but there is not a measurement of the effectiveness of the given training (not measurement at all).

Figure 6: Process of Effective Communication

Taking into account the process of effective communication, the way in which Ecoratio communicates is not effective, because there is not a formal process that creates Awareness in employees. This leads to the absence of feedback from the bottom to the top. Furthermore, if there is not Awareness, it is more difficult to make employees Understand, Accept, Commit and take Action. From the first step of the effective communication process, the process is been blocked.

Why communication is important for the strategic alignment?
In a company there is only one purpose and is the mission of the company. Every employee can understand and think different of the purpose of the company, this will lead to a situation in which all the employees pull to their direction changing the course of the real direction of the company, harming the path and future of the company. However with effective communication it become much more difficult that employees pull to their side because their way of thinking is the same as the company. When all the employees pull to the same direction the company is creating synergy and at the same time is working to achieve its purpose.

It is clear that the barriers of the communication process are harming the alignment of the company. Moreover, there is not a clear corporate strategy. Furthermore, there is not an adequate process to communicate, (taking into account meetings, trainings’, and reinforcement).

5.2. Control:
There are two main topics that were found in the research about control and that are discussed in this chapter. The first topic is the information that the company is collecting, analyzing and using in order to make decisions. And the second topic is the position in which the company is
mapped according to the four levers of control that were introduced in the Chapter of Theoretical Framework.

Collecting, analyzing Information:

It was evident that the company collects quantitative (Account View) and qualitative (CRM System) information. For Ecoratio quantitative information is enough in order to maintain the business working, because is controlling sales, profits and costs. On the other hand, the company is not using qualitative information that could be used to generate insights for the making decision process. However, if the company wanted to use qualitative information, there will be another type of problem because in the moment the employees are not filling or uploading the required information in the CRM system, this means that there could be occasion where the information is not complete, or is not well organized.

The only way in which the qualitative information (which is in the CRM System) is used is when the employees need to solve troubles, or when the sales managers want to be more prepare for a meeting with a customer, but normally they called the office to get the needed information instead of using the CRM System and search for information. This means that the information stored in the system is not been used to create knowledge for new strategies that can be used to improve sales, improve customer satisfaction, develop new products or services, or to increase the customer data base. The information that is in the CRM system is static and it should be like Kumar & Reinartz argue, it should be used as a process to select customers in order to serve them in a profitable way by customizing the relationship between the company and the customers. “The ultimate goal is to optimize the current and future value of customers for the company.” (Kumar & Reinartz, 2012) This is not happening.

Finally, there is no feedback from the costumers and employees. Ecoratio do not know what customer wants or need. Nevertheless, the company should know because their strategy is customer intimacy (Treacy & Wiersema, 1992), and if Ecoratio do not know what the customer thinks about the product, the service, the company, etc., then Ecoratio will not achieve the strategy and the company will risk the business. Without any feedback from the customer, the company cannot improve and learn from the mistakes.

The other way in which Ecoratio is not using the feedback is with the employees (excepting sales managers), at the moment there is no feedback top-bottom and bottom top, employees are doing their work without knowing if it was well done or not, additionally they know how can Ecoratio improve some activities but they do not communicate them.

For Ecoratio both the qualitative and the quantitative information are always separate, there is not an analysis where both types of information are required in order to create strategies. However, if the company wants to grow, expand and become more professional it will be necessary to start collecting much more information, analyzing it and using it to make better decisions by using both types of information. One way to include both types of information is including the Balanced Scorecard, which includes the overall understanding of the company regarding the corporate strategy and it includes four different perspectives (Financial Perspective, Internal Perspective, Innovation and Learning perspective, and Customer Perspective). At the moment, the company is only measuring the financial perspective, but the rest of them are not included.
Mapping Ecoratio:

Now that there is an overall picture of Ecoratio it is possible to map it by using the levers of control of Simons (2000) and the life cycle of the company. The next graph shows the actual position of Ecoratio regarding the life cycle and controls that are needed in each phase.

![Control System over the Life Cycle of a Business](image)

**Figure 7: Control System over the Life Cycle of a Business (Simons, 2000)**

According to this graph Ecoratio is mapped in the growing stage of the life cycle of a business. It is at the end of the functional specialization structure and starting the Market based profit center structure. The reasons for mapping Ecoratio in this position are: first of all, the company is not anymore a small start-up taking into account that it is not possible to communicate the strategy in an informal, taking into consideration that the company is expanding around the world and employees are located in different places (countries and continents) making informal communication ineffective. The same situation occurs with the core values and culture, which also cannot be communicated in an informal effective way.

However, according to progress that Ecoratio has had in specific aspects, it is possible to map it almost in the middle of growing stage. Progress such as: the company changed its organizational structure and created functional work units like Global Technical support, Global Business Marketing and Global Business Development (right now the company is in the process to hire people for these positions). Furthermore, the company has had the capacity to grow and expand because the business is giving profitable results. However, taking into account the tension that exist in the company toward profits, growth and control (Figure # 6: Tension of Profits, Growth and Control) the company is taking many risks that are not being control as it should be. The company is focused on growing fast and expand to all the continents but without a structure plan. This means that in order to be prepared and to be under control the company must include control systems.

What will happen with a company that is in the same position of the life cycle and do not take into account the controls systems?
1. “A profitable business that lacks adequate controls can quickly collapse.” (Simons, 2000)

2. When there is weakness in the control this will lead to error and risk inside the operations and process of the company.

For this reason, the next step that Ecoratio should give, and that it can be supported with the work that Marketing department is doing, is to work on the belief systems. It is clear that the Ecoratio count with a purpose, however the purpose is not well defined and is not communicate in an effective way to all the levels of the company. What is more important, is that while the company keeps growing and expanding around the world, it will be much more difficult to communicate and to have the same understanding of the purpose of the company. Ecoratio should incorporate a “set of organizational definitions that senior managers communicate formally and reinforce systematically to provide basic values, purpose, and direction for the organization.” (Simons, 1996) When Ecoratio establish a unique mission, a vision and the core values, it will be fundamental to communicate them in an effective and formal way, with reinforcement.

When the mission, vision and core values are establish then Ecoratio have to give the next step which is the incorporation of the boundary system (in the strategy aspect), however this information will be explained in the chapter of Recommendations as well as further steps until reach the Interactive control System.

Why a company should use a control system?

- To reduce the risk of temptation or pressure, because the control system are used in order to enforce the organization rules and avoid temptations.
- To bring focus and resources to the employees when seeking for opportunities.
- To stimulate innovation by inspiring and motivating employees to create and seek for opportunities as well as to improve internal aspects.
  - To learn and improve all days
(Simons, 1996)

5.3. Discussion Summary:

This chapter starts by discussing the four quality criteria that were achieved according to the methods used to collect the necessary data in order to answer all the main and sub-question of the research.

In this chapter it was discussed two main topics that include all the relevant information that of the research. These main topics are: promotion and communication of the Corporate Strategy and the second is Control
In the first main topic it was discussed the situation of the corporate strategy within the employees of Ecoratio, the process of internal communication, and the feedback inside Ecoratio. For the first aspect, the situation of Ecoratio in the strategy, it was discussed that the company do not have a defined corporate strategy affecting what the employees understand according to the purpose of the company. Furthermore, there is not a vision, which means there is not a formal expectation of what does the company want to become and where it wants to go. On the other hand, there are some barriers that are affecting the internal communication, and there is a lack of formal processes to communicate, which do not allow an effective communication. Finally there is not a formal process or system to give and receive feedback.

In the second main topic, it was discussed the controls that the company have in order to manage the performance of the company. Control is divided into two elements that are: The Collecting and analyzing data and information. And Mapping Ecoratio according to the control systems in the cycle of life of the business.

In the first aspect, collecting and analyzing data, the company is collecting qualitative and quantitative data (financial and non-financial). With the financial data there is analysis in order to know the financial situation of the company. However, for the case of non-financial data, the company is not doing any analysis, what is more is that sometimes the non-financial data they are collecting is not complete. Finally there is not any further analysis that use both types of data. On the other case, Mapping Ecoratio according to the control system, it was discussed that Ecoratio is positioned between the growing stage of the life cycle. According to the stage where Ecoratio is mapped, it is recommended to improve the boundary system.

For both main topics it was necessary to use the information from the findings together with theories and models that were included in the framework.
6. Conclusions and Limitations:

Strategic alignment is a state where members of a company are focused on achieving the expectation of the stakeholders. There are three main elements that contribute to the strategic alignment of a company, they are: to have a clear and unified corporate strategy, to have a proper process to communicate the corporate strategy, and the last element is to control in different ways if the clear unified corporate strategy is understood by the employees, and if they are in the capacity of taking action in order to achieve the corporate strategy.

This means that if Ecoratio want to be aligned, it have to achieve each of the three elements, because as it was discussed,

According to the research it is possible to answer each of the sub-questions that were included in the research with the aim of answering the main question and achieving the main objective. The sub-question with the answers are:

- In which way Ecoratio is promoting and communicating the corporate strategy to the stakeholders? The first aspect of the promotion and communication of Ecoratio is whether the corporate strategy is well defined or not, and the second aspect is how this process is taking place in Ecoratio. For the first aspect, Ecoratio do not have a well-defined corporate strategy, because the marketing there are employees who do not understand the mission statement, also because there it was told that the mission which is in the office will not be anymore the mission of Ecoratio, and finally because there is not a vision statement. For the second aspect, the process of communication, there are some barriers that are blocking the process of effective communication (different language overload information, cultural difference, etc.). On the other hand there is not a formal process to communicate, the company still have informal process to communicate. Finally, regarding trainings, the company is not training for strategic matters, only technical and applied. Taking into account these aspect it is possible to conclude that the company lack of a formal process to communicate and promote the corporate strategy which also is not clear.

- How Ecoratio is managing the internal information and collected data? Ecoratio is used to work with financial and non-financial information, there are two systems where all the data and all the information is stored. For Financial information the system is account view, and for the non-financial is Maximazer (CRM System). The company is using the financial information to have control of the company regarding profits, costs, sales, etc. However for the company is not using the non-financial information to analyze it and have insights that could help the company to develop strategies. This information is not adding any value to the company. Taking into account both aspects of the management of information and data, in conclusion Ecoratio is working with half of the information that could use in order to have a better understanding of the business and of the company.

- In which way Ecoratio is controlling the three strategic levels? According to the internal control of employees, Ecoratio is controlling the sales managers with sales targets that are related with financial information. However, the rest of the employees do not have any goals or objective to achieve, just the daily activities. This means that in the moment Ecoratio is controlling less than half of the employees.

- How Ecoratio should improve the communication of the corporate strategy to the stakeholders? The first aspect that Ecoratio have to improve is the corporate strategy. If the corporate strategy is not well established, a good and effective communication will not help to align the company toward the same purpose. For this reason it is necessary that Ecoratio work on establishing a belief system. The second step is to work on
achieving an effective communication. For which it will be required to follow some steps of the hierarchy communication process. The first step is to aware the employee by implementing a formal process of communication. The next step is to explain in detail what the message means in order that he or she can understand the information. The third step is to motivate him/her and explain the importance of the corporate strategy so that he/she can accept the reason the meaning and purpose of the information. The fourth step is to show him/her where is he/she is located in the big picture of the business and how is supporting the main purpose of the firm in order to commit him. The final step is to see the actions that the employee will take in order to achieve the corporate strategy. This process is shown in an applied way in the chapter of Recommendations.

- Which approaches/methods can be used to improve the flow of information inside the company? The way that this research handle the improvement of information flow is by applying a performance management in order that the company start using the information in both ways (top-bottom and vice versa). By implementing the management of performance the company can start becoming a continues improvement organization by creating better products and by offering better services. However to achieve this, it was necessary to include in the four levers of control according to the position of the company (growing stage) regarding the life cycle of a business. Also it was necessary to include the Balance Scorecard which aims to control the mission and vision by using goals and objectives of the employees and of the company in four different perspectives (internal, customers, innovation and learning, and financial).

Talking into account the conclusions regarding the answers of the subquestions, in addition to the analysis and discussion of the three aspects used during the research, it is possible to conclude that Ecoratio is not well align. And that it the company wants to improve its alignment it will be necessary to focus and to start working on each of the three elements, as well as on the recommendation of the research.

Limitations:
During the development of this research there were five main limitations that could affected the result of the research.
The first limitation was the time given by the school. The topic of this thesis is really interesting and it is time consuming to understand and to find the real situation of the company. With more time to collected data as well as to include more theoretical framework, the research can have a deeper insights which could lead to a better result.
The second limitation was the language of some of the employees of Ecoratio. It was really difficult to interview them in English (which is supposed to be the official language of the company), so it was necessary to translate the interview and ask them to answer in their own language. However the translation is open to mistakes. More important, the approach is richer when there is an open communication between the researcher and the interviewee because is possible to have an open conversation. Moreover, if the communication is face to face it is possible to observe the behavior of the employee (verbal and non-verbal communication).
The third aspect was that half of the employees of Ecoratio are working abroad so it was impossible to have a face to face interview or at least to observe some of the aspects that were taken into account while collecting data with observation method.
The fourth aspect is that it was asked by Ecoratio to not include in this research all the cultural elements that can be present in the strategic alignment, as well as the leadership...
style of the company, taking into account that for the case of cultural elements Ecoratio is working hard in order to improve it. The last limitation is that for this research it was out of the scope the organizational structure, due to the fact that the company changed it this year.
7. **Recommendations:**

There are some steps that the company can apply and follow that will lead to an improvement in the alignment. Each of the following steps should be done step by step taking into account that each steps have a previous requirements. In the case that Ecoratio jump one step the result will not be the same and it is possible that the alignment cannot be achieved according to the expectations. The way for Ecoratio to improve the alignment is as follow:

**Step # 1 - Establish a belief system:** Ecoratio should establish a proper belief system. Have a unique mission, a vision and objectives. By implementing the belief system, the company is also promoting the expansion and growth of the company. The reason is that when all employees know what the company do, the main purpose, how it works, which are the segments and the customers that the company attend, and the direction of where and when the company want to be in a couple of years, employees are able to identify new opportunities. Moreover, this opportunities will be the ones that Ecoratio is looking for, because the employees are focused in the same direction as the whole company. In few words, by implementing a unique and clear belief system the company is also empowering their employees to follow the same scope and direction.

**Step # 2 – Enable Effective Communication:** There is no real improvement if the company established a strong belief system but if there is not an effective way to communicate it. In the moment the company ensure the unique belief system it will be necessary to promote it in an effective way. For this reason it is important to overcome the barriers that obstruct the communication as well as to implement a process of communication.

Regarding to the barriers, the priority of the company is to implement the main language and use it. It do not works that everyone knows there is an official language, but they speak or write in their own language. The employees of the company should be disciplined and follow the politics of the company, moreover when there are people from different backgrounds, nationalities and that speak different languages (like in Ecoratio). The implementation of an official language was not because the headquarters wanted, is more because is needed in order to work in a effective way in an international environment.

On the other hand, one way that Ecoratio can achieve effective communication is by using the Hierarchy of Effective Communication of Yates (2006), which is the process of achieving effective communication linked with some characteristics that the process required.

The next graph shows one way that Ecoratio could use to achieve effective communication.
Taking into account the Hierarchy of Effective Communication of Yates (2006), the first step is to create “awareness” in the employees, for which is necessary to implement a Formal Process of Communication, Use Employees Inputs, Integrates total rewards, and Leverage control.

a) One formal process of communication that can included is the half monthly virtual meetings with every one of the office, everyone should know which is the day and the time of the meeting so that they schedule the meeting in advance and can attend virtually.

b) Use of employees’ inputs: for every meeting they have to tell what they have learned during those two weeks. The idea is that the good actions of an employee can be teach to other employees in order to be replicated by all of them. Also it can be about issues that they are having with one customer and it is possible that another employee who have the experience can help with insights of how to manage the issue or problem. Is an open communication from both sides (employees and manager or head office) where everyone can participate.

c) The meeting will be integrated to social and cultural rewards, this means that the reward will be the creation of a unified team as well as the creation of culture, It also helps to the implementation of the belief system. Furthermore, the use of the colleagues experience will help to everyone to achieve their goals in a more effective way.

d) The employees should know how to use the technology that will be used in the meeting. In this case it could the use of Skype. This means that the employees should be trained in this tool.

When the employees are aware of the communication process (half monthly virtual meetings), the next step is to make them understand the message of the communication. For which is required to Facilitates Organizational Change, Focuses on Continuous Improvement, and Connect the message to the Business Strategy:
a) Facilitates Organizational Change: One way to facilitate the change, or to make understandable the message is by motivating the employees. The manager can mention the success of one employee who did a great job and explain in detail why was successful. In this way, employees will understand, will be motivate, and will be able to use the information (it will be replicable).

b) Focuses on Continuous Improvement: To develop this step is necessary to measure the communication. One way of measuring message is by using the Model of Four Level (Kirkpatrick's) which will be explained in step # 3.

c) Connect the message to the Business Strategy: Every time that there is the need of transmitting important information, it should be explain the link between the information and the business strategy. In the moment the employee realized that the information that is been given is interconnected to the strategy, he or she will be in the responsibility of understanding it and use it.

In the moment the employee understand the message and see the link between the message and the corporate strategy, he or she will accept the information. One way to engage the employee is by having open communication between different levels. Employees will feel more commitment when they have direct and open communication with their supervisor or manager than with their peer.

Finally, to prove that the communication is effective, the employee have to act in the way he was told. If it is like that then the employee had understand the message and the company is the one that will obtain the benefits of an effective communication.

Step # 3 – Effective Training:

The Hierarchy of Effective Communication can be used to have an effective training. Because Ecoratio have to reinforce the understanding of the corporate strategy in the company. A good way is by implementing strategic train program. However, it should be included a model to measure the effectiveness of the program. An effective training program for Ecoratio could be like:

First step is to create awareness to the employees, for which is necessary to implement a Formal Process of Communication, Use Employees Inputs, Integrates total rewards, and Leverage control.

a) The formal process is the training program for all the employees and for new starters.

b) In this case it will not be required the input of the employees, just the feedback at the end of the training not during.

c) For the training there will not be rewards, rather than be aligned and in the same direction of the company.

d) Select the technology that will be used in the training (power point, video, Prezi, etc.) the way to present the information.

Now that the employees are aware of the training program, the next step is to make them understand the message of the communication. For which is required to Facilitates Organizational Change, Focuses on Continuous Improvement, and Connect the message to the Business Strategy:
a) Facilitates Organizational Change: The corporate Strategy have to be explained in detail. Why was established like that, who decided that, explain the meaning of technical words, etc. But what is more relevant is to tell them the importance of the corporate strategy for the present and for the future of Ecoratio.

b) Focuses on Continuous Improvement: To develop this step is necessary to measure the training. One way of measuring the training is by using the Model of Four Level of Kirkpatricks consist of: Reaction of the employees, what they had learned, Behavior the applicability of the training, and Results of the training.

- Reacting: Is the opinion of the employees that are receiving the training. They communicate what they think about the train they had received, and how satisfied they are with it.
- Learning: measure the improvements of the skills, knowledge or attitudes of the employee after taking the training.
- Application: Measure the change of the employee had after having the training. How align is the Employee with the corporate strategy?
- Evaluates: Evaluates the effects of the training in business results, such as: productivity increase, sales increase, quality improvement, increase of customer satisfaction.

For the training it is not necessary to go further because the acceptance and the commitment have to be achieve in the moment the corporate strategy is explained in detail by the responsible.

Step # 4: Improve the Diagnostic Control System:
Taking into account the Figure # 5: Control System over the Life Cycle of a Business (Simons, 2000). Ecoratio should be focused on the implementation of the Belief system, however during the research it was evident that the company have to improve the Diagnostic Control System (which are the essential management tools) because Ecoratio is using only the financial perspective and not the others three perspective. Furthermore, the Balance between Profits, Growth and Control shows that Ecoratio do not have a balanced because is focused on growth and not in control. For this reason is important that Ecoratio Implement the Balanced Scorecard, which will allow the company control the growth and the expansion in a sustainable way mitigating the risks, as well as to “translate the mission and strategy into goals and measures, organized into the four perspectives” (Simons, 2000), which are:
Customer perspective (How do customers see the company?): To know the perspective of customers’ in subjects like: the time that Ecoratio is meeting the customer needs, as well as the quality (quality of the product of the technical service). The creation of value to Ecoratio’s customers. Finally the cost. (Kaplan & Norton, 1992)

Internal Perspective (What must the company Excel at?): It can measure the employees that are involved in the key activities of the company, and how they are engaged with the customer satisfaction. For Ecoratio the key activities could be the whole process of selling and services. The company can measure the cycle time, quality of the product and service, the skills of the employees and productivity. (Kaplan & Norton, 1992)

Innovation and Learning (Can the company continue improving and creating value?): It can be measured the capacity to learn and improve in services. Also, according to the new structure of the company there will be a head of R&D, this means that from the moment when the department is created, it will be possible to start measuring the capacity to innovate in products, as well as the whole process of creation until launching the product in a market.

Financial (How do stakeholders see the company?): The financial perspective is the one that is most developed in the company. For this reason the information and the data that the department is developing it is suitable for the Balanced Scorecard.

Step # 5: Implementation of the Boundary Systems: The boundary system is divided into two, the Business Conduct Boundaries and the Strategic Boundaries. For the first aspect, the company has established a code of conduct and employees know what they can do and what they cannot do. In fact, Marketing Department is writing a handbook which includes this code of conduct. On the other hand strategy boundary focuses on “opportunity-seeking behavior to support explicit organizational strategies.” (Simons, 1996) In the moment the company communicate the belief system and the employees start believing in it as if it was also of them. As mentioned before, they will start looking for opportunities to expand and growth according to the direction of the company. However without the boundary system there is not any risk analysis for undertaking the opportunities (this is happening right now in Ecoratio).
One way to establish strategic boundaries is by communicating policies like:

- When entering a new market, Ecoratio create a plan with all the steps from beginning to the end. Also, all the resources that the company need for each step. This information will simplify the entrances and will reduce the uncertainty of a new market.
- When seeking to entry a new market, the business development department must work on a business plan, and if the ROE is below 18% then company should not take the opportunity and the risk.
- It can also be included the following boundary: If there are two or more opportunities to entry a new market, Ecoratio, instead of trying to undertake both opportunities, can make a comparison analysis between both that include the expected cash flow, possible investment, possible risks, resources needed, possible profits, growth rate, etc. When comparing the results Ecoratio can choose one opportunity and focus all the energies and resources to undertake in a successful way, as well as with low risk.
- Finally, it could be included that before trying to enter a new market, the business plan have to be approved by the shareholders, as well as by a person who is specialized in that new market. (a guest)

The strategy boundaries are ways that help the company to be less uncertain and to be prepare to the challenges that comes when entering a new market. Today Ecoratio is taking high risks that can harm the company financial healthy.

Step # 6: Implement Interactive Control System: these formal information systems can be used on the foundation that the managers “involve regularly and personally in the decisions of activities of their employees”. (Simons, 1996). This is a process were first managers of Ecoratio establish a strategy, then the employees learn by experience new ways of undertaking the strategy (tactics) and take action. In the moment the managers realized that one employee is achieving successfully the goals. The manager will go and ask to the employee what is he or she doing to be successful. When the employees tells to the manager the tactic, the manager will adapt the strategy in order that all the employees are able to start using these tactics in order to succeed.

Managers can ask frequently to the employees’ questions about how they are developing their work? How Ecoratio can improve? Which barriers the employees found while doing the work? How the employees overcome the barriers?, etc. This can be done as the half-month meetings.

By following these six steps, Ecoratio will be able to achieve the strategic alignment. As it was mentioned before, it is a process that take time, but in the moment the company is well aligned, the business will be able to grow and expand in easier and sustainable way avoiding high risks.
The importance of these six steps to achieve alignment is that when the company established a belief system it has to communicate in an effective way. But how to know if it the communication was effective? By measuring the results of the communication. For this reason is important to include a model (model of four levels) in which the company can evaluate if the communication is effective or not. Moreover, if the company use balanced scorecard, the company can control if the employees are working in order to achieve the mission and vision or they are on the wrong track. The advantage of knowing this type of information is that the headquarters can make decisions with the information collected and analyzed in order correct the track of the strategy by arranging the pitfalls or by implementing another strategy. This also can be done with the interactive system.

Then why is important the implementation of the boundary system? It is important because in a company that is growing and expanding, opportunities can be all around them as well as risks. If the company do not start implementing boundaries the health of the company can be harmed, and one of the aspects of the alignment is not to harm the company but to make it stronger. By doing these steps the company will have the guideline to align the employees with the company expectations.
8. Bibliography:

- Fonvielle, W. Carr, L.P., (2001). Gaining Strategic Alignment: Making Scorecards Work. *Management accounting quarterly.* e.g. 32 (e.g. 2), pp.1-14


# Appendix:

<table>
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<td>Appendix 4: Self Reflection</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 1: Ecoratio’s Mission Statement

Mission of Ecoratio
Ecoratio’s drive for perfect customer service, our honest approach and our long term commitment to our markets excites all our main stakeholders and turn them into fans.

Our Customers:
Are excited because the unique combination of our perfect services together with our technical superior and environmental safe products, helps them to achieve their targets of sustainable growth.

Our Employees:
Are exited by the challenging and rewarding working environment in which they can develop their talents and contribute to maintain and build a loyal customer base of promoters, not seen before in he markets we are active in.

Our Shareholders:
Are excited by the opportunity they can build Ecoratio into a world class company to which they can be proud of at a fair return on investment.

Our Suppliers:
Are excited by being able to grow with us, in a loyal relationship in which they can sell their products and services at a fair price.

The Society:
Is excited, because it rates Ecoratio as a school example: professionally managed and making the world a better place by selling environmentally sound products as improving working conditions.

Our Values:
- Enterprising, disciplined and transparent -, help us to focus and to achieve our mission.
# Appendix 2: Interviews

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<tr>
<th>Level Info</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Strategy</td>
<td>Lisette van de Riet</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
<td>+31 624 990 103, <a href="mailto:lisette@ecoratio.com">lisette@ecoratio.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Michael Hollenbenders</td>
<td>Chief Operating Officer</td>
<td>+49 1627 860 860, <a href="mailto:michael.hollenbenders@ecoratio.com">michael.hollenbenders@ecoratio.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan van Driel</td>
<td>Head of Finance</td>
<td>+31 624 990 103, <a href="mailto:jan.van.driel@ecoratio.com">jan.van.driel@ecoratio.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Level</td>
<td>Roanna Klasens</td>
<td>Global Business Development Manager</td>
<td>+44 7841 385 278, <a href="mailto:roanna.klasens@ecoratio.com">roanna.klasens@ecoratio.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Stewart</td>
<td>Customer Services Representative</td>
<td>+44 1332 781 767, <a href="mailto:john.stewart@ecoratio.com">john.stewart@ecoratio.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barbara Kenkmann</td>
<td>Financial Services Representative</td>
<td>+49 151 12 11 65 08, <a href="mailto:barbara@ecoratio.com">barbara@ecoratio.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christine Földesi</td>
<td>Personal Assistant</td>
<td>+37 126 148 758, <a href="mailto:christine@ecoratio.com">christine@ecoratio.com</a></td>
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<td>Functional Level</td>
<td>Bjorn Hanzel</td>
<td>Technical Sales Manager</td>
<td>+49 160 718 8628, <a href="mailto:bjoern.hanzel@ecoratio.com">bjoern.hanzel@ecoratio.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kjell Larsson</td>
<td>Technical Sales Manager</td>
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**INTERVIEWS ECORATIO PER STRATEGIC LEVEL**

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<td>Which is the overall strategy of Ecoratio?</td>
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<td>Who is in charge of the development of the strategy inside Ecoratio?</td>
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<td>How often, the strategy is evaluated and/or modified the strategy?</td>
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<td>Organizational structure</td>
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<td>Which is the organizational structure of Ecoratio?</td>
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<td>Why the organizational structure was changed?</td>
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<td>Which is the purpose of this new organizational structure?</td>
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<td>Who is in charge of the internal communication toward strategic topics?</td>
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<td>In which way this activity is developed?</td>
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<td>How often the employees of Ecoratio receive strategic information?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Which is/are the method/s used to communicate?</td>
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<td>Example: Media, email, intranet, face to face, Skype, phone, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>General question:</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>In which way Ecoratio is taking care of the management control?</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
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<td>Who is in charge of the control of the company?</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Data:</td>
<td>Which topics are relevant to control?</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Management of Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
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<td>How the data is collected?</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Is there any system or tool that helps to collect data?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>Who collects all the data?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>The data collection take place every day / week / month?</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Training:</td>
<td>Which is the final result of this data collection?</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>Is there strategic training for the employees and partners of Ecoratio?</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>How often the employees and partners receive strategic training?</td>
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<td>Who is in charge of this activity?</td>
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<td>Are there some tools or documents that support this activity?</td>
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<td>How is the process for new employees?</td>
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</table>
# Questions

1. Why did you decide to start up this company?
2. Which were your expectations of starting this company?
3. In that moment how did you think the company would be?
4. Which is the gap of your expectations regarding Ecoratio now a days?
5. How do you see Ecoratio today?
6. How do you think Ecoratio will be in the future? Next five years
7. What do you think is missing to become the company you are expecting in the future?
8. Taking into account the mission of the company, what do you mean by becoming stakeholders fans of Ecoratio?
9. How do you think the internal communication is working today?
10. Do you think that the employees are trying their best when communicating with each other?
11. Which is your concept of the tools and systems that the company is using to communicate?
12. Specifically what do you think about the CRM system? (Maximizer)
13. How do you think the communication can be improved in Ecoratio?
14. In which way can you know the overall situation of the company?
15. Does the information you received is suitable and sufficient for you?
16. Which is the most important subject for Ecoratio? It is being control?
17. What type of information will you like to receive?
18. Do you believe that training that the employees are receiving is fulfilling the expectations of the market?
19. In which aspect do you think that the employees could received more training?
20. Do you believe that the employees understand the mission of Ecoratio?
21. What is doing Ecoratio to make employees go to the same direction?
22. What aspects are primordial to improve in training?
23. Can you tell me in one sentences or one word, what is Ecoratio for you?
## Questions

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<td>Which is the Mission and Vision of Ecoratio?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Which are the objectives and goals that the company want to achieve in 2014?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Which is the overall strategy of Ecoratio?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>How does Finance Department support the Mission, Vision and Objectives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Which is the roll of Finance Department toward the strategy of the Company?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>With which areas does the Finance Department communicate?</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>How does the Finance Department communicate? Which is the process?</td>
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<td>Do you think that the internal communication is efficient and effective?</td>
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<td>Why yes or why not?</td>
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### General question:

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<td>10</td>
<td>How does the Finance Department managed in Ecoratio?</td>
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### Data:

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<td>Do you think this tool fullfil the expectations and needs of the company</td>
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<td>Which is the final result of this data collection? Reports?</td>
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<td>To who is shown the result of the information? How often the information is shown?</td>
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<tr>
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<td>How often this information is shown?</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>How can the Finance Department can produce more information?</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Do you think that the members of Ecoratio should know and understand more about the finances of the company?</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Do you think your department is well trained? Why yes or why no?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>In which aspects and subject Ecoratio can improve in training?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Can you tell me in one sentences or one word, what is Ecoratio for you?</td>
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# Questions - Business Level

1. Which activities do you develop in Ecoratio?
2. For how long have you been working for Ecoratio?
3. Is there a document that says in a standard way what you should do in your work?
4. Sometimes you think that you are doing someone else’s work? When? Which type of work? And Why?
5. Do you have to manage staff members?

5. With whom do you have constant communication? What is the reason?
6. It is easy to communicate with the employees of Ecoratio?
7. Which type of tools or system do you use to communicate?
8. How about Miximizar, do you use it and what is your opinion of it?
9. How do you think Ecoratio can improve internal communication?

## General question:

9. Do you now which is the Vision and/or Mission of Ecoratio?
10. What do you understand of the term fan, that is used in the mission?
11. How can you create fans inside and outside the company? (employees and customers)
12. How does your work help to achieve the mission and vision of the company?
13. Do you believe and live this Vision and mission? How?
14. In which way is the head office measuring your performance?

## Data:

15. Do you need data (information) to develop your work?
16. Which type of data?
17. Where can you find it?
18. Is it available always?
19. When using Maximizar, do you have to create reports, what do you think about this reports?
20. What kind of things you think it can be improved in Ecoratio regarding the data process or flow?

21. How often do you receive training?
22. In which subjects do you receive training?
23. Do you like the way in which you are receiving training?
24. How do you think this can be improved?
Interviews for the Functional Strategic Level

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Interview Barbara Kenkmann – The Interview was not recorder because she did not want too. These are the notes that where collected during the interview.

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<th>Barbara Kenkmann</th>
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1. Which activities do you develop for Ecoratio?
   I am in charge of ordering process, stock warehouse (Germany, Swede, Australia, Uk, etc.). I have place all the orders in account view and also to manage the sock of the warehouses all around the world.

2. For how long have you been working for Ecoratio?
   I have been working in Ecoratio for 2 years.

3. In some occasions do you have to someone else work? When? Which type of work? And Why?
   Yes, sometimes I have to translate documents from English to German or the other way, also I check grammar mistakes in special documents, and sometime I have to do troubleshooting. It depends on the type of trouble.

4. With who you have constant communication?
   I have contact with everyone in Ecoratio, sale managers, technicians, and people from the office, also I have contact with customers. This contact is almost daily and I don’t have any trouble to contact people, they always answer me the phone or the email.

5. Which type of tools ot system you use to communicate?
   The two tools I most use are the phone and the email, however, I also use SMS, mobile, viber, whats app, etc.

6. What do you think about Maximizer?
   The way in which it is used is not convenient. Right now we are using it as an application to store documents. There is not an outcome from it.

7. How do you think Ecoratio can improve the internal communication?
   I think that if people change of attitude the communication will improve. I mean there are employees who does not communicate with each other. What I have done to have a good communication with all is by having an informal and friendly communication.

8. Do you know which is the Mission of Ecoratio?
   Yes to make a better world.

9. What do you understand of the term fan that is used in the mission?
   Is that our customers see us different, that with the friendly communication we have we become their supplier but also their friend, who helps them and give them good quality products. For example, last week we were needing something urgent and I called one of our customers and ask for help and they helped, they didn’t have to that but because we have a friendly relationship we help each other also.

10. Do you believe in the mission?
    Yes

11. In which way the head office is measuring your performance?
    No there is not a specific way to measure my work.

12. Do you need data (information) to develop your work?
    Yes normally I use information that it is in Account View. Information like emails, telephones, contact information, prices, etc. When I don’t find the information I looked it in other places. For example if it is a contact information that I need I google it, but if it is a price, I go and look in emails, or call the sales manager, etc.

13. Do you use maximizer to create reports?
    No I do not create reports.

14. How Ecoratio can improve in the data process flow?
Ecoratio can improve in the moment that everyone start using the CRM system in the way it should be used. People need more discipline to upload the necessary information in the proper system.

15. How often do you receive training?
16. During these two years, I received training in subjects like product, visit warehouses, account view, maximizer. In a special way I received Excel lessons to develop my job last year, however I didn't use it because I changed of work. Now I asked for export import course which will help me in sending orders to other countries or by supplying the ware houses in other countries different from EU.

17. What is Ecoratio in one sentences or one word?
   It is a small company trying to conquer the world.

18. How do you think Ecoratio will be in 5 years?
   It will have more branches and more personnel. It will grow and expand around the world.

Interview Bjorn Hanzel

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1. Which activities do you develop in Ecoratio?
   I work as a sales manager so I get new opportunities new business new customers. All customers that come to company, arrange trials, arrange numbers and sales numbers for central Europe (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Hungry and Czech Republic. My home country is Germany. However I spent the most of the times around my area, I am traveling all around central Europe.

2. For how long have you been working for Ecoratio?
   I started in Ecoratio in 2012 as a sales manager for region Central Europe. I have been always sales manager.
   I am also the fleet manager. I handle the cars of the company.

3. Is there a document with the activities that you have to develop?
   Yes

4. Sometime you feel that you have to do the work of somebody?
   No I do not do things that are not part of my job.

5. With who you communicate internally in Ecoratio?
   I am daily I contact with the technical guys of my area, we are very close and stay very close regarding contact. Also with Michael Hollenbenders when we have something to discuss. However it is not so easy to contact him. With the others I can contact. I also contact Barbara and Christine there is no problem. There is no problem the only thing is that the office time (9:00 am) it doesn't match with the one of our customers who starts at 7:00am.

6. Which types of tools and/or systems you are using to communicate?
   The most important is the mobile, I also use emails.
7. What do you think about Maximizer?
Maximizer is the biggest problem of the company. I do not get in touch with the maximizer with my colleagues, I fell all the information the details and interesting things in Maximizer and I send out the report but when I get in touch with my colleagues I use the mobile or an email, but this is the data base for all the things we put in, I used Maximizer daily, but this is a very stupid system. The terminal service is so so so slowly and when u have to send a report I need 5 or 6 or 7 minutes only waiting when uploading the document and this make me very very angry. So it is a difficult system and is not running well and this is a problem. I think we need a data base and this is the only we have.
We need a faster system. Also a system that works offline so that when I write a report offline and I go to a place where I have internet the report upload automatically.

8. When you try to contact Michael and he is not in the office because he is in business trip other people can help you?
When I call Michael I only need Michael. Normally special prices, things to discuss that are not in range I ask Michael.

9. Do you know the mission of Ecoratio?
Yes

10. What does it mean that stakeholders become fan of Ecoratio?
When we get new customer and build and create fan on our worldwide. We are not normal on the market, we are very special company and our worldwide is very special, we stay closer to the customer, we create fan, we don’t say to the customer we are the one and only we are the best, we have the best prices. We come to you show our product, you can feel it, we taste we show you how it works, the customer can see and know by themselves and their results are much better than the competition. Then we create a fan. Our worldwide is so nice so smoody, because our customers is free from problems. There is not a hierarchical office. We are a team without big teams, this is a good way to get all the colleagues happy so that we can give 100% of our work.

11. Do you believe in the mission of Ecoratio?
Of course, I live in the Ecoratio matrix and I am so happy with this and is so lovely to work for Ecoratio, it is so nice.

12. How does the head office measure your performance?
I have a target meeting with Michael Hollenbenders, and I make the business plan and target by myself. I plan the targets for the region central Europe. We discuss customer by customer in the target meeting. Then we discuss about new business, we discuss about no name business and then we find the targets for the year. If I reach this number in sales I get a bonus.

13. Do you need some information to develop your work?
I need all the information about my colleague. When my technical support drive the around area and they hear something about new factories new planning, so I get the information from my colleagues. We stay on concrete shoes and I get information of new customers. I do not get important information for new customers from maximizer. For example I just received and email from on colleague who is in a concrete show who meet a new customer, he sent me the business card by email asking me if I knew this possible customer. It is easier for me and for him to send it via email and not through maximizer because then we will have to wait until he have internet access. Our business
day is too long and so hard to have problems with the system, so it must work. Why millions of people have an Iphone because it works.

14. Which type of information you need from the office?
Delivery times, what have bought the customers in the last month or years. We don’t have a system where I can get an overview of how many the customers have bought of the product. I get the information when I need it so long the office is open. It will be nice a system where I can search by myself. However I can ask before the meeting some information.

15. How often do you receive training?
I have training all the time when I am with my technical colleagues. Is not an official training. The official training is one or twice trainings at the year, it is for more than 2 days. For me is more interesting the daily day issues. Regarding strategically issues we have one big meeting in the year, and two sales meeting in the year. I think the big company meeting is too short, it is too much information in too short time. I think we must work more as a team, we must stay closer together, we don’t have enough time to have team works or some question. We did it last time in November. We went in different teams and did it. However we not have enough time we don’t discuss much about personal stuff and understand the personality of our peers. If we make one big meeting we should stay longer time together. Two big meetings is a little bit too much.

16. What is
17. The best company ever. I love to work for this company
18. I see the company growing, sometime growing too fast, but at the end of the year we are happy with the figures. Is a wonderful part to work and to be.

Interview John Stewart

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1. Which activities you develop for Ecoratio?
Business developer manager. Basically startin the presense of Ecoratio in new areas of the world where Ecoratio isn’t right now. Like Australia, America and the middle east.

2. For how long you have been working with Ecoratio?
In total is 9 years. Five years the first time, I had one year of break, and then 4 years this time. Over the past decade

3. Which is the biggest change Ecoratio have done?
The change that has created the biggest change was employing the third director.

4. There is a description of your job?
Yes there is a document. I have been doing this job since January this year, before that I was sales manager for the UK Island.
5. Sometimes you have to do the job of someone else?
   Is always doing the job of many. When I start in Ecoratio there were only 5 people. At that time, I was sales manager, I was service manager, I found warehouse in the UK, I match the stock, and more or less everything else. As time go on, it has become more organize. It has improve a lot, we are still under result.

6. You have to manage staff members?
   I am responsible of all new starter, of the training of new starters, up until the training is complete until they go over a general manager, but at the moment we don’t have general managers, so anybody that is new in the company reports to me, and anybody who is not new has their own reports structure.

7. Where does the training take place?
   Is a mixture of places, the train take place both the UK and in The Netherlands and often in other countries as well.

8. With who you communicate often?
   Most people in the office, Michael, all of the sales staff, all of the training team (me, Coope and Haine) in reality there is probably two people with I don’t have real communication they are Leiger (Germany) and Jan (Accountability).

9. It is easy to communicate with everyone?
   Contact is by telephone email, face to face according to what is needed it is becoming easy. My job is a new job there were some reservations within the company to what I was doing. I think that my job has become more transparent as communication is becoming easier. Skype not often.

10. How about Maximizer?
    Is something that should be used far more but is difficult to use and ineffective, we need to replace it. It is ineffective, difficult to use and is totally not done intuitive. What I mean by that is when apple started to selling the IPhone their marketing said behind it, Is the computer you know how to use, because you turned on and everything was very easy to follow and self-explanatory. With Maximizer is the opposite.

11. Which information you include?
    Reports, visiting customer, main part of them, I should be using the calendar, but I am struggling actually to actually to get working to synchronized with other calendars which it was what I was telling not intuitive. It should be used for developing pipelines and new accounts and stuff like that. But again is not used like that as much at it should again because of the system. It take a long time to include the process, especially when you are working with the system remotely. If you don’t have internet then you cannot connect to it. And when you do have Internet everything is very slow. It takes 3-4 minutes, it could take actually 30 seconds to send an email. It is not big amount when you are doing remotely when you stop for coffees it just don’t work.

12. Which information you need for maximizer?
    You should be able to get all contacts all the information about the customers, etc etc. A big problem that the company have is that until very recently everybody wrote in their own language. For example something was written in German someone who doesn’t know German could not read it. However it have been change but there are still reports put on in German and translated roughly in to English because into my view workers in Germany belief haven’t grasp
the point that someone else that who doesn’t speak in German may work there in the future and is important that anybody can get that information. Technical support was supposed to be able to get financial information but that is either not available or too old. As I said the theory is good the practice is very poor. I need somewhere to store the information, until now is the only place I can do it. Regretfully instead of using it as a CRM should be used is being use as a filing carpet.

13. Do you know the mission of Ecoratio?
Is where our customer actively talk about us among their peers and would recommend us about everybody else and will turn to us as a first point of contact. In an internal way as I said if they have any issues they will turn to us before rather than everybody else. That is the key thing. I will said that inside the company is generally good. Most of the people would do what they have to do and a little more. As matter of cause, I will said everybody within the company has got the company’s best interest.

14. How do you think that you are helping to achieve the mission of Ecoratio with the activities you develop?
Hopefully quit a lot, I am responsible for huge amount of the growth within the company. Also I have been responsible for the first time introducing an actual training program rather than it just been done by who ever had spare time. Now I am doing it in a very organize way. There are a lot of changes happening within the company this year and in the future. And Michael is leading the way in those changes.

15. Do you believe in Ecoratio Mission?
Yea.

16. How do you think that the head office measure your performance?
I have targets, of growth and customer retention and new customers, with regard about training program is more subject. That is going to be mostly measure by directors and is very much under the microscope the current staff we have because is affecting them because I am asking them to contribute some parts as well it will be look and measure by them as well.

17. Is part of your job to train people?
Is part of my job?

18. Do you received training?
Yea It starting to get better. I receive my first official training last year. It was a course I had ask to Michael, others as well. If people need training they can ask for it We want to be proactive, at the moment it have to be put a little on me because I am writing the new starter training programs. Literally is being used for the first time. But they plan that everybody in the company have to take the training so that everyone would know. If someone need some training they can ask to the director, and it will be arrange if it is possible. In strategic subjects is something it has to be introduced. Hopefully in the last quarter of this year.
As a company we are use to travel, so if people need to travel we will do it. I suspect that some more training process will start to occur during team meeting and stuff like that to make the most of the time that everybody is together. But very aware that a meeting should be a meeting and not a training meeting, so there should be a balanced.

19. What should Ecoratio improve?
CRM
20. What is Ecoratio for you?
   My future.

Interview Lisette Van de Riet

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1. When did you decide to start up Ecoratio? And Why
   I was working with a big company (part of Unilever), and there we develop the first product, but it was not working in that company because they were focus on selling in brug not in germ where I recede. I, together with Marco we decided to start up a company because we saw positive results and improvements we bring and the idea of an environmental product to bring into the market and do business.

2. Which was your expectations on that moment?
   At that time the name was different, and my opinion we saw a big change and you never know if it is going to be a success or not. But at the end we can say this is success.

3. Regarding your expectations and the situation of Ecoratio how the company has become?
   I was wondering that it was going to happened, that is why I start the company. It was working better than my expectations.

4. How do you see Ecoratio right now?
   I think we are developing in the right direction. However we have to be careful that we are not growing to fast, because there are a lot of opportunities all over the world. But we need to have it in control, step by step. I think this is really important in the moment. Sometimes is difficult because you have to stop some products, projects. I think we are in a middle of the process we are giving the next step for Ecoratio.

5. How do you see Ecoratio in 5 years?
   We need to be more professional. In five years we are all over the world. I see only positive things, the importance is that we have to do step by step so that we can manage it and have it in control.

6. What things are missing to give the next step?
   It is important that the office can manage everything. I think we need more specialist on logistics, because that will be more and more complicated how far you go. In Europe is not a problem but if you go outside it is more and more critical to manage logistics process.

7. What do you mean by stakeholders become fan?
   I think Michael Hollenbenders bought a book of how to create fans. We need to create fans so that they will promote us, as a reference. The customer come to you and not the other way around. They come to us because they have heard the best product the best company, the best employees, everything is good there and we need to know the products. Employees have to be fans of Ecoratio they will like to work for long period for
us, because they are motivated that they like Ecoratio, otherwise they can’t sale it and that they can develop their self in the company.

9. What do you think about the internal Communication in Ecoratio?
   I think we can improve a lot because our communication is not the best, and it has different reasons. The first one is the language is German and English people and the distance of course, is difficult to say come for a meeting to Rotterdam because they have to flight. The main language is English, they all have training but they do not use too much because they talk in their own language.

10. Do you think that the employees are doing their best when communicating with each other?
    They do the best, but there is a lot of improvement possible. Share knowledge information, share new things. Have phone calls between each other but they do not do that.

11. Which tools and systems the company use to communicate?
    The most used is phone and email, and we have our CRM system Maximizer, which is also important for the communication. However we are analyzing our CRM system to find out if it is the best for us. Also marketing is part of communication, Roanna is looking at it. Emails is nice but not emotional things that you have to do by phones.

12. What do you think about Maximizer?
    Maximizer is different depending the position in which you are. For me is alright, I can see customers and look some information. The question is how happy are the sales manager with this system. But to find out and we are in the process, the first question is what you expect of from a good CRM program, then how Maximizer is performing and what can be improved, and finally which is the best system then. Could be that Maximizer is perfect but we don’t know. How can you use maximizer and nobody is telling you how can you find it?

13. How do you think that Ecoratio can improve the communication?
    I think we need to do more meeting that they have the feeling that we are a team. I think this is not the case at the moment. What can help is not only tools, it could also be something else, sharing information to find the best way. The problem is everybody has their own ideas about it or feels is important information.

14. Is there a feedback between employees and head-office?
    No we don’t have, we can try it but in which way? We have meetings but is more top-bottom but not the other way, and employees are the one with best ideas.

15. Which other type of tools you use?
    Account view which is more about financial stuff. Every month Jan send us a report with the sales and budgets, and we send it to everybody.

16. Which is the most important aspect to be aware of?
    Figures – cost- overview.

17. Which type of communication you think that company can produce that right now is not producing?
    I think right now is ok. Maybe we can improve the way in which we come to the information.

18. What about the analysis of the information?
    The analysis is too less we need to analyses more. Management team is analyzing and then we send it to the employees if it is something important.
19. Does the training that the employees are receiving to fulfil the expectations of the customers?
   I hope so, we have to ask the customers.
20. The company is asking to customer the perception about Ecoratio?
   In the past we had customer questions but at this moment we don't do it. Most of the time we do a reflection at the end of the year about how can be improve something. I think you need to ask every time. If you visit a customer we can improve something to the customer? We sent by email before some question but it didn't work, it has to be face to face, and discuss what can be improve.
21. Which topics employees could have more training?
22. We are starting a new training program for starters. I think they could have more training in maximizer but I think is something we have to ask people in what they need more training. Regarding strategic training are coming from the management team and the communicate it.
23. Do you think that the employees understand the mission and strategy of the company?
   I hope so, but I am sure not everyone is understanding or in a different way. Understand different things regarding their language.
24. What is Ecoratio?
   Is very important, is my third daughter.

Interview – Maris Erdmanis

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1. Which activities you develop in Ecoratio
   I am a support technician, I support sales and support customers to keep them happy. In Denmark, Sweden Norway and Holland.
2. For how long have you been working in Ecoratio
   Since 1st of august.
3. Which was the training that you received when you started working in Ecoratio?
   The training, actually I was the first one to receive the training. As we see now I was trained improperly. I didn't receive The training actually that will prepare me to this kind of job, because it was more like going around to factories and it was more like go to museums and see the art work, or go to factories and see how it was done. But my work is not only to see how is done is also to know how is done, that means that you have to investigate why is like that or why is not going well. When you visit the factories everything was running well and when they ask question if everything is going well I didn't have question because I saw that everything was ok. For me it was hard to explain when something was not going with the customers, however now a days I can explain what is going wrong because of the experience.
4. Now we have done a lot of improvements in the training, because with our colleagues we discuss how the training should be done taking into account my previous training. Is there a document with the description of the activities I have to develop, it is in the contract.

5. Do you have to do others activities?
   No I think is perfect, I do what I have to do, and I am not doing someone else’s work. Maybe is sometimes a lot to do and can’t concentrate in something so sometimes I have delays of one or two weeks.

6. With who you have constant communication?
   I communicate with my sales person (Mr. Larsson), who also have the same territory, I work with him, and with Heine. In the office I do contact them but we are not working with them because Mr. Larsson communicate between the office and customer, and I am a contact between Mr. Larsson and client. I can contact him whenever I need him is actually we can always talk and he always have time. He is supporting me a lot since I begin.

7. Which tools or the systems you use to communicate with each other?
   Basically Is phone, I am lack a little bit of communication, because sometimes is really difficult to go to Maximizer and write all the things I did in the day, reports.

8. What do you think about Maximizer?
   It is needed but is too slow, and sometimes in the hotels when the connection is not good and cuts down, sometime you write something and you lose what you have done. It is not a fast tool, it creates confusion, you don’t know if it is done or not.

9. What does it can be improve in communication?
   I think that we don’t have enough of talks with the whole team. I communicate with my sales manager and with Coope.

10. Do you know the mission of Ecoratio?
    I know it is changing, but right now I don’t remember.

11. What do you understand of make that the stakeholder become fans of Ecoratio?
    The customer should become a fanatic of our products. That means you have to do a lot of work with the customer, you have to explain why is better than the other, and you also have to show them that the product really works. Once they are happy and they see the improvement compared to other products, then they can become our fans. The most important aspect is the services that we are giving to customers. If something is going bad then we are going to be there and react fast. Also to convince them not to be afraid to ask if something is wrong. People think that they are bothering for small issues but for small issues we can lose the customer. The environmental issue is important for the people that use the product, but the people customer don’t know how good is for the environment and for the people that applied it.

12. How do you think your work help to achieve the mission of Ecoratio?
    I have to talk to the people that are at the factory. Then more people will see the outcome and people will tell the boss which oil is good for the concrete and for them to use it.

13. How is measure your performance?
    My colleague Michael knows if I did the work right, if the customers don’t appear is because all is working right. If something goes bad they will appear. My target is to help customer. I don’t have quantitative goals, maybe in the future. To help the client you
should know well the product, no one explain why some product is better than the other, they just tell is better and I have to prove it with experience.

14. What type of information you need to develop your work?
I get the information from Mr. Larsson and Coope, sometime I look email in the Maximizer, but it will be much easier if it is easier to look for it. The information is in Maximizer but you don’t know where to look, is hard to find.

15. What do you think it can be improve in the training?
The training it was two weeks in a row, it is too much information you get without going to real situations. Everything is in documents and in papers, but the training should be explanation about the trial we are going to have in the next week. Because the trial is from another product, so that you can get your hands in what you have learn.. The trial is to try the product for real, taking pictures and look how it worked. Also you have like a test with some questions and you answer because you remember what have been said but sometimes you don’t know how it looks what you are answering,. In my case was easy because I have previous experience. There is a gap between experience and what is thought and what is asked.

16. Can you tell in one word or one sentences what is Ecoratio?
Is a great company that care about their workers and cares about of living green, taking care of tomorrow’s world.
How you think Ecoratio will be in 5 years?
Developing, spreading all around the world, and also paying attention to smaller clients, not only the big companies, key accounts, but also small customers.

Interview – Michael Corporate

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1. Which are the Mission and Vision of Ecoratio?
   ✔ We don’t have really set a real vision and we don’t separate between the mission and the vision. So the vision we have is overall to make the world a better place. This company was founded in 1998 by two shareholders, who decided to come out of the chemical industry and found out there is a lot of harmful products sold to customers worldwide, harmful to people and harmful to environment, and they decided lets make the world a better place, lets create a product which is different to the rest you can find worldwide.
   So then they decided we go, since they were focused on the construction industry to develop emulsion, which was very new in 1998 cause every was mineral oil based. So they entire world has change since then because everybody now understands that is better having emulsion better having this kind
of products even though there is also competitive products on the market which is not only environment friendly but is also mineral base or at least with a high volume of mineral in the emulsion and we don’t do that at all so we really follow the vision saying making the world a better place. So that is what we strongly believe.

That is why all of our products are free of mineral everything is based on veggie oil, delivering also good solution on these new products new development new ideas we brought to this industry. The mission is clear written down, that is something we really have on paper, just letting everybody know who is joining us who is with us, not only employees also partner and customers we have.

I don’t like to talk about customers we also have the internal goal that we have to create a fan. So we are not looking for people only buying our product or using our products. We are also looking a customer base a fan base of people love working with us love and understand what we are doing and also follow the idea of being different.

2. Who order to changes the organizational structure and why?

- Well I decided a couple of month ago when I found that we are extremely growing worldwide that we have to change something otherwise we cannot cop with the requirements the world is showing or the world is actual demanding from us. What we have is a couple of years ago, when we started this business everything was located or everything was focused on central Europe of the German speaking countries in Europe. Because this a major market in this industry in central Europe. So a couple of years ago 7 – 8 years ago we also went out of the midland Europe to United kingdom and conquest the Island, after that we went also to Scandinavian t Switzerland growing also the business in this part of the world . What we are doing since then is that we are expanding extremely in other regions we start to do things in Russia we set up a partner business in Spain so what is doing now is all the things for us in south America since in Spain there is not construction anymore because of the crisis. The company changes from Madrid to Sao Pablo.

We found out during the last couple of years that the world is a playground for us, so there is some many things waiting for us and we are a small company of only 15 people, have big opportunities out there. We centralized everything we can here in Rotterdam but most of the things need to be done locally, local mentalities, local behavior local people and we can’t do it. We tried to when we made the decision lets go abroad out of Europe we tried to get resellers, sales agency, will do this for us. But this is also not working because they don’t have our philosophy. Sales agency is only looking for the quick bug quick money and try to sale whatever they can his is something we are not looking for. We need to have people on place that understand our philosophy understand our vision follow the idea of making the world a better place means you have to sale this to customer to fans creating fans and changing the entire behavior of this industry where ever we are going because nobody knows what we deliver the value that we deliver must of the things are all fashion way so then we decided lets grow with own people lets hire own people. But then we realized very quickly hiring old people on the other side of the world, and we are in the process to hired
someone, we just hired someone in central Europe located in Germany, we hire someone from France, in Australia, we have already someone in New Zealand so we are really expanding and now in 2014 we also have the plan to go to the Unites States with own people hire in the United States and setting our company also over there.
What we found out is that sitting here making decisions locally is not working anymore. And that is why we change the structure.

3. Regarding what you have said Partners are not going to be a main purpose of the company in the next few years?
   ✓ Not at all, what I am trying to do is getting rid of all the partners we have. We really failed by having partners on board and asking them to do our sales. We just signed a new partner contract in small countries like Ireland, in countries that we are not looking forward to do it yourself anyway. So this is a nice opportunity for us having someone local who knows. Because if we don’t sale is fine but if we sale is better. But there is no focused on because we don’t have the resources to focus on small countries and small things just having 15 people maybe we will expand until 20 at the end of the year that is what I think it will be. We need to focus on high volume countries where we can have big game or big return of our investment.
   We need to focus on regions. We cannot be everywhere at the same time, so what we decided is expanding Europe, that is why we hire 2 new people so we also increase this amount of people very quickly. The other focus is on the other side of the world which is Australia and New Zealand, these is our main second main thing we are looking for, and the third one to go to North America. And then we have Partners, which not a reseller or distributor but is a strategically partner, they recommend us, they bring us to costumers, we work with them by following their recommendations and serving their customers with our products. This is also that we find a quicker entrance into the market because we don’t have to do market evaluation, they do for us, and they help us to get a foot into the door which is leading us at the same time at the same point to a quicker faster job.

4. How does the management team promote and communicate the strategy to the whole company?
   ✓ We have meetings three times a year, everybody get together where ever they come. And We also keep doing this because this is something you cannot communicate big changes like this on the internet or by email it has to be done by presentations by face to face meetings. This is affecting so many people, I mean this is not like we turn on the switch and everything is changing, we need to involve the people, we need to convince the people working here and being part of Ecoratio, actually being the company that is why we do this by presentation sitting together and talking.

5. How to align new employees with the overall strategy of the Ecoratio?
   That is the most difficult part. First of all finding the right people is something we don’t do ourselves, we decided some time ago not searching ourselves anymore which we have done in the past, so we just use headhunters to do the right
selection for us. We really use human resource agencies doing all this things for us.

Once we have decided somebody coming on board they get a training in Rotterdam for a whole week on who we are, what we are, why we are, how we sale, which is our philosophy, how to approach our customer, which are our differentiations, why we think we are better than the rest of the world.

After this week they should know who we are and who we are and why we are. Then they start having their technical training which is also taking place at customer side or in region where we have technical trainers one on Germany and another in United Kingdom. These guys take care of the technical training of new people coming aboard. This is a process starting traveling around the world with the technical trainers and being at customer, being showed what we do will take another four weeks. Then they come back to the office and do a written test of what they have learn. Most of the times it is not enough trained at that time. So we found out that we have to retrain or get back to the office get a retrain on technical, commercial, administration. Finally the people will be out of customers side for them self for first time after 8 weeks.

The technical sales managers are people who knows the technical side, technical perspective and also for the commercial side. We are looking that when we hire someone they have knowledge of technical training technical sales, experience and we just give them the last thing they need to know about us. Then they do everything by themselves.

There are three more meeting during the year where 2 of them technical or information based and the other one is for sharing information and sharing time.

6. How does the company handle the internal communication?

✓ The only thing we do all day is being on the telephone. We do a lot of things by Skype, however not all people like Skype because they are sitting in the car all day traveling. All our people go at least 60.000 km by car per year driving through Europe. For example, the technical sale manager is for central Europe with all the three German speaking countries (Germany, Austria and Switzerland) lot of motor ways to be driven to see customers. I talk almost everybody every day, just finding out where are they what they do, and they also talk to technical trainers technical advisor, marketing so there is nothing we are not sharing. It could be better I am always complaining that our communication is a disaster, I will like to have a real setup process a real professional way communicating things which I believes we don’t have today. Today we are sharing information when we think is needed to be share but sometimes we hear at the office that the management team have a complete view of things than the others, so sometimes we believe that is not necessary to talk about it and everybody has a really strong demand to get this information.

I received also around 50 emails from the people.

7. What happened with the information that the office collect during the day?

✓ Nothing, that is our major problem, we doesn’t use it the right way, we don’t write a blog out of it, we don’t share, the problem I have seen is that specially from the technical side not from the commercial side, is a question pops out somewhere,
someone calls the technical leader he answers the question and it’s done. However what we have to do is to share the question and answer with everyone out there and collecting the information. Why don’t we create an internal blog, why don’t we share all this information (in the website that is right now is been under creation). Or file it somewhere that people can start searching for it. On the other hand if you don’t know what to search you don’t start searching. If there is a continues information every single day and information coming in. I can see automatically with the newsletter or the information of the blog d ask question or this is something I am looking for, which is good for us. I am strong believer in communications and that this will help the entire company to grow. Today is easy to be on the phone because we are a small team in Europe but how about in Australia there is 11 – 12 hours of differences it there is not change to be on the phone, or the other guy in United States, is on the other side of the world and on the other way I have Australia we are in the middle so what we could do? Nothing nobody will call me so we have to do something. We have to do something in writing (email or blog).

8. Which is the main point of the website which is under constructor?

- It is outside information that we share information to the outside customers, to the outside world, we just show who we are what we do and where you can download couple of information datasheets, safety data sheets,. All you need for your daily business is available also in the website. However you have to put your email first to get the information, if not you will not get any answer.
- This is at the same time marketing and sales a combination because we have the information available for someone that is looking for it. On the other side I am interesting to know who is searching this type of information, so that is why is important to include the email address.

9. How Ecoratio is been controlled?

- Well we are not controlling freaks, what we are doing is hiring the right people that we can believe and trust that they are doing the right. But there must be some control that is at the same time sharing information. We have a Customer relationship management, where everybody is forced to shared what they are doing so force means that they need to do the planning where they are going to, what they are planning to do, and on the other hand when they have done it, they come back to do the reporting, which is in the CRM system and this information the collect customer site they create reports from and is share by sending to an email account report@ecoratio.com and this reports goes to do the people that should be aware of what is going on which the entire management team, the office and marketing but is not going to the rest of the company, it is only for the office that we understand what tour people is doing.
- The reports that are sent to the email address, is share to the entire people here in the office, so we know what to do because there is a lot of actions point in this kind of emails and this information for us to do here at the office and also for the management team to know what to do in the customer side. The information they include is all kind of information, whenever they have contact to the customer they have to come sign in and include all the things. However there are a lot of things I am not interested to read because is too much repetition, but if it says I
have a new project or there is a possible project and then there is a big report or we have to do some technical trainings some technical trials these is something we all need to read.

10. Do the technical sellers and the manager sellers have goals? Who create these goals?
   ✓ Yes they have goals, If they get to their goals they get more money, If not they don’t get the extra money, and if it is repetitive is necessary to have a personal talk with the manager seller or the technical seller. At least twice a year is the goal. I am traveling the world all the time, I am in the regions where the manager sellers are located, I meet them very frequently., which in addition to the normal meeting we have here in Rotterdam, I am traveling frequently, almost 50 flights per year just going to people. We are lucky, because during the last couple of years non one is not reaching goals, because I believe the goal planning is the key. Not having goals in place nobody can achieve. So do it together with the team, and let them create what they think they can achieve, then we talk about it and most of the time is working.
   ✓ I think we have a big lack in communication and communicating this kind of things, and also starts with collecting this kind of things that we don’t do well so if we don’t start collecting how we can share it. Actually this is the big part that we are missing.
   ✓ The more we grow the more we go global the more we need this information, because at the same time the more we grow the more new people are on board and don’t understand anything is the single thing we are doing. So we need to train here, but it needs to be also in continues training which is done by sharing, because when I am sharing what I found is also creating a question on the other side of the radar, so they are creating information coming back to someone and this is also creating an internal communication process when they are talking to each other and start sharing themselves.

11. Is there a special document that helps the manager sellers and the technical sellers to include all the information?
   ✓ We have two standardized documents, one is in the CRM system, the typical reporting system the typical report paper work, and the technical side is a technical report which picture has to be added where information has to be added, this is a 4 -5 slides documents which has to be fill in by technicians being at the customer side and finding out all this kind of things. But then, we have this information, we know what is going on, but we don’t share.

12. It is possible to include documents inside the website so that all the employees have access to them whenever they want?
   ✓ This is the part of the CR M we have, we have a library where all the information like this is uploaded to the system.

13. Everyone have Access to this library?
   ✓ Yes they have, however they don’t do it, because they want the easy way of getting information (by phone). Therefore I think if create something and you put in the system and store it without telling me that you have upload something in the system, why should I check. So if you have something that you share why don’t you put it a tool which is automatically shared with everyone and nobody can avoid been informed, nobody can actually, if we have something specially
and we want to share it why not put in a blog which it will pops automatically in the CRM showing new information of whatever subject. It forces you to read, you have to go through. Otherwise you don’t get to the point you are looking for, because you have to click it to go there. The human behavior is always looking for the easiest way. If you want someone to know something you need to force them to read it. The most important thing is just make sure that nobody can say no.

Maximizer is the CRM tool

14. What do you think about the too you are using for CRM? (maximazer)

✓ We are on the middle of an idea to change it because I am not happy with the product, and because we bought 8 years ago or 7, and it is a big tool for big company, it is focused on a called center environment. You can store whatever you like in, but is for people sitting at the office all day, but it is not suitable for Ecoratio’s work force which is selling and doesn’t stop on the office.

✓ What we are looking for is a completely new system, we need to replace this maximier with a very easy to use sales tool, there are couple out there (for example sales force), it is not perfect, but is very closed for what we are looking for. Sales force is focusing on sharing things finding information very easily you can use with an ipad a laptop, you just click and put whatever. Everything is available right away everything is in the cloud which is the future of the tools. At this time is not like that. The cloud is not the solution, there is going to be a lot of crap in the cloud. A solution that we all could live with this and we also love to work with, because if you don’t like the tool you have you won’t use it. That is what it is happening today because a lot of people are saying it is really not a good tool (maximize) let’s find something else that we can work with.

15. Does everyone have access to devises so that have access to the CRM system wherever they are?

✓ Everybody has Iphones, just a few have ipads because we don’t provide ipads. But all our sales people bought them because they wanted to have it and wanted to use it, and also there is a especial application for apple which can be use by iphone and ipad. Everyone has also maximum 3 years laptops. And all our tools we are using have access to the website wherever they are. It is really important to have everything in place to make it happen. The problem at the end f the day is that we have chosen the wrong tool and that is why not everybody is happy with this and we need to change it now because time is flying and tools are obsolete (maximizer), not the way we need them. Our demand of technology and technical support is different has change during the last couple years within the company. And because we are growing and expanding all over the world, we need to cooperate with the people on the other side of the world.

16. Who is in charge of the communications?

✓ It is me together with Roanna, we know what we want to do but we don’t have the time or the resources to do it. We have to work when we have time and with what we can do.

17. When are you going to decide if the CRM is going to be change?
I am just collecting information. We started collecting information two weeks ago. During 2014 we would look into it when we have more time which is normal in the summer period, when all our customers are on holidays and we also have a slow business so this is the time to start really thinking about it.

18. Are you looking the system with different approaches?

Maybe we are just really need to replace it and find another tool, or maybe we will stay where we are and think ok we just need more training or just understand more what is going on and it will be very easy.

Interview Michael Liegel German:

1. Employee work:
   a. Welche Aktivitäten werden Sie die Entwicklung in Ecoratio?
      Anwendungstechniker / Service Manager / Beton technologe / Producut Development Technician
   b. Für wie lange haben Sie für Ecoratio gearbeitet?
      13 Jahre (vom 01.April 2001 bis heute)
   c. Gibt es ein offizielles Dokument mit der Beschreibung der Aktivitäten, die Sie für Ecoratio entwickeln?
      Ja, Stellenbeschreibung / Technische-Aufgaben / Kundenbetreuung
      Ja, Berichte erstellen / Planung / Producut Development Technician ab 2014

2. Internal Communication:
   a. Mit wem haben Sie eine ständige Komunikation, während Unternehmen Ihre Aktivitäten?
      Mit unseren Kunden / = Stahlbeton-Fertigteilhersteller - Fertigteilwerke / Baustelen usw.
   b. Wie beurteilen Sie die Kommunikation innerhalb der Ecoratio beschreiben? Es ist leicht, mit anderen Mitarbeitern zu kommunizieren?
      Per Handy oder per e-mail funktioniert gut und problemlos. Problem ist für mich die Firmensprache in Wort und Schrift in Englisch. Muttersprache meine Deutsch ist.
   c. Welche Art von Tools oder System verwenden Sie, um zu kommunizieren?
      Lap-Top / iPhone / Handy
   d. Wie denken Sie über das CRM an Ecoratio ? (Maximizer)
   e. Wie kann Ecoratio die interne Kommunikation zu verbessern?
      Gute frage, nächste Frage, eine gute Mischung bei aller Nutzung verfügbaren positiv für alle Medien könnte Nutzer Wirken. Handy ist nicht immer nur möglich bremst und das auch für jeden Tagesgeschäft einzelnen Mitarbeiter.

3. Management of Control:
   a. General Information
      i. Was ist die Mission der Ecoratio?
         Unsere Ziele sind immer ein und Grün Orientiert Jährliches gesundes Wachstum. Stellen wir nur Umwelt freundliche her Produkte und diese auf
dem vertreiben Weltmarkt / bis jetzt nur überwiegend in Europe. Unsere Grundwerte sind "unternehmerisch, diszipliniert und transparent"

ii. Was halten Sie von Stakeholders die ein Fan von Ecoratio sind zu denken?
   Nur echte Fans sichere und sind gut langfristige Kunden.
   Ja / Produktionformatoinen / Verarbeitungshinweise / Sichheitsdatenblätter / Auftragsbestätigungen / Lieferinformationen / usw.

iii. Wie können Sie auf die creatin von Fans der Ecoratio beitragen?
   Wir sind immer die schnellsten, liefern die beste Lösung mit dem dem Besten Besten Service und das Produkt dauerhaft dem Kunden Profit sichert.

iv. Wie sieht Ihre Arbeit helfen, die Mission des Unternehmens zu erreichen?
   Optimal Teamwork gute innerhalb von Ecoratio.

v. Glauben sie in die Mission auf Ecoratio?
   Ja, die ist ein Ecoratio Mission von Sicherer GUTER und Weg, Schritt für Schritt.

vi. Wie beeinteilt der Buro Ihre Arbeit?
   Das Büro von Ecoratio sichert Zentrale als eine gut für Organisation und schnelle Bestellungen / Kunden und Logistik für die aller Mitarbeiter und bei Ecoratio wegen Koordination Bereitstellung.

b. Daten Frage:
   i. Sie benötigen spezielle information, um Ihre Arbeit zu entwickeln?
      Ja / Produktionformatoinen / Verarbeitungshinweise / Sichheitsdatenblätter / Auftragsbestätigungen / Lieferinformationen / usw.

   ii. Welche Art von Daten, die Sie benötigen?

   iii. Wie beurteilen Sie diese Art von Informationen?
      Erforderliche Schulungen betroffene finden für Mitarbeiter von Zeit zu Zeit regelmäßig statt. Ist nicht zu viel unbedingt, ca. 3x im Jahr.

   iv. Diese Informationen sind immer verfügbar?

   v. Mussen Sie Berichte für das CRM-System zu schaffen?
   vi. Was denken Sie, kann es zu Daten Prozess zu verbessern?

4. Training
   a. Wie oft haben Sie geschult?
   b. Welches sind die Hauptthemen in dem Ausbildung?
   c. Haben Sie die Art und Weise, in der Sie eine Ausbildung interessiert?
   d. Was denken Sie, kann verbessert werden?
   e. Bitte definieren Sie in einem Wort Ecoratio?
Interview Michael Liegel English:

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Michael Liegel</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:michael.liegel@ecoratio.com">michael.liegel@ecoratio.com</a></td>
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1. Employee work:
   a. Which activities do you develop in Ecoratio?
      Application Engineer / Service Manager / Concrete Technologist / Technician Product Development
   b. For how long have you been working for Ecoratio?
      For 13 years
   c. Is there an official document that describes the activities you have to develop?
      Yes, job description / technical tasks / customer care
   d. Do you have to develop activities that are not included in your job description?
      Yes, report / Planning / Development Technician Product 2014

2. Internal Communication:
   a. With whom do you have constant communication while undertaking your activities?
      With our customers / = steel concrete precast manufacturer - Precast plants / construction stelae, etc.
   b. How do you rate the communication within in Ecoratio members? It is easy to communicate with them?
      Works well and easily by phone or by e-mail. Problem is the company language in speaking and writing in English for me. My native language is German.
   c. Which tools or systems do you use to communicate with the members of Ecoratio?
      Lap-Top / iPhone / Mobile Phone
   d. What do you think about the CRM system? (Maximizer)
      Maximizer only works on-line. If there is no network then there is no access to the CRM system. Server problems always show that not all users have the same information about the same time. Employees All information can fill with Maximizer, this is just better than to send e-mails.
   e. How do you think that Ecoratio can improve the internal communication?
Good question, next question, a good mix at all available positive use for all media could be user interaction. Mobile phone is not always possible and only slows the individual and for every day business employees.

3. Management of Control:
   a. General Information
      i. Which is the mission of Ecoratio?
         Our goals are always one and Green Oriented Annual healthy growth. If we only eco-friendly manufacture products and sell them on the world market / to now only prevalent in Europe. Our core values are "entrepreneurial, disciplined and transparent"
      ii. What do you think of the stakeholders as a fan of Ecoratio?
         Only true fans safe and are good long-term customers.
      iii. How can you contribute the creation of fans in Ecoratio?
         We are always the fastest and best solution for customer permanently secures profit the best of the best service and the product.
      iv. How your work help Ecoratio to achieve the mission?
         Optimal Teamwork good within Ecoratio.
      v. Do you believe in the mission of Ecoratio?
         Yes, that is a Ecoratio mission of Safe and GOOD way, step by step.
      vi. How can the head office rate your performance?
         The Office of Ecoratio ensures centering Rail as a good for organization and quick orders / customers and logistics for all employees and Ecoratio for coordination provision.
   b. Data Information:
      i. Do you need specific information in order to develop your work?
         Yes / Produktionformatoinen / Processing instructions / Sicherheitsdatenblätter / order confirmations / Delivery Information / etc.
      ii. What kind of data do you need?
         Produktionformatoinen / Processing instructions / Sicherheitsdatenblätter / order confirmations / Delivery Information / etc. If the type of information to customers and usually suffice OK. Information for the staff of mostly Ecoratio are available online. Reports and notes of all employees must be created in Maximizer. Necessary for the new DATA products are not always immediately accessible Developed. Personnel-related bottleneck.
      iii. How can you have access to this kind of information?
      iv. Does this information is always available?
      v. Do you need to create reports for the CRM?
      vi. How do you think the process of information can improve?

4. Training
   a. How often you have trainings?
      Required training for employees affected will find from time to time held regularly. Is not necessarily too much, about 3 times a year.
   b. In which topics you receive training?
      Technical and Commercial information for the person concerned. New products, new applications, continuous changes in the organization, personal and technical / Commercial.
c. Do you like the way in which you receive training?
   Education and Training Top / fully OK

d. How do you think the training can improve?
   Permanent - exchange of information with the sales technician

e. Please define in one word the meaning of Ecoratio for you?
   If the Company / the market leader for release agent emulsions Europe and world wide.

Interview Roanna Klasens

1. Which activities you develop for Ecoratio?
   Well I work in the marketing. For this moment for 2014 I fund the agenda handbook, the company handbook. Because there was a lot of clarity, some people did it one way others the other, and they didn’t know really how to do it. Also simple things, emails signatures, how to ask for your holidays I am writing a complete handbook, I am building a website, I am developing the house style, because I realized how different everyone sold Ecoratio and there was not affinity and without difference with competitors, so now I have develop a new house style. Production videos, making sure that we provide customer service. Advice marketing strategy and global brand recognition. The handbook include: It has values, mission, vision, internal communication, how do we do team meetings, it support, contact people, job evaluations, company car policy, etc. We are building a new website because the old is so updated there is not enough pictures on it, but is also not accessible from smart devices. We create a new one where you can get access from smart devices. Our website is purely meant to inform, maybe in the future will be different.

2. For how long have you been working for Ecoratio?
   For 2 years

3. Is there a document that describe your activities?
   Yes, there wasn’t there, there are no HR related activities in Ecoratio, but last year I developed so that this year is the first time everyone has a clear job description.

4. Do you have to do the work of someone else?
   Since this year is much more organize and I am just working in marketing. Before I did IT, HR, a lot of activities.

5. With who do you have constant communication?
   Michael, Vera, Sales managers, and everybody else. But because I was working on finding house style I manage to speak to everybody.

6. It is easy to contact employees in Ecoratio?
   It was not easy, it was a distorted hierarchy, so the sales team felt elevated over the other team member and I met quit a little bit of resistance when I started working. Only
after I showed the house style they realized what I was doing they understood the importance of it and they change. There is not a lot of information sharing.

7. Do you know the mission of Ecoratio?
   Yes I do, however that mission is outdated. I want to change that because the mission should have one sentences so we are not going to use this anymore.

8. Why is there not a Vision?
   No it has to be develop. When Ecoratio was founded they just started working on it, there was never time taken for business plan, strategy written, so I am actually working on that.

9. What it means make stakeholders fan of Ecoratio?
   Yes you can just delete out of your memory because Michael took out of a book and just copy it and it was not consistency of who Ecoratio is. In my belief it has to fit the people who works in the company, and the owner of the company, and you cannot take some idealistic mission and copy to your own company because it will never work and people will be never able to identify with it.

10. What do you think about the mission statement and do you think the people from Ecoratio is following up?
    Not at all, it was just written to look nice. We says as Ecoratio we are transparent, honest and ambition. Because we are small I think is sufficient.

11. Which tools you use the most to communicate with each other?
    Email.

12. What do you think about Maximizer?
    It is a very difficult to use, it is so slow and so tedious to use that people just stop using it, so it miss its point. People are not using it in the proper way. There is not proper training neither in software but also on the philosophy, and if you are not properly trained you just going to avoid using it, and then you don’t like using it because things keep going wrong. People were never shown what actually you can do with the CRM system, so because they don’t understand it and they don’t see the advantage of using it, why they will fill on it properly? They never shown the graphs or nothing so they just say o what a horrible program.

13. How do you think your work is helping the company to achieve the mission?
    The company was two sided with a lot of internal problem when I came here, so I did the HR, I spoke everybody, I map the problems which brought a better team feeling, and people feel this. On the other side, is my job to make sure that Ecoratio still in business 10 years from now, my job is long-term.
    How do you think the head-office can measure your work?
    On the internal I think you just have to ask people how do they feel, do they have better understanding with other peers, are you better supporter. On the external it can be measure by the visits of the website, or a survey about the new style upon the old style.

14. There is something that measure you?
    I will like to do that but there is not enough time to do that. I haven’t dine documentation of what I have done and is very important to have it written.

15. What do you think about the strategy of Ecoratio?
    I think that if there are opportunities we should take it. However, we are going to fast we see just opportunities but without risk analysis, no body check return on investment, because of that things have gone wrong, and it is a shame. Also I think that we have insufficient proper bases and you can make a good impression the first time. For
example the website, if we go to America and possible go to our website they will not understand what we do and the company we are. If I would have the time I will have the website ready and that will make a good impression. ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF HOW ECORATIO FAILED BECAUSE IT WAS NOT PREPARED. Interview # 3 minute 2. Our media is not working, so if it is not updated it is better to delete it, and I don’t have the time to do it.

Another thing is that our sales managers or technicians managers they even don’t have a computer half of the time, an email because they are working on a factory.

16. What is high priority?
Having our marketing tools necessary. Expand fully the house style, the website, a good brochure, also that the respect of each other and knowledge share of the company it take to a higher level.

17. Which type of information you need to develop your work?
I am using field research, I travel to the trade shows to association meeting, and I listen to the internal knowledge. But I will like also to use market research.
If account view was well filled the information will help us to know much more, and we will have information to make decisions. However is not well filled.

18. Which type of reports you develop?
My own presentation is marketing overview, and I collect yearly turnover. When I started working here meetings where not good, they were only about sales. Now is team building and understanding the company, and the company philosophy. We change the content of the meetings.

19. Do you have to train Ecoratio Employees?
Just fur things I find important, like Maximizers, power point, this year’s how to deal with international colleague.

20. Which type of training you received?
No is too bad, we got Maximizer training and account view training and Lisette give you a basic technical training but never on philosophy or way of working. I will like to do this, to train the philosophy.

21. What type of training you can receive here to improve your talents and skills?
I am working on been an international marketer certificate.

22. How do you see Ecoration in 5 years?
A future extremely Uncertain. Because of the

23. What is Ecoratio for you?
There is really room to do what you want is fun for me.

Vera Interview

Vera Baggerman
Personal Assistant
vera@ecoratio.com
8
24/02/2014 -1:00 Pm

1. I will like to know which activities you develop here in Ecoratio?
It says I am the PA of Michael Hollenbenders, but I think is more than that. I am only working here since September, so this is also a new position and it says that I have to assist him and also Lissette. However during the last months since is more the time assisting the whole Company of Ecoratio with all kind of different things, such as scheduling, meetings, flights, hotels, IT things, telephones, arranging.

2. Is there a guide of the activities you have to develop?
   There is a description. It was on internet and it says you have to do this and this, but actually is completely different.

3. With who you have communication?
   The whole company.

4. Which type of systems or tools you use to communicate?
   Everything, face to face, telephone, email. If I could use Skype I will use it, I haven't use it until now. Also maximizer.

5. How was the training you received when you were hired in the company?
   With maximizer was really basic just to know a little bit of the program. I think that for the beginning was ok. Then I started to use the program if I had question I have to ask my colleagues and about a month ago we had a training in maximizer for sales people. They use it for reports and other kind of things, but some of them didn't have enough information to use the program so there was a especial training here and I was also there because I am assisting Michael and I have to be in this training. That was my second training, I also learn some things I didn't know.
   I also have training of account view which is a financial program. The people from finance is using it, but I don't have to use it, I don't have to work with it, I only did the training very basic.

6. Did you receive training about the strategy of Ecoratio?
   Yes I did some proper training with Lissette, she show me everything about all the different products where you using it for and that kind of things. And Michael of course told on the first week all about Ecoratio the plans. Also Barbara show what she is doing all the order.

7. Where do you think that Ecoratio is going to be in five years?
   Well they have plans to growth, I know we are going to get one new employee in France and they are speaking to go to USA or Australia, so I hope that in 5 years we are bigger.

8. Do you think that with the work you are doing you are developing your talents?
   I don't think I can really say, I am doing a lot of things, I am learning, I think I have to grow, but I can't say I need more training. I think that in one year I need to know more about some things I will ask for training, but for now is ok.

9. You have access to reports? And What do you do with them?
   Yes I have. I use to check them because at the beginning of the month everyone have to fill their expense forms and the time sheets, and then I was checking time sheet and checking if they write down client contacts or what ever and that they have sent the report already. But them Micheal decided it was working alright, because last year the people forgot to send the reports and he wanted me to check but it was more control, and now is ok so he said leave it like that. I see the reports but I don't read them. I just checked them no more. I do not have the time to do it and it is not my job to read. Right now I don't know who is doing it, maybe Michael. I think that between sales people and technical people are doing that, they read each other emails, the appointments, the communication, etc. But for here Michael.
10. What do you think about Maximizer? And how to improve?
The program I think is not very logical, easy program, very complicated. If you want to change something or add something, you have a lot of questions to do this or do that, it is not simple and not flexible, and if you have question about the program you only can call college because if you call the company you have to pay. For other IT stuff we have service contract so for everything you don’t understand or is not working properly and you don’t understand you can always call them and is within the contract.

11. Do you have goals or objectives to achieve?
No I don’t have goals.

12. How do you think Michael can evaluate your performance?
Well Michael is sending me all the questions or things he doesn’t want to do or is not his job, but the he sent me all the email do this do that, arrange this arrange that and I am supporting him all the time, I am saying I finish this I finish that, I am working on this.

13. You have communication with customers?
Sometime when Michael is no here sometimes when Barbara and Christine work until 3 pm so I take the calls.

14. If there is one thing that you will like that Ecoratio Improve what do you think it would be?
Sometime I think they want to grow to fast and all the work cost time, and if you want to do it well it is all not finish directly and sometimes you feel the pressure, because it must be more and quicker and because everybody have a lot of things to do. For example, Roanna she has to do the marketing and also the basic things she have to do but I know she has no time to do it. I am supporting her a little bit but since she was in holidays I was supporting her. We are working on the basic things and they are not done and there is always more and more. We need more time to do things to start, not too many things all around the world. Michael see opportunities all around the world, and he wants to pick up and to do it, but I think we are too small to do everything. More staff means more time, for example you have to arrange all the things to the new staff members, like car, clothe. The part of Human resources is not working very well and needs to include in the strategy and documents, and how to do things. Because is also Michael doing a part, Lissette a bit, and Jan another. It is not well organize.

15. In the big meetings they show reports?
In March there will be a meeting for the manage team. I will go to listen and make notes.

16. How do you think that your work is helping Ecoratio to achieve the mission?
I know from my colleagues they are very happy with me. The things that I am doing where split up to everybody and actually nobody had time to do them. I am working 30 hours a week, you can imagine if that have to be dived to others and they will not have time.

17. The mission of Ecoratio talks about fans, what does this mean to you?
We want to work like that, and everybody is working really hard, that they want to support Ecoratio, that is more that they job. However is really difficult because sometime I think is too much work. If you want to serve the customer you have to do this really well and even more better but if you don’t have time is difficult.
Internal we do our best to support the clients, I think we need extra time to do it quicker.

18. How do you define in one word or one sentences Ecoratio?
Very energetic, never boring and very interesting.
You belief that you can improve your abilities and change of job inside Ecoratio?
Maybe but I am new for the first two years I think I am very happy on doing this job.
Interview – Mr. Van Driel

1. In jou eigen worden welke is de missie van Ecoratio?
   Verbeter de wereld, begin bij jezelf. In ons geval is Ecoratio begonnen de wereld te verbeteren.

2. Wat voor soort financiële doelen moet het bedrijf bereiken in 2014? Kan u een voorbeeld geven? Een positief resulutaat wat in verhouding staat tot de omvang en de risico’s

3. In jou eigen worden wantij de totaal strategie van Ecoratio?
   Begrijp de vraag niet.

4. Hoe ondersteun de financieel afdeling de missie en doelstelling van Ecoratio?
   Door middel van controle en informatie

5. Welke is de rol van de financieel afdeling voor de strategie van het bedrijf?
   Controle en informatie

6. Met welke afdelingen of employés van Ecoratio communiceer permanent de afdeling financiën? Met het management en orderverwerking

7. Op welke manier communiceer met anderen de afdeling financiën.
   Mondeling en per e-mail

8. Denk jij dat de internationale communicatie is efficiënt en effectief? Waarom ja of waarom niet? Ja, telefoon en e-mail is snel en efficient


10. Welke gegevens of informatie zijn verzamel om de activiteiten en de doelen te bereken. Alle beschikbare financiële en commerciële gegevens worden verzameld

11. Welke analyses worden meegenomen om te creëren relevante informatie. Analyse op basis van klanten, verkopen, brutomarges en kosten.

12. Is er enige systeem of procedure om te helpen om de data te verzamelen. Data wordt verzameld uit orderverwerking, crediteurenverwerking d.m.v. computersoftware AccountView.

13. Wat denk u over de manier of procedure dat wordt gebruik. Is het goed of niet? Voor de huidige omvang is het goed maar zal te beperkt zijn als Ecoratio na een aantal jaren fors groter zal groeien.

14. Denk u dat deze tool vervuld de expectatieve en behoeftes van het bedrijf
   Zie antwoord op vraag 13
15. Welke is het eindresultaat van het verzamelen van gegevens? Rapporten? o.a.
   Maandelijks: Omzetgegevens: per klant/ salesmanager/ regio
   Kwartaal: Brutomarge / kosten / winstbijdrage per klant
   Per Jaar: Compleet jaarverslag t.b.v. de aandeelhouders

16. Aan wie worden de resultaat en informatie getoond? Afhankelijk van het rapport:
   A- Allen  B- Management  C- aandeelhouders

17. Hoe kan de financieel afdeling meer informatie creëren voor de toekomst? Wat voor data
   is het nodig om meer relevante informatie te hebben?
   Wij creëren geen informatie. Wij verwerken informatie, ordenen die en stellen
   rapporten samen.

18. Denk u dat de employés van Ecoratio moeten weten en more begrip hebben van de
    financiën van het bedrijf?
    De functionele informatie wordt verstrekt waar nodig. 1x per jaar worden ook de
    algemene jaarlijsten en het resultaat bekend gemaakt. Bij veel commerciële mensen is
    er weinig begrip en kennis van de financiële zaken. Hun denkpatroon is daar ook niet op
    ingesteld.

19. Denk u dat jou afdeling is goed getraind. Waarom ja of niet?
    Nee, nog niet goed getraind. We zijn op de goede weg.

20. In welke aspecten en onderwerpen kan Ecoratio verbeteren de training? Training en
    cursussen voor meer diepgang en achtergrond kennis bij systeem orderverwerking,
    exportdocumenten, accountancy en belastingwetgeving.

21. Kun u in een zin of een woord wat is Ecoratio voor u? ALLES

22. Voor u Welke is de toekomst van Ecoratio? Ik voorzie een geweldige toekomst voor
    Ecoratio. Voor ons kwalitatief uitstekend product zal een steeds grotere markt ontstaan,
    doordat steeds meer mensen/ bedrijven/ overheden het belang van een schoon milieu
    onderkennen.

Michael Liegel
Zu Work: Zu 1: Anwendungstechniker / Service Manager / Betontechnologe / Producut
    Development Technician Zu 2: 13 Jahre ( vom 01.April 2001 bis heute ) Zu 3: Ja, Stellenbeschreibung / Technische-
    Aufgaben / Kundenbetreuung Zu 4: Ja, Berichte erstellen / Planung / Producut Development Technician ab 2014 Zu
    Communication: Zu 2: Mit unseren Kunden = Stahlbeton-Fertigteilhersteller – Fertigteilverkern / Baustellen usw.Zu 3: Per Handy oder per e-mail funktioniert gut und problemlos. Problem für
    mich ist die Firmensprache in Englisch in Wort und Schrift. Meine Muttersprache ist Deutsch. Zu 4: Lap-Top / iPhone / Handy Zu 5: Maximizer funktioniert nur on-line. Ohne Netz
## Appendix 3: Thesis plan

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Appendix 4: Self Reflection

The first time I was asked about the subject that I want to research during my thesis, I thought in one problem that most of the Small and Medium sized enterprises have, this problem is “Alignment”. However, it was not easy to find an SME here in the Netherlands who wanted and needed that I develop a study about alignment.

During this search of enterprises, one teacher help me to find a company that was willing to let me do a study if I developed a market research. I was really happy to have a company and a subject for thesis, but I was not going to undertake the subject I wanted.

Lucky me, one friend of mine told me that in the company where he was doing his thesis they were looking for another student to undertake a special subject. I went there two times and we talked about what I can offer to them taking into account the context of the company and the expectation they have according to the future of the company. At the end of the last meeting we knew that it was going to be a win-win situation because I was going to develop a project I was willing since the beginning and they were going to have a customized report with ways to improve the strategic alignment of the company. I had to turn down the other company because occasions like this one do not happen so often.

This small story is the way to let the reader know that this topic motivates me since the beginning, and that I was passionate while doing the research. In fact I go ing to continue with further and deeper researches like this one, because the subject is interesting, I enjoyed doing it, I did not get tired of it, and also it is a subject that I can use in the future (my future plans).

During this journey I learned a lot of things in two aspects, personally and professionally. In the case of what I learned personally are: before starting this master I thought I was a person that was not good enough to make structure plans, because I felt I was lack of planning skills. However, during the master I showed and saw how structure I was (taking into account projects lake IP project and Entrepreneurial Challenge where I was the person that was guiding and structuring the groups), however when I realized that I was structured was while undertaking my thesis. The way in which I planed my week (activities to do- time scheduling), the subjects, the interviews as well as the development of the findings, discussion and recommendations let me see myself as a structured person. Thanks to this thesis project I realized I can do structure plans and undertake them. This could be a professional aspect but for me it was an objective of life, to become more structure. It was one of the objectives of coming abroad and study.

Another aspect I learned about my self is the pressure I can handle. I had to wait too much time to have a supervisor, and according to the rules of the school I could not start my thesis if I did not have a supervisor. While some of my colleagues were doing the thesis I was reading information about strategies, alignment, etc. that later were used in the thesis as literature review. This reading gave me a wider perspective of the subject. So when the school introduced me the supervisor I was ready to start working hard, to get to the same point where my colleagues where, and to achieve the deadlines. I noticed while doing my thesis that with the structured plans I developed together with the hard working I was able to finished my thesis on time and with good quality.

On the other hand, the professional aspects, for me it was a really good opportunity to work with a Dutch company. It is the first time I have access to a company different from the ones of my country. This gave me a wider perspective of business. Moreover, when I was in Colombia I
worked in big company and I was used to it, so in the moment I started my thesis I had some issues because I was comparing both companies, of course the difference were huge. However, with the help of the supervisor I started to understand that small companies think different of how a big company does, in fact, the expectations, the way of managing people, etc. are totally different. This issue was difficult for me to accepted, because I had to take away my perspective and start thinking more in what a SME will do (it is not easy to take away 5 years that built your perspective), instead of what a big organization have.

Finally, I learned that companies that are profitable also have internal issues to solve, that a company should be one and not a bunch of employees who works in the same place and have to develop some activities. That when the employees of the company are pulling to the same place 1+1 is not 2 but to 3 or 4, because those employees are generating synergy, and when there is synergy it is easier to succeed than to failed, that is why vision and mission becomes so important in a company

“The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.”
Aristotle