



# Building Attractive Employer Brands Through Internal Social Media

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Starting Inside

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Winning Outside

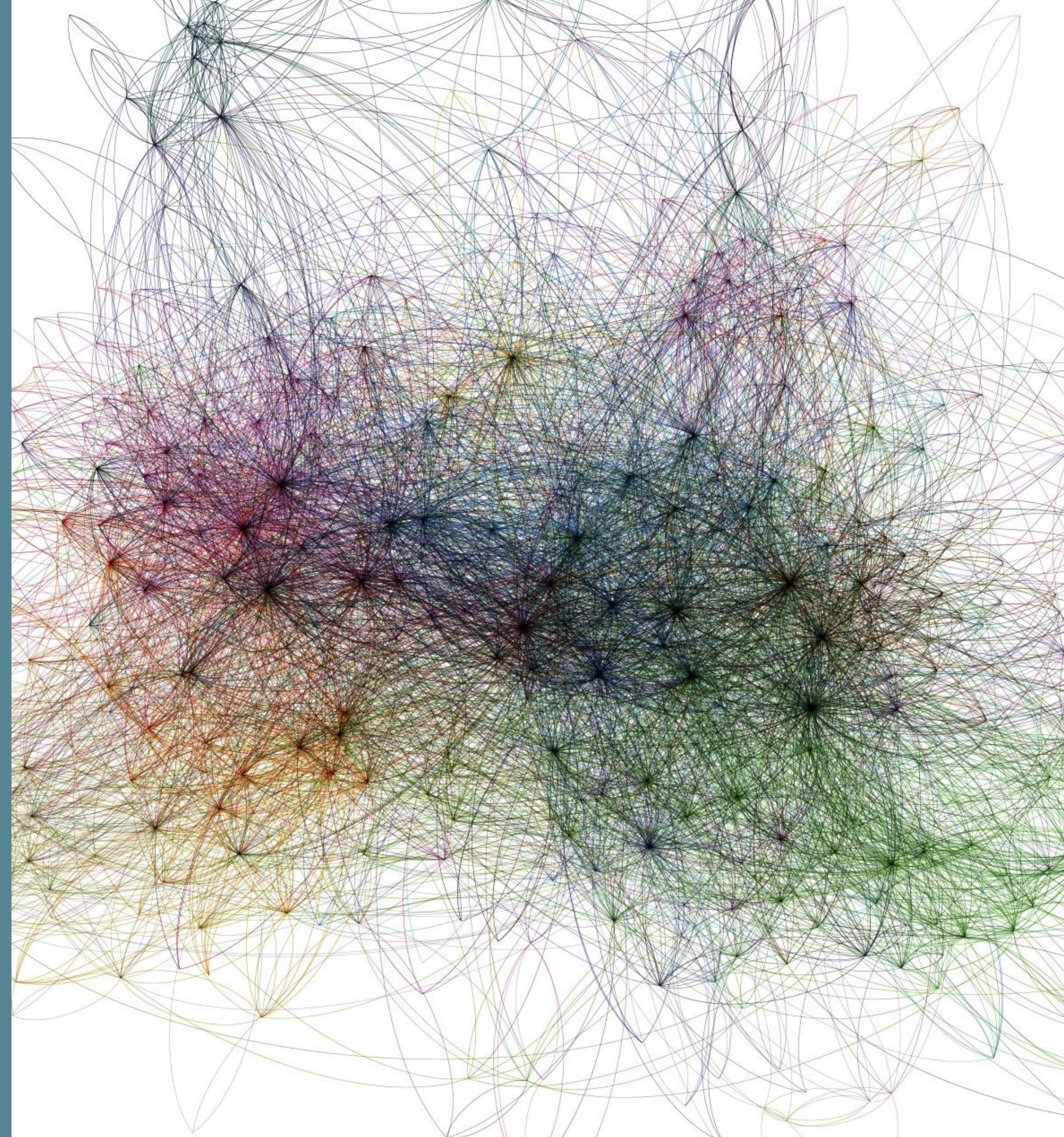




# Context

Employees – active  
communication roles

Current employees – best  
ambassadors



- **Studies** – internal communication satisfaction and internal employer branding (Verčič, 2021; Itam, *et al.*, 2020)
- Effect of internal social media use on employee satisfaction (Madsen and Verhoeven, 2019)
- **Limited evidence** – the use of internal social media (ISM) for building an attractive internal employer brand – *struggle for organizations*



*“building an identifiable and unique identity of an employer for employees”* (Lievens and Slaughter, 2016)

ISM use - *“a user-friendly web-based communication arena inside an organization in which coworkers and managers can communicate, interact, connect, and make sense of their work and organizational life”* (Madsen, 2017, p.3).

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# Research Questions

- How do **employers use ISM** in their communication strategy **as part of the internal EB?**
- How do **employees engage with ISM** and how does that **align with EB?**
- Does the **use of ISM correlate** with **increased levels of employee engagement** and **employer attractiveness?**

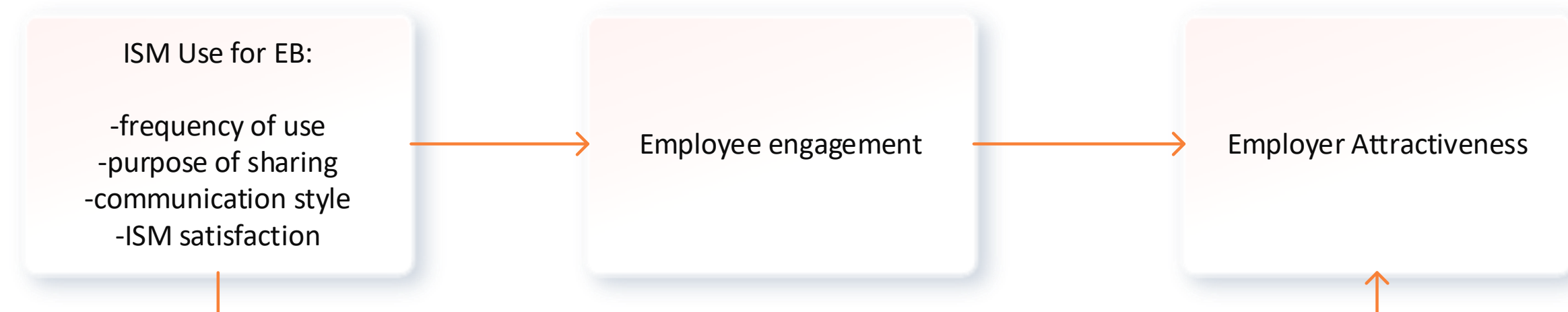


Figure 1: Elements of ISM use influencing Employer Attractiveness



## Method

- 26 organizations in **the North of the Netherlands**
- Multilevel study
- **Mixed-method approach**
  - Semi-structured interviews with managers
  - Survey among employees
- **946 valid** responses
- Measures



**ENERGY**



**IT**



**HEALTHCARE**

# Results and Implications 1

## Employer's perspective on ISM

- Knowledge-sharing, informing, social activities (team building) – **work-related**
- Social Intranet, Teams, and email for **lengthier information exchanges** and Teams chat or WhatsApp for **shorter exchanges about social activities.**
- **Informal, frequency higher in IT, depends on the function**

*“Yeah, we are working via SharePoint. So, we are sharing information via SharePoint. And we have AFAS as employee system. I'm not really familiar with it, but I can send out emails via AFAS and like short messages, and it's a pop-up on your phone. So, it really works out when you want to reach everyone for like a family event or something. So that's really nice.”*  
*(Iw. 5)*



*“That's what I like to use it for (informing), yes, and also to plan outings or things like that. Setting a date and things like that, that's handy to do via WhatsApp.”  
(Iw.20)*

# Results and Implications 2

## Employer's perspective on ISM

- No ISM policy and no intentional ISM as part of EB
- ISM used primarily as a communication tool rather than incorporated in EB strategy

*“It has to still be outlined” (lw.8), “...Now we are really going to make plans about it.”, “Employer branding is something for the long-term” (lw.12).*

*“Yeah, exactly. And **internally that tends to slip away** from me also because I don't have eyes everywhere. So, I mean, I feel like I have **this perception of internal communications that is not necessarily very rewarding. People always want it, but never use it, right?** I mean, that's my experience with internal communication.”*

*(Iw.10)*

*“We manage **platform stress** by bringing everything under one platform.” (lw.10)*

# Results and Implications 3

## Employee engagement with ISM – alignment with EB

- Depends on the **topic discussed, likes, reshares**
- Social intranet – one-way channel for policy documents
- Opinions voiced – **knowledge-sharing, less sensitive topics (emotional about very opinionated messages)**

Approach to EB on ISM – depends on the **culture and values** of each organization

*“loss of time”*  
(lw.9)

*“I never see the added value of it”*  
(lw.2)

*“I think it's an **open culture** so **everyone can walk into each other's office**. There are a lot of **young people** working here, so a lot of enthusiastic people. We even have 12 students walking around here at the moment, so we also have a lot of yes **people learning new things** walking around here. I think that everyone works here with **a certain drive, also on ISM**, so a certain drive in the **work attitude is being noticed regardless of the tool we use.**”*

*(Iw.26)*

*“...social thing like, hey, we're building this together and then you want to succeed together.”*  
*(Iw.14)*

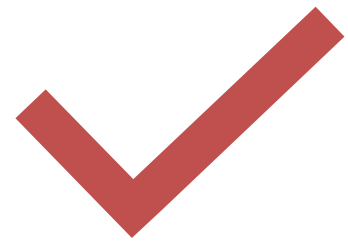


# Main Conclusions

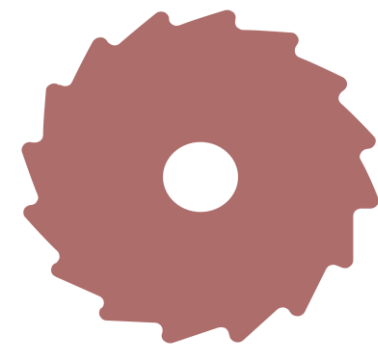
- Quantitative analysis – employer attractiveness goes hand in hand with employee engagement and ISM use
- No explicit strategy or policy on ISM use for EB (explicit choice of platform) – ad hoc
- Not an explicit tool, resource use for EB -- bottom-up, put culture and values in the spotlight
- Frequency depends on the type of company and type of work
- Given that ISM is used ad hoc for EB, we suggest it should be a strategic choice and will be more effective if used intentionally from the drawing table.

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# Takeaways



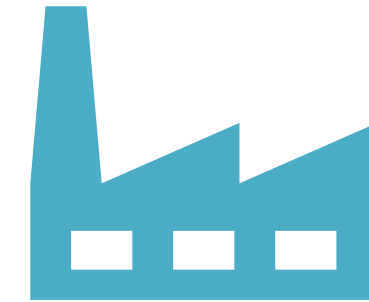
Alignment of EB  
(internally + externally)



Activating the EB starts  
from within the  
organization



ISM allows employees to  
be more involved;  
employees want to be  
part of the organization



A benchmark instrument  
on how an organization's  
internal EB ranks among  
employees

# Thank you for your attention

Your suggestions are welcome!



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