



**CIÊNCIAS
EMPRESARIAIS**

ESCOLA SUPERIOR
POLITÉCNICO SETÚBAL

SOFIA GASPAR
CRISTINA

**HOW TO COMMUNICATE TO
ATTRACT YOUNG TALENT TO S[&]T**

Internship Report of the Master's in Marketing
Management

SUPERVISOR

Duarte Xara-Brasil, PhD

October 2024

SOFIA GASPAR **HOW TO COMMUNICATE TO**
CRISTINA **ATTRACT YOUNG TALENT TO S[&]T**

JÚRI

Presidente: Prof. Coordenador Paulo Silveira

Vogal Arguente: Prof. Adjunto Convidado Mário Cravidão

Orientador: Prof. Adjunto Duarte Xara-Brasil

December 2024

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to express my gratitude to my academic supervisor, Dr. Duarte Xara-Brasil, for all the guidance provided and all the support while I grew into a marketing professional in these nine months. His expertise not only in marketing-related domains but also in international experience made me feel supported and understood in the high and low moments of my internship.

A special thank you to my internship supervisor at S[&]T, Roland Hooghiemstra, for all the support and trust that he had in me. Even though he became my supervisor unexpectedly, it was a privilege to work and learn alongside S[&]T's CEO, and I will be forever grateful to him for trusting his marketing department in my hands, and for believing in me even when I didn't. I also want to express my gratitude to all my colleagues at S[&]T, I wouldn't been able to learn and grow so much without all of them and all the help they provided.

I am also extremely grateful for my friends who were my support and shoulders to cry on the lows and highs of this journey. Thank you for listening to me complain all the time but still, like me enough to keep me around.

My deepest gratitude to my family, my parents and my sisters, who were the biggest support I had and needed during this internship. A special thank you to my sister Joana, who provided me with a home and a safe space when I moved to the Netherlands to do my internship, I will be forever grateful.

Abstract

This internship report presents a Communication Plan developed for S[&]T, during a nine-month internship. The primary objective was to increase brand awareness of S[&]T among potential candidates, specifically, students and young professionals, to position the company as an expert, a respected industry player, and a desirable employer, while also developing employer branding and recruitment marketing. The Communication Plan was developed using the SOSTAC model, where there were described the situation analysis, objectives, strategy, tactics, actions and control. It proposes the creation of a sub-branding for the specific target group, social media strategies, and improvements for the website, events, newsletters and offline communication material, as well as a timeline to implement it and metrics of evaluation. This Communication Plan is expected to achieve a 20% increase in social media engagement, a 15% increase in website traffic, and a 25% increase in content engagement.

Keywords: Employer Branding, Recruitment Marketing, Communication Plan, Young Professionals

Resumo

Este relatório de estágio apresenta um plano de comunicação desenvolvido para a S[&]T, durante um estágio de nove meses. O objetivo principal era aumentar a notoriedade da marca S[&]T junto de potenciais candidatos, especificamente estudantes e jovens profissionais, para posicionar a empresa como um especialista, um *player* respeitado na indústria e um empregador desejável, focando também no *employer branding* e no *recruitment marketing*. O Plano de Comunicação foi desenvolvido utilizando o modelo SOSTAC, onde se descrevem a análise da situação, os objetivos, a estratégia, as táticas, as ações e o controlo. Propõe a criação de um sub-branding para o grupo-alvo específico, estratégias de redes sociais e melhorias para o sítio Web, eventos, boletins informativos e material de comunicação offline, bem como um calendário para a sua implementação e métricas de avaliação. Espera-se que este Plano de Comunicação consiga um aumento de 20% no envolvimento nas redes sociais, um aumento de 15% no tráfego do website e um aumento de 25% no envolvimento nos conteúdos.

Palavras-chave: Employer Branding, Recruitment Marketing, Plano de Comunicação, Jovens Profissionais

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	II
Abstract	IV
Resumo	IV
Table of Contents	V
Table of Figures	VII
Tables	VII
Introduction	1
Chapter I - Theoretical Framework	3
1. Recruitment Marketing.....	3
1.1. Recruitment Marketing Objectives.....	4
1.1.1. Attracting and Acquiring Talent	4
1.2. Young Talent as Job Seekers	5
2. Integrated Marketing Communication	6
2.1. Communication Objectives.....	6
2.1.1. Brand Awareness.....	8
2.2. Social Media Marketing.....	8
3. Employer Branding	9
3.1. Employer Value Proposition and Employer Attractiveness	10
3.2. The Role of Integrated Communication in Employer Branding	12
3.3. Employer Branding on Social Media	13
3.4. Summary of the Theoretical Framework.....	14
Chapter II - Objectives and Methodology.....	15
Chapter III – Internship Activities	17
Chapter IV – S[&]T Analysis	20
1. Company's Current Situation	20
1.2. External Analysis of the Company - Microenvironment	22
1.2.1. Competitor Analysis	22

1.2.2.	Supplier Analysis.....	23
1.3.	Internal Analysis of the Company.....	24
1.3.1.	Clients.....	24
1.3.2.	Services	26
1.3.3.	Price.....	28
1.3.4.	Promotion.....	28
1.4.	SWOT Analysis.....	29
Chapter V – Communication Plan for S[&]T.....		33
1.	Formulation of the Communication Strategy	33
1.1.	Objectives Formulation	33
1.2.	Target Definition.....	34
2.1.	Sub-branding	35
2.2.	Social Media	37
2.2.1.	LinkedIn	38
2.2.2.	YouTube	40
2.2.3.	TikTok	41
2.3.	Website.....	41
2.4.	Events.....	42
2.5.	Newsletter	44
2.6.	Offline Communication Material	45
3.	Budget	47
4.	Evaluation and Monitoring.....	48
Conclusion		49
Bibliographical References		53

Table of Figures

Figure 1 - Recruitment Funnel.....	3
Figure 2 - S[&]T competitors by category.....	22
Figure 3 - High-Tech Consulting Promotion.....	29
Figure 4 - Industry Event LinkedIn Post.....	36
Figure 5 - Student Event LinkedIn Post.....	36
Figure 6 - Colour Palettes.....	37
Figure 7 - World Clean Up Day LinkedIn Post.....	39
Figure 8 - Call to Action on the website.....	42
Figure 9 - Newsletter Topic: Partnership.....	44
Figure 10 - Newsletter Topic: Mission Updates.....	45
Figure 11 - Newsletter Topic: Event.....	45
Figure 12 - S[&]T Banners.....	46

Tables

Table 1 - SOSTAC model applied to S[&]T.....	15
Table 2 - Activities developed during the internship.....	17
Table 3 - High-Tech Consulting Competitors Overview.....	23
Table 4 - S[&]T Solutions and Expertise.....	27
Table 5 - SWOT Analysis.....	30
Table 6 - LinkedIn Schedule.....	39
Table 7 - YouTube Schedule.....	40
Table 8 - Event Planning.....	43
Table 9 - Budget for the proposed actions.....	47

Introduction

Upon my arrival at S[&]T, the company was facing a significant challenge: the need to raise brand awareness among students and young professionals. This demographic is crucial for the Talent Acquisition team, both for internal placements and for meeting the needs of S[&]T's partners. However, the company was aware that it wasn't successfully engaging with these groups. Despite the importance of young talent to the company's future growth, there was no structured plan to understand or communicate with them. This presented a key problem: **how can we improve brand awareness among this target group if we don't fully understand their needs or what S[&]T can offer to attract them?** It became clear that strategic action was necessary to address this gap, and that was where my focus was needed.

The goal of my nine-month internship, was to **create a Communication Plan** specifically designed to engage students and young professionals, primarily from Generation Y and Z. This plan was intended not only to raise S[&]T's brand awareness but also to attract highly skilled talent to the company by effectively communicating the employer brand. Understanding the needs, preferences, and expectations of these potential employees would allow the company to align its brand identity with what matters most to this audience.

As a master's student benefiting from the Erasmus+ program and doing my internship in the Netherlands, I knew that I would go through new experiences, personally and professionally, but this experience became even more intense. Initially, my role at S[&]T was to assist in this effort as an intern in the marketing department but focusing on one of the business units of the company, High-Tech Consulting. However, due to some unforeseen circumstances, my responsibilities expanded significantly. After my supervisor at the company, and the only person working in the marketing department, left me as the only marketing employee, I was entrusted with leading the Marketing department at S[&]T and focusing on all the business units, supervised by the CEO. This transition allowed me to take full ownership of the creation and implementation of not only the Communication Plan I created, but also taking care of all activities related to marketing and communication at S[&]T. This unexpected experience provided me with deep insights into recruitment marketing and employer branding, further informing the basis of this thesis, but also provided me insights into how the marketing department works alongside all the departments in a company and supports the business in a very important and meaningful way. There were treacherous times while leading the department, but my strong will and dedication to it granted me the official role at the end of my internship.

This report is divided into three main parts. The first part provides a theoretical framework by reviewing relevant literature on key topics such as Recruitment Marketing, Employer Branding

and Talent Acquisition. Recruitment marketing is essential in the talent acquisition process, as it is the first step in building brand awareness and attracting potential candidates. Employer branding, meanwhile, forms the backbone of how S[&]T will present itself to its target audience, helping the company stand out without losing its unique identity. These concepts are critical in understanding how organizations can appeal to young professionals while maintaining a cohesive and authentic employer brand.

In the second part, it is presented a full analysis of the company and the industry where it is involved. It is an external analysis of the company, helped to understand in depth S[&]T's competitors and suppliers, and an internal analysis of the company, from getting to know its services to clients. Lastly, in this part, there is an in-depth SWOT analysis that would help them identify the key strategy to create the Communication plan.

In the third and final part, this theoretical knowledge is applied to the Communication Plan developed for S[&]T. This section outlines the specific actions and strategies designed to achieve the company's goals. The plan includes digital engagement initiatives, collaborations with educational institutions, and social media strategies that aim to increase S[&]T's visibility and appeal to Generation Y and Z talent. These recommendations aim to attract, engage, and ultimately recruit the right candidates, ensuring a strong talent pipeline for S[&]T and its partners.

By implementing this Communication Plan, S[&]T will be better positioned to raise brand awareness among young and skilled professionals and potentially employ them in the future. The plan serves as a long-term strategy to meet the company's talent acquisition needs while building a recognizable employer brand that resonates with this key demographic.

Chapter I - Theoretical Framework

1. Recruitment Marketing

Recruitment marketing is defined as all activities and strategies aimed at building employer branding, increasing reach, identifying career opportunities, building relationships with candidates, and managing communication with candidates. Another definition considers recruitment marketing as a combination of strategies and tools used by an organization to engage and nurture potential talent in the pre-application phase (Alashmawy & Yazdanifard, 2019).

Recruitment marketing is a comprehensive recruitment tactic that includes content marketing, email nurturing, social recruitment, mobile recruitment, career sites, SEO, employee referrals, talent networks, job marketing, employer branding, recruitment events, analytics, and candidate relationship management. Its main goal is to create a talent pool that provides the best candidates, ensuring that companies can fill the available vacancies at any time. Inbound marketing, which involves content marketing, social media marketing, search engine optimization, and branding, is integrated to attract qualified candidates and maintain relationships with them. This approach helps companies build a reliable employer brand and run advertising campaigns for job vacancies (Alashmawy & Yazdanifard, 2019).

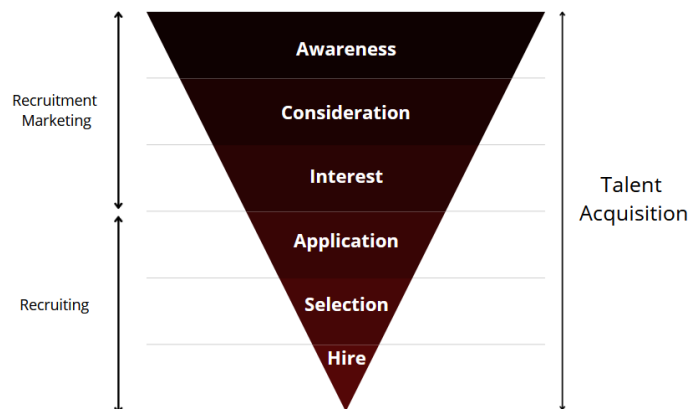


Figure 1 - Recruitment Funnel

Source: Adapted from Tracy Parsons (2016)

Recruitment marketing has a specific placement in the recruitment funnel, as shown in Figure 1. Numerous studies place recruitment marketing at the top of the recruitment funnel, however, others consider it as a pre-funnel phase since it first creates awareness and increases recognition of the organization, secondly helps the potential candidate to consider what the organization offers and finally induces interest in applying for the job. After the application the candidates enter the traditional recruitment channel that processes the application, selects the

candidates for evaluation and finally makes the hiring decision. Recruitment marketing, as part of the front of the recruitment funnel, is an area that talent acquisition did not consider in the past but has become an effective part of modern recruitment and talent acquisition activities that involve marketing practices (Parsons, 2016).

Recent research highlights the importance of aligning a company's communications strategy with its recruitment goals to attract and retain talent. Recruitment marketing leverages employer branding and targeted messaging to effectively communicate a company's value proposition. Aligning all recruitment marketing efforts with communication strategies, helps potential applicants understand not only the job opening but also the company culture and values. In this way, the effectiveness of recruitment efforts is improved (Cioppi, Curina, Francioni, & Savelli, 2023).

1.1. Recruitment Marketing Objectives

Attracting and acquiring talent is the main objective of recruitment marketing, as shown in . The points that follow will help to understand better what exactly talent acquisition is.

1.1.1. Attracting and Acquiring Talent

Talent acquisition is defined as the process of finding and acquiring skilled labour for organizational needs and to satisfy any labour requirement. The narrow view of talent acquisition sees it as a function within the human resources department, responsible for seeking, acquiring, and hiring the best talent needed to achieve the organization's goals. However, talent acquisition, as a single function, has developed to be a designated function separate from human resources and has become responsible for strategic forecasting, channelling, evaluating, and developing talent. The acquisition of talents serves for the acquisition of human capital, as well as for the development of the company's employees, attracting the best talents to work in the organization. In other words, talent acquisition focuses on long-term human resource planning and finding suitable candidates for positions that require a distinct and specific skill set (Alashmawy & Yazdanifard, 2019).

The high-tech industry is having a significant impact on both customers and workers around the world. The demand for skilled technical workers is growing with the increase in the number of companies and positions in the technology area. However, the modern workplace faces challenges such as worker shortages and stiff competition. The Internet and social media have increased the touchpoints between companies and candidates, forcing recruiters to use various communication channels. To attract exceptional talent, companies use marketing techniques to stand out and attract the attention of potential candidates. The web has created

means to find employment, balancing the interests of candidates and companies (Mashiah, 2021).

To manage their employer branding, Information Technology (IT) companies need to understand the new world of online employer branding. By understanding the advantages that make an IT company an employer of choice, companies can attract and retain a highly skilled workforce whose supply is limited (Dabirian, Paschen, & Kietzmann, 2019).

1.2. Young Talent as Job Seekers

It's important to understand how the specific generations we want to attract to S[&]T behave while looking for jobs. For that reason, the following are some studies regarding the behaviour of Generation Y, also known as Millennials, and Generation Z on the job market.

As job seekers, Generation Z will be attracted to an organisation based on instrumental attributes, such as salary, benefits or work-life balance, and symbolic attributes, such as the company's social responsibility (Thang, Dung, Rowley, & Bach, 2022). These individuals make decisions and approach organisations in a highly analytical and pragmatic way, which consequently means that all company activities must be based on truth and transparency and be directly linked to the organisation's ethics, especially in work ethics. They also expect open conversations about the company's strategy and decisions (Rzemieniak & Wawer, 2021).

Some relevant characteristics that employers should expect from a Generation Z job candidate are valuing work-life balance, frequent feedback from supervisors and the connection between technology and humans. In addition, they are also attracted to organisations that frequently implement corporate social responsibility activities (Thang, Dung, Rowley, & Bach, 2022).

Generation Y job candidates prioritize fulfilling and career-advancing jobs. While looking for a job they value autonomy, justice, empowerment, and self-development from their workplaces and look for companies that can offer flexible work hours, growth opportunities and appealing compensation. It's also important to understand that people of Generation Y are risk-takers, unloyal to their employers and constantly seek new opportunities which makes it crucial for companies to allow them to explore multiple career paths, even within the same organization, to retain their talent (Katumpe & Kyongo, 2023).

Studies have shown that 41 per cent of young jobseekers look for job adverts mainly on social media and younger generations increasingly prefer online methods and communication (Peter, Izsák, & Vasa, 2020).

2. Integrated Marketing Communication

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is a business process that is driven by the audience and involves strategically managing the channels, content, stakeholders, and outcomes of brand communication initiatives. Combining various consumer touchpoints, media, and messages is emphasised by interactive integrated marketing communications. Emerging technologies and this interaction give marketers the chance to customise the forms and methods of consumer communication (Payne, Peltier, & Barger, 2017).

Any integrated marketing communication process aims to raise brand recognition, disseminate brand knowledge, and enhance the favourable linkages between brands and products. IMC is important for promoting brand loyalty and convincing customers to buy goods and services from businesses. Integrated Marketing Communication provides considerable long-term value that supports the growth of a company's or product brand's brand equity. Through customer interaction and brand exposure, integrated marketing communications can strengthen and increase brand equity (Theodora, 2021).

The marketing communications landscape has changed because of technological developments and other causes, and marketers now face new opportunities and difficulties. Particularly in terms of digital media, which are more versatile and precise but also present more integration issues, have huge potential. Marketers want new tools and ways of thinking that can give structure to a communications environment that is becoming more complex to take advantage of these new media opportunities (Batra & Keller, 2016).

2.1. Communication Objectives

In 2016 Batra and Keller defined eight marketing communication objectives of an Integrated Marketing Communication plan. Those eight objectives are (Batra & Keller, 2016):

- **Create Awareness and Salience:** Creating awareness and ensuring that the brand is sufficiently salient and thought of in the correct way at the right times and locations forms the basis of all brand- and marketing-related initiatives. Salience happens when a brand is connected to numerous cues—categories, events, need states, etc.—making it easy and frequent to recall.
- **Convey Detailed Information:** Persuading consumers about brand performance requires that they appreciate the benefits of the products or services and understand why the brand can better deliver those benefits in terms of supporting product attributes, features, or characteristics that function as proof points.
- **Create Imagery and Personality:** The type of person who uses the brand, the times and places the brand might be utilized, and other factors can all be used to produce various types of imagery. The human qualities that customers associate with a brand are

reflected in their brand personality, which also affects how consumers see themselves and the attachments they develop with brands.

- **Build Trust:** Customers are becoming more informed and dubious about attempts by marketers to sway them, and there is a growing need for the authenticity of products and messages. The growing number of social media posts from friends and peers demonstrates the value of communications from like-minded and dependable sources over those from dissimilar and self-serving ones.
- **Elicit Emotions:** By adding these advantages to the typical functional and utilitarian ones, brands can raise their overall perceived worth. Through mechanisms such as transmitting cultural meaning, brand messages might, for example, boost these perceived added value benefits. A wide range of advantages also aids in evoking various emotions influencing customer decision-making.
- **Inspire Action:** Due to the intrinsic gap that can exist between cognition, affect, and conduct, brand message information that is received, processed, and accepted may impact brand preference and choice but does not always result in action and behaviour. When the objective is to influence action and behaviour from consumers who are already favourably predisposed toward the brand, a specific message is frequently necessary.
- **Instil Loyalty:** After actual consumption, the consumer makes a judgment of how satisfied they are, in which their expectations are compared with their interpreted consumption experience, with the latter itself being possibly influenced by marketing communications. Shaping satisfaction is part of a bigger purpose of sustaining loyalty and reducing consumer defections.
- **Connect People:** For service brands, for which consumers cannot otherwise receive concrete and reliable evidence of product quality and reliability, brand advocacy and word-of-mouth marketing (WOM) are particularly crucial. Consumers may need to connect with the brand frequently and feel a sense of brand love for WOM and advocacy to occur. This brand love may result in part from the brand taking on symbolic and emotional significance. Additionally, the brand may need to communicate with customers in a way that encourages them to spread the word about it.

By having clear communication objectives of detailed information, shaping compelling brand identity, and cultivating authenticity to build trust, brands can shape consumer perceptions and behaviour. Also, driving action, fostering loyalty, and promoting word-of-mouth are vital for sustained brand success. These approaches not only improve brand awareness but can also promote meaningful and lasting consumer relationships.

2.1.1. Brand Awareness

Since one of the main goals of this project is to improve brand awareness, and since creating awareness is one communication objectives of IMC, it is important to understand it better.

The concept of brand awareness is related to how easily a brand is recalled by consumers when considering a particular product category. This factor is significantly influential in the decision-making process of consumers, impacting the brands they evaluate and ultimately choose (Kamadi, Aras, Andriani, & Bayani, 2022).

Brand awareness can be influenced by various factors, such as promotion and longevity. For example, widespread promotion on digital platforms, like social media, can increase a brand's visibility and reach a larger audience. Additionally, brands that have been in the market for a longer time tend to have higher awareness levels due to familiarity and trust (Kamadi, Aras, Andriani, & Bayani, 2022).

To maintain continuous engagement with consumers, communication is crucial. This involves utilizing platforms such as social media, websites, and content marketing. Keeping the brand top of mind and relevant through ongoing interaction further contributes to boosting brand awareness (Kamadi, Aras, Andriani, & Bayani, 2022).

2.2. Social Media Marketing

Contemporary businesses face a demanding environment due to the rapid development of ICT technology, which offers stakeholders numerous opportunities to access information and participate in their lives. This has led to companies' involvement in Web 2.0, a platform that allows users to publish content and collaborate on various projects. User-generated content is an essential aspect of a company's Web 2.0 presence, with prominent social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Social networks allow users to become both producers and consumers of information, creating, editing, and disseminating information and can be divided into 4 different categories: social networking sites (Facebook), content sharing sites (YouTube, Flickr), blogs, and microblogs (Twitter), and collaborative projects (wikis) (Grzesiuk & Wawer, 2018).

It has become increasingly important for marketers to strategically use and leverage social media to gain a competitive advantage and deliver superior performance as the role of social media has gradually changed from that of a single marketing tool to that of a marketing intelligence source, in which businesses can observe, analyse, and predict customer behaviours. The continuous difficulty for most businesses is not to launch social media campaigns, but rather to integrate social media into their marketing plan to engage customers and develop value and lasting relationships with them (Li, Larimo, & Leonidou, 2021).

Since the focus should be on young talent, it is important to understand how the younger generations, especially Generation Y (Gen Y), also known as Millennials, and Generation Z (Gen Z) behave on social media, for us to understand if social media marketing might be efficient for them. According to some studies, with an average daily usage of two hours and fifty-five minutes across multiple platforms, Gen Z is especially active on social media. This outperforms Gen Y, who have a lower engagement rate. Both generations view social media as essential to their daily lives, but Gen Z has embraced it more because of their early exposure to technology and the internet (Mude & Undale, 2023). Gen Z and Gen Y both use social media for information-seeking in equal measure, but Gen Z uses it more for educational materials (Mude & Undale, 2023).

3. Employer Branding

The concept of Employer Branding was introduced in the 90s and is associated with the practice of talent management and the need to attract and retain the same talent, is one of the most recent concepts of organizational management (Rzemieniak & Wawer, 2021). It also refers to an organization's reputation as an employer and its value proposition to its current and future employees (Eger, Mičik, Gangur, & Řehoř, 2019) and is b. It is an increasingly important success factor in the global competitive environment in different segments (Bejtkovský & Copca, 2020).

Employer Branding can be categorized into three dimensions: functional, economic, and psychological (John & Raj, 2020). The functional dimension focuses on career development opportunities, while the economic dimension describes the financial benefits. The psychological dimension reveals the feelings of belonging and the relationship of workers with employers. More studies are needed to understand the importance of employer branding in organizations (John & Raj, 2020). Other authors argue that the five dimensions of Employer Branding are the value of interest, the social value, the economic value, the value of development, and the value of application. Interest value measures a worker's attraction to an employer that offers a healthy work environment, utilizing their creativity and potential for innovative products and services. Social value measures worker satisfaction with social support, happiness, and team relationships. Economic value is based on wages, remuneration, job security, and promotion opportunities. The development value focuses on career development and recognition, while the application value assesses the worker's interest in applying their knowledge and teaching others (John & Raj, 2020).

The activities linked to Employer Branding result in internal and external efforts, considering current and potential employees. Internal efforts aim to create a friendly work environment,

promote employee development, and foster organizational engagement, while external efforts aim to build an attractive employer image (Grzesiuk & Wawer, 2018).

Companies that have a good reputation in the labour market are more likely to hire the best workers, which often results in lower personnel expenses. These companies reduce staff turnover and absenteeism rates, as well as a more dedicated and satisfied workforce, which often leads to better financial results and greater company competitiveness. By establishing the company as a desirable employer and by combining the right human resources strategy with a strategy of communicating the company with its surroundings, it is possible to successfully recruit the best individuals (Rzemieniak & Wawer, 2021).

Employers can access a wide range of potential jobseekers and promote themselves through social networks, platforms where users create public profiles, making their connections visible. Companies can use these public profiles to advertise job openings, positively influencing the impression of the organization. One of the positive points of using social networks is that they provide convenience and accessibility to employers and job seekers during the job search. Candidates can get to know the company in a more diverse, lively, and realistic way, which allows the creation of a more integral image of the organization. Social media can become an effective tool to attract talented candidates in a situation where the lack of highly skilled job seekers becomes one of the trends in the labour market, especially in highly developed economies (Grzesiuk & Wawer, 2018).

3.1. Employer Value Proposition and Employer Attractiveness

The Employer Value Proposition, (EVP) is the organizational culture, values, and principles, that form the identity of the employer and create an image in the minds of current and future employees. These attributes must be unique, differentiable, and value-added to maximize competitive advantage. EVPs can be classified into transactional and relational attributes. Transactional value attributes are explicit written contracts with static economic terms, such as compensation and benefits. Relational value attributes are implicit and include both tangible and intangible socio-emotional exchanges, with dynamic and open terms. They aim to reinforce the pride and prestige of workers by offering opportunities for career growth, managers who support them, and work-life balance (Rajagopalan & Baral, 2023).

In 2005 a scale with 5 dimensions of Employer Attractiveness was proposed, to be able to measure how attractive an employer can be in the eyes of an employee, also considering the Employer Value Proposition (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005). These 5 dimensions are as follows:

- Value of Interest: the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer due to the enthusiasm and creativity of the work environment.

- Social Value: attraction based on a work environment in which responsibility and authority are shared equally by colleagues and there is a good work environment.
- Economic Value: attraction based on salary and benefits.
- Development Value: based on job recognition and career advancement opportunities.
- Application Value: The ability of employees to value what they have learned to teach others and interact with customers in a positive and humanitarian way.

This scale is still the most used today in studies related to employer branding and employer attractiveness, but in Information Technology (IT) there has already been a need to identify more dimensions of employer attractiveness (Dabirian, Paschen, & Kietzmann, 2019). In 2019 another scale with 8 dimensions was proposed, which are as follows:

- Social Value: refers to the gratification that IT workers get from working with others. They care a lot about an organizational culture centred on people, the talent of colleagues, and a team problem-solving approach.
- Value of Interest: this is measured based on the degree of challenge and achievement of your specific tasks and requirements. It also considers whether the work requires innovative approaches to problem-solving and openness to new ideas, such as "cutting-edge technology".
- Application Value: refers to the importance to IT employees that their knowledge and skills are applied in a meaningful way. This includes contributing to your employer's success and providing innovative, high-quality products and services to customers.
- Development Value: considers the existence of opportunities for lateral or vertical growth in the career and with the opportunities for professional development.
- Economic Value: refers mainly to remuneration and various types of benefits for workers, such as medical or dental benefits, holidays, and "unconventional" perks such as free food.
- Management Value: is based on the leadership qualities of superiors, such as the competence of managers, the existence of a strong vision, and the ability to motivate and inspire others.
- Work/Life Balance: the ability to balance work-related commitments with non-work-related ones, such as family, leisure, or volunteer activities, and flexible working hours.
- Brand Image: the desire to work for an "exciting", "cool" or "modern" company in a great location.

The study conducted by Dabirian, Paschen and Kietzmann, where they proposed the 8 dimensions, showed some insights regarding the most important factors when evaluating companies to work for. These include social value, interest value, economic value, and management.

- Social value, such as a collaborative work environment and smart colleagues, is a significant factor for current and former IT employees. Interest value is equally important for attracting and retaining talent, but complaints about bureaucracy, repetitive tasks, and a mismatch between qualifications and job profiles are common.
- Economic value is consistently praised and not complained about in top companies, suggesting that other reasons than economic ones are at play when employees leave their jobs. Management is a major complaint factor, with employees critiquing the lack of leadership skills and being micromanaged.
- Brand image is another main complaint factor, with employees sharing more negative opinions about their employer's brand than praise. This suggests that the gap between brand image and brand identity is a key contributing factor to employees leaving the company.

Other value propositions, such as application, work/life balance, and development value, are less frequently mentioned in the reviews, suggesting that these three value propositions do not feature strongly in attracting or retaining IT talent.

3.2. The Role of Integrated Communication in Employer Branding

Integrated communication is considered effective when messages are persuasive and goal-oriented, and result in actions on the part of the receiver. It is a persuasive two-way communication process that increases the effectiveness of communication. The selection criteria in the literature on integrated communication determine the effectiveness and efficiency of communication, where communication and channels work independently and together to maximize long-term brand value. Consistency is a crucial criterion of choice in integrated communication, as it ensures the coherence of messages across multiple communication channels, avoiding confusion or misrepresentation. Brands must develop consistency across all touchpoints and stakeholders. Similarity and complementarity are also important choices, as they reinforce common associations and experiences across all communication channels and options. A communication option is considered versatile or robust when it achieves the desired effect, regardless of consumers' history, brand awareness, or processing objectives. Coverage refers to the proportion of the audience reached by each channel and communication option used. Contribution refers to the main effects of a marketing option on consumers' interactions with a channel or communication, and interactivity involves the development of mechanisms that allow for an intentional and strategically useful dialogue between the organization and its consumers and stakeholders (Rajagopalan & Baral, 2023).

The brand of an organization works as a representation that influences its target audience and their actions. Employer branding communication reflects honest and authentic messages, consistent with marketing efforts, channelled effectively to reach the organization's specific target audience. Employer branding uses multiple communication channels to manage both tangible and intangible employer value proposition attributes, ensuring that employees reciprocate the benefits received (Rajagopalan & Baral, 2023).

Integrated communication is crucial to the employer's brand image as it involves the coordination of mass and interactive communication channels to reach individual employees. Consistency is essential to avoid confusion and negative word-of-mouth. It involves coordinating an organization's functions, processes, and actions to support employer branding, ensuring that strategic intent is achieved, and maintaining long-term sustainable relationships with employees. This entails the alignment of symbols, messages, channels, procedures, and behaviours to communicate with clarity, consistency, and continuity within and beyond formal organizational boundaries (Rajagopalan & Baral, 2023).

3.3. Employer Branding on Social Media

The different social networks are used for different purposes. It is important in the specific context of this report to highlight LinkedIn which is mainly treated as a tool for the recruitment process, both for employers and job seekers. That is why the creation of a public profile on this social network is often a strategy adopted by users to present themselves positively. This profile is also used by employers to select the right candidates for the job (Grzesiuk & Wawer, 2018).

Social networks allow companies to create public profiles and make their connections visible, giving access to potential active and passive job candidates. Employers can use these platforms to advertise job openings and create a positive impression of their organization. Social networks offer convenience and accessibility, making them a frequent channel of access to information during the job search. Candidates can get to know a company more vividly and realistically, creating a more holistic image of the company. Social media can be an effective tool for attracting talented candidates, especially in highly developed economies where a shortage of highly skilled job seekers is a labour market trend (Grzesiuk & Wawer, 2018).

The *Society for Human Resource Management* conducted a survey in 2015 in which it found that 84% of companies used social media during the recruitment process to recruit passive candidates, increase employer brand and recognition, and target candidates with specific skills. The most used social networks for this purpose were LinkedIn (96%), Facebook (66%), Twitter (53%) and YouTube (11%). However, companies have also worried about legal risks,

the need for more time and resources, and the credibility of information about candidates. (Grzesiuk & Wawer, 2018).

3.4. Summary of the Theoretical Framework

The concepts of Recruitment Marketing, Talent Acquisition, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Employer Branding need to be integrated and worked very closely to face the high demand for highly skilled young talent in the high-tech industry and companies, and that has been clear in the theoretical framework presented.

Recruitment marketing efforts will help build and strengthen employer branding by engaging with potential candidates during the process before application, and this is possible by creating awareness and improving brand recognition. The process after application will be aligned with talent acquisition, which will focus on the identification and acquisition of highly skilled young talent that will meet the organisation's needs.

IMC framework and employer branding efforts are connected because they will help manage communication channels, content, stakeholders and all other brand communication plans. Platforms like social media channels are essential tools to engage with potential candidates and it's an important way to build and maintain relationships. IMC will guarantee that all the branding messages are consistent with the company values, culture and image, reinforcing the employer value proposition. There has been an increase in touchpoints between companies and potential candidates, which makes the IMC framework essential for consistency across all communication channels and reinforces the employer's brand image. Interactive communication will ensure that companies can show their social, interest and economic value to potential candidates since they are the most influencing factors in employment decisions.

Even though all the concepts seem to align, there are some challenges that companies will face while applying them. Social media does offer opportunities to attract young and skilled talent, but there are some legal risks, the credibility of the information given by candidates, and the issue of resource allocation. By taking these issues into account but making a clear plan with the integrations of recruitment marketing, talent acquisition and IMC and utilising social media platforms to their full potential, companies can adapt to the market needs, the ever-evolving landscape and in this way be able to attract and retain the skilled talent needed.

Chapter II - Objectives and Methodology

The data collection for this study was carried out using a mixed methodology, combining qualitative and quantitative data to support the preparation of the communication marketing plan in question. To this end, S[&]T provided all the necessary information to understand the business evolution and its medium/long-term goals. Finally, analyses were made of the website and social media. It should be noted that there is information owned by S[&]T that cannot be disclosed in this document for reasons of confidentiality (e.g. defence documentation), but which has been made available for the preparation of the plan and which effectively considered in the strategies, tactics, and actions that will be proposed. Table 1 shows the steps for drawing up the communication marketing plan for S[&]T, based on the conceptual model, the SOSTAC model.

SOSTAC MODEL	COMMUNICATION PLAN STAGES	POINTS OF EACH STAGE
Situation Analysis	Company Analysis	• External Analysis • Internal Analysis
Objectives	Strategy Formulation	• Objectives
Strategy		• Target • Strategy
Tactics	Formulation of Tactics and Actions	• Tactics
Actions		• Actions
Control	Evaluation and Control	• Evaluation • Control

Table 1 - *SOSTAC model applied to S[&]T*

Each stage of the SOSTAC model corresponds to a stage in the Communication Plan.

The **Situation Analysis** matches the **Company Analysis** in the communication plan. This involves looking at both external factors like market trends and competition, and internal factors such as the company's strengths and weaknesses.

The **Objectives** align with **Strategy Formulation** in the communication plan. Here, the focus is on setting clear goals, identifying the target audience, and developing the overall communication strategy.

The **Strategy** is also part of **Strategy Formulation** in the communication plan. It involves creating a solid communication strategy that guides the next actions.

The **Tactics** matches the **Formulation of Tactics and Actions** in the communication plan. This step is about deciding the specific tactics to implement the communication strategy. The **Actions** stage in SOSTAC continues under the **Formulation of Tactics and Actions**. It involves carrying out the plan based on the tactics.

Finally, the **Control** stage corresponds to the **Evaluation and Control** stage in the communication plan. This step focuses on reviewing the results and adjusting to stay on track.

Chapter III – Internship Activities

During the traineeship, several activities were developed that also helped with the elaboration of the communication plan. Table 2 shows a table of the activities developed.

ACTIVITIES	CONTRIBUTION
Analysis and management of social media channels.	Understanding the type of content that is posted and understanding the engagement.
Content creation for social media.	Understanding how content is created and how information is collected to create said content.
Website relaunch and management.	Understanding of what was changed on the previous website and what new content can be added.
Creation of business cases for the website.	Understanding S[&]T's Expertise and how to showcase it for clients, partners, and employees.
Designing of communication materials.	Understand how to organise and transmit S[&]T's message and mission.
Attending and participating in events.	Analysis of event management and what is S[&] T's strengths and weaknesses.
Regular meetings with human resources, the talent acquisition team, and business line managers.	Understanding of the company's needs and how all the departments work towards the mission.
Update the Brand Manual and Communication Guidelines.	Understanding the S[&]T branding and how to translate it into communication.
Help the human resources department with various tasks.	Understanding how to retain employees and the needs they may have.

Table 2 - Activities developed during the internship

Some of these activities were day-to-day normal marketing needs for the company, like content creation for social media, website management, attending and preparing events and regular meetings with the departments. Other activities were identified as needed because they could

help improve the marketing activities of the company and understand what is still missing and some insights for the communication plan.

One of my key responsibilities was the **analysis and management of social media channels**. I analysed various platforms to understand the type of content shared and the level of engagement each post received. By monitoring key metrics such as likes, shares, and comments, I gained insight into which types of content resonated most with the audience. This activity helped me develop analytical skills and provided me with the ability to offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of different content strategies.

I also participated in **content creation for social media**, where I contributed to crafting posts, graphics, and captions for LinkedIn. Through this process, I learned about the creative side of content development and the importance of consistency. I also gained an understanding of how content creation is influenced by audience feedback and engagement, which helped refine our approach to better align with the company's branding and messaging.

In addition to social media tasks, I was involved in the **website relaunch and management**. My role was to review the website content, suggest updates, and propose new features to enhance user experience. This helped me understand the basics of website management.

One of the more strategic activities I participated in was the **creation of business cases for the website**. I helped highlight the company's expertise and develop ways to effectively communicate it on the website to attract potential partners. This task provided valuable insight into how to showcase company strengths and helped me improve my skills in business communication and strategic planning.

I was also engaged in **designing communication materials**, such as brochures and presentations, to effectively communicate the company's mission and values. This task helped me understand how to organize information clearly and design visually appealing materials that reflect the company's branding goals. It also improved my design and branding skills.

Another part of my internship was **attending and participating in events**. I assisted in organizing and managing these events, which included preparing materials, communicating with participants, and handling logistics. This experience helped me develop event management skills and gave me a deeper understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of different types of company events.

I also attended **regular meetings with the Talent Acquisition team and business line managers** to discuss the company's needs and ongoing talent acquisition efforts. These meetings provided me with insight into internal business operations and HR processes, which contributed to my understanding of workforce management and organizational strategy.

One of the more significant projects I worked on was **updating the Brand Manual and Communication Guidelines**. This task taught me how to maintain consistency in brand messaging and adapt branding materials to meet the company's evolving goals.

Finally, I assisted the HR department with various tasks, such as onboarding internal communication and internal events. This experience gave me a better understanding of how HR supports organizational objectives and how it aligns with the Marketing department.

Overall, the amount and diversity of activities I was involved in during my internship not only expanded my practical skills in social media management, content creation, and website management but also helped me understand how different departments work together to achieve the company goals.

Overall, the activities developed during the internship allowed me to develop a communication strategy based on a comprehensive understanding of S[&]T brand, audience, and operational needs ensuring that the plan is both effective and closely aligned with the company's mission.

Chapter IV – S[&]T Analysis

1. Company's Current Situation

S[&]T is a company that specialises in turning space data into valuable insights. It uses satellite data to create applications and software like climate change monitoring, navigation, defence and national security. The key areas of interest are high-tech industry, defence & security, environment & sustainability, and space & science (S[&]T, 2024).

S[&]T was founded in 2000 by Carina Maas, Erik Zoutman, and Andre Bos. Through close collaboration with the European Space Agency (ESA) and related European system integrators, they established an extensive network within the international space industry over the years. Predicting the rise in satellite missions and the resulting increase in raw satellite data, they established S[&]T to address the growing need for processing and interpreting this valuable data. Their expertise, combined with a personalised approach, has helped the company to grow successfully over the years. It has since developed into a reputable company with offices in the Netherlands, Norway, and Italy, as well as more than 125 programmers, engineers, developers, and other tech specialists as well as commercial employees

S[&]T is based on two corporate values:

- **Human:** *We want to contribute to secure human life on earth. We believe people need to feel secure in order to work together to accomplish this. Respectful, trustworthy, approachable, flexible and open-minded is how we like to work with our co-workers, customers and partners. By doing so we stimulate co-creation and accomplish innovations together for a safer human life, and ultimately secure life on earth (S[&]T, 2024).*
- **Experts:** *We are Experts in Space Data Technology who are driven by complex technology challenges. We thrive on exploring and solving them together. It takes Expert knowledge to bring thought-out consulting services and to create reliable high-tech solutions. In fact we commercialise the technology to unlock solutions to benefit society. Solutions that enable our customers to take more effective and reliable decisions to anticipate to threats to human life and ultimately secure human life on earth (S[&]T, 2024).*

S[&]T's mission is **Space for a Safer Life**. The word **Space** has several meanings inside itself, it signifies the space data that it is utilized to create our solutions, but it also means the space S[&]T creates for our customers by offering expertise and resources and the workspace we offer as an employer. The wording **Safer Life** also has different meanings, to use space technology to make life on Earth safer, but also to have a safe work environment.

1.1. External Analysis of the Company - Macroenvironment

Defence [&] Security is one of the domains with more considerable growth since the start of the War in Ukraine and is not showing signs of slowing down soon due to the global geopolitical situation. At S[&]T the expertise requests made by our partners have been heavily connected with defence and security, which led the HTC team to shift their focus to finding suitable highly skilled candidates to suppress these needs. However, working in this domain is a challenging task, since the number of restrictions imposed by governmental security policies on institutes and companies in the Netherlands determine that most defence and security-related projects can only be integrated by either Dutch nationals or people originally from NATO and EU countries. When we consider that the immigration trend in the Netherlands is to continue to rise (CBS, 2024) and that the populational growth depends on immigration (CBS, 2023), this does not show a sustainable practice for the coming years. On average it is necessary to live in the Netherlands for more than 5 years before being able to request citizenship and, most of the requests received by the HTC team, require that the expert is already a Dutch national for more than 8 years, especially when they are originally from countries deemed increased risk by NATO standards. Even when candidates are originally from EU and NATO countries, there are bureaucratic obstacles that may compromise the process, since it is necessary to have a complete Security Clearance before the start of the employment and, especially when requested to countries in the south of Europe, it has been reported that may take between 6 months to 1 year and many of them are never completed. Most of our partners have been delaying and abandoning projects due to the lack of experts, which has tools for innovation as well, because with fewer projects less innovation.

Besides all the referred constraints, often candidates that correspond to the criteria are not interested in working in a domain such as defence and security. This has been one of the biggest constraints to the HTC team, as they report that most of the candidates contacted for opportunities in this domain are not interested and do not want their daily work to impact our society negatively. When the Ukrainian war started almost 3 years ago, the scenario was complete opposition, as many candidates were open and declared the ambition to take sides on improving the countries and NATO's defensive strategies. Nowadays, with the exhaustion of the war and the new conflict between Palestine and Israel, more experts choose not to side with or affiliate with a specific conflict, fearing to end up on the dark side of the history of mankind. Currently, the preference is for opportunities in the Space domain, as the technology is rather like defence and security but there is no moral binding.

1.2. External Analysis of the Company - Microenvironment

1.2.1. Competitor Analysis

S[&]T has no direct competitor because it enjoys a unique position based on a combination of solutions offered and projects. But this means that they have competitors in various categories, namely products, consultancy, projects, and talent sourcing services. Its most direct competitor is ATG Europe, an engineering company that specializes in the space industry. As seen in Figure 2, the company has the most competitors in the consultancy and product categories, followed by the projects.

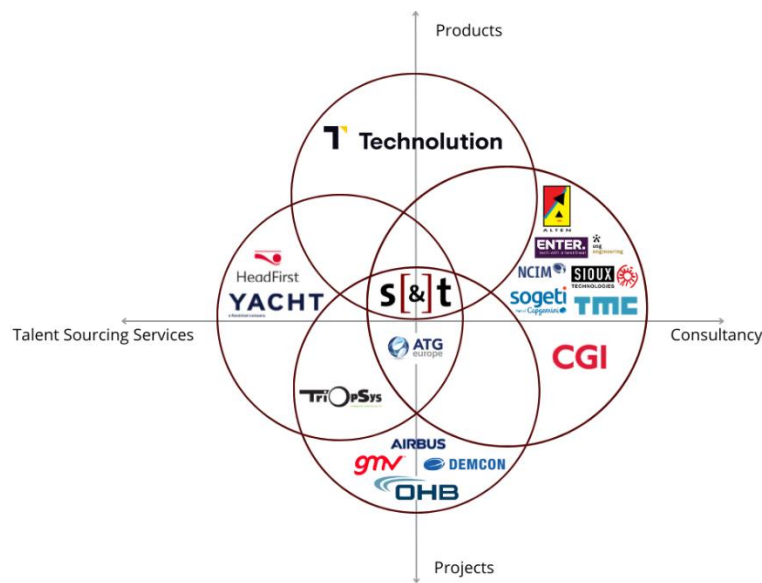


Figure 2 - S[&]T competitors by category

In terms of communication, S[&]T also benefits from its unique position since it's the only company amongst its competitors focused on the pure why of its existence. The other companies are positioned on their expertise, people connected to technology, leadership, empowering together with partners, a high-tech future, innovation, and improving life in the space industry.

For this Communication Plan specifically, our main competitors are the ones in the consultancy category, direct competitors to High-Tech Consulting, and for that reason, it is important to understand their positioning.

POSITIONING CATEGORY	COMPETITOR	MISSION
People and Technology	Enter.	<i>People push technology further</i>
	TMC	<i>People drive Technology</i>
	NCIM Groep	<i>A passion for technology</i>
Future and High-Tech	SIOUX	<i>We bring high-tech to life</i>
	Sogeti	<i>We unlock technology's possibilities</i>
Expertise	USG engineering	<i>Supplier of expertise</i>
Leadership	ALTEN	<i>Leader in outsource engineering</i>

Table 3 - High-Tech Consulting Competitors Overview

It's important to understand that compared to our main competitors, S[&]T is a small company, with fewer resources, money wise and people wise, which puts us at a disadvantage. Companies like HeadFirst and Yatch have very large revenues, for example, in their annual report for 2023 Headfirst informs of revenue of 2,6 billion euros (HeadFirst Group, 2023), and can invest a great amount of money in Artificial Intelligence and recruitment automation, like CV screening, chatbots, video interviews, and sourcing platforms, among others. Small and medium companies like S[&]T can't afford to make this type of investment. But we can also see this as an opportunity for us to show how human and personal we can be with our candidates and how much we care to foster a relationship with them, which is already one of S[&] T's strong suit, unlike our competitors.

1.2.2. Supplier Analysis

The supplier list at S[&]T varies and depends on the requests from our in-house and on-site projects.

When it comes to hiring recent graduates and young professionals, the company prefers to do it locally and, due to the proximity with TU Delft, one of the best universities technical universities worldwide, most of S[&]T hires are former alumni, especially from the fields of Aerospace Engineering and Computer Science. For the in-house developments, most of the internal colleagues started their careers as interns and kept on growing within different teams. On-site the situation is different, since most of the colleagues have already a few years of experience and, since S[&]T works with a considerable number of internationals, their

educational background is not only from Dutch universities but especially from universities across Europe.

When recruiting Experts, the company prefer people already living in the Netherlands and working in companies with a technical and scientific background close to S[&]T and its partners. Since there are limitations to not sourcing, meaning finding candidates on platforms like LinkedIn, already working on S[&]T partners (unless the candidates contact S[&]T directly), there is the necessity to find similar companies in the Dutch market. The same course of action is taken when recruiting candidates living and working outside the Netherlands. However, this is only done if no suitable candidates are found within the Netherlands.

The companies/institutions normally tracked within the Netherlands are Fugro, NLR, ASML, Thales, TU Delft, and other High-Tech entities. Outside of the Netherlands S[&]T often approaches candidates working at Airbus, Thales, BMW, Telespazio, Leonardo, and others similar.

1.3. Internal Analysis of the Company

1.3.1. Clients

At S[&]T the clients are called partners. The company doesn't see the partners as clients because S[&]T's mission is to create Space for a Safer Life by being an innovation partner by delivering solutions. In the specific case of High-Tech Consulting, the business unit that this communication plan will focus on, the partners are public institutions and commercial companies in need of software solutions that S[&]T can arrange by providing either know-how or Experts to help them achieve their goals.

The most important partners of High-Tech Consulting are:

- **TNO:** TNO (Dutch Organization for Applied Scientific Research) is the leading independent research organisation in the Netherlands. TNO's focus is on applied science, bridging the gap between basic research and practical applications. They conduct research in a wide range of areas including defence, security and safety, healthy living, industry, energy transition, mobility and logistics, information and communication technologies and urbanization. TNO is known for its role in developing technologies with a significant societal impact, with contributions including advances in healthcare, sustainable energy solutions, smart city technologies and defence innovation. As an independent company, TNO provides objective research and consultancy services funded by government subsidies, contract research and in partnership with private companies (TNO, 2024).
- **Lely:** Lely is a Dutch company leader in agricultural innovation, especially in dairy farming. Its main products include the Lely Astronaut robotic milking system, the Lely

Juno automatic feeding and pushing machine, the Lely Vector automatic feeding system, and the Lely Discovery manure pusher. Lely focuses on sustainable development, integrating robotics, data analytics, and the Internet of Things to optimize resources and promote precision agriculture. With operations in more than 40 countries, Lely provides tailor-made solutions for different agricultural needs (Lely, 2024).

- **KNMI:** The Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI) is the national weather service of the Netherlands. It provides daily weather forecasts, and severe weather warnings, and monitors seismic activity. KNMI uses advanced technologies such as satellite data and supercomputing and collaborates internationally with organizations such as the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF). KNMI publishes scientific research results and provides open access to a wide range of meteorological and climate data. It also conducts public education to increase awareness of weather, climate, and earthquake risks (KNMI, 2024).
- **SRON:** SRON (Netherlands Research Institute for Space Research) is the leading space research centre in the Netherlands, focusing on astrophysics, Earth observation and planetary science. Founded as part of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), SRON designs and builds scientific instruments for space missions in collaboration with international space agencies such as ESA and NASA. SRON is renowned for its technological innovations and is committed to educational activities and outreach to inspire future scientists (SRON Netherlands Institute for Space Research, 2024).
- **Airbus:** Airbus Netherlands is part of the Airbus Group and focuses on space technology and satellite systems. Headquartered in Leiden, the Netherlands, the company develops and manufactures advanced satellite systems, including communications satellites and Earth observation satellites. Airbus Netherlands focuses on innovation and cooperation and has contributed to global space exploration (Airbus Netherlands, 2024).
- **TU Delft:** Delft University of Technology is a leading public technical university in the Netherlands. It offers degrees in the fields of Aerospace, Mechanical, and Civil Engineering, and it emphasizes research in areas like sustainable energy, biotechnology, and materials science. The university is known for the high-quality education offered strong industry connections and its rankings among the top universities for engineering and technology (Technische Universiteit Delft, 2024).

1.3.2. Services

In general, S[&]T provides tailor-made solutions by translating space data into actionable insights, from instrument to application. This means that S[&]T can offer software frameworks, information products and consultancy, and all this is tailor-made to fully enable organisations, governments, and industries to improve their information capabilities and enhance decision-making.

Table 4 showcases the different types of solutions that S[&]T has successfully developed and has extensive expertise with, divided by business unit.

BUSINESS UNIT	SOLUTIONS
Space [&] Science	Ground Segment: • Instrument data simulation • Prototype and operational ground processors (Level 1 and 2) • Data quality monitoring & control tools • Real-time data processing and archiving framework • Cloud storage and high-performance cloud computing Onboard Processing & Analytics: • Onboard data processor development (SAR, Hyperspectral, IR) • ML modules for cloud detection • ML modules for land cover classification • IDS and architecture for onboard • FPGA, CPU, and GDCPU programming
Defence [&] Security	Resilient Satellite Navigation: • Interference Monitoring • Performance Monitoring • Smart Antennas Satellite-based Surveillance: • Maritime Surveillance • Military and Intelligence Services Space Situational Awareness: • Space Weather Monitoring
Environment [&] Sustainability	Mitigating Actions: • Ground Working Monitoring • Emission Monitoring • Forestry Monitoring

	Adapting Insights: • Disaster Management • Air Quality • Urban Development • Ecosystem Preservation
High-Tech Consulting	In-house Solutions: • Earth Observation • GNSS & Robust Navigation • Scientific Data Processing • Embedded & Control Software • Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning On-site Solutions: • Quantum • Laser Satellite Communication • Control Software • Smart Maintenance

Table 4 - S[&]T Solutions and Expertise

Since this communication plan will be focused on High-Tech Consulting, there will be a deeper analysis of their solutions. There are two sides to the solutions presented, the side of the partners and the side of the candidates, and both sides can benefit from the In-house and On-site solutions.

The partner side can benefit from S[&]T's strong presence in the European market which allows the internal employees to grow their expertise by working on international projects in the fields of Earth Observation, GNSS & Robust Navigation, Scientific Data Processing, Embedded & Control Software, and AI/ML. With this extensive internal know-how, S[&]T can provide Experts who are always available to collaborate with the partner that will help create the most suitable solutions. This is the In-house solution from the partner's perspective. The On-site solution allows the partner to have an Expert, or team of Experts, on-site who will help them to scale up in specific fields as well as ensure that the solution created will make a genuine impact on today's society, as intended by the partner. This means that the Expert will be working for the partner for a specific amount of time.

For the candidate side the In-house solution means they will be working internally at S[&]T and the On-site solution they will be working for and at one of S[&] T's partners.

1.3.3. Price

Regarding the prices of S[&]T services, the amounts can't be disclosed. In terms of the pricing strategy, it can be said that S[&]T uses a value-based pricing strategy. This means that the pricing of the company services and solutions is tailored to each partner, reflecting their specific requirements and the duration of the project.

In general, internal rates are higher since S[&]T carries the project risks. External rates are lower since the partner carries the project risks. In exchange for a higher rate, S[&]T can consider a shared project risk approach too.

1.3.4. Promotion

Not only does S[&]T have several different target groups, but it is also in a niche market, making it even more important to use the correct terminology and tone of voice. To make it all more complex, it also communicates within four different market segments: Space & Science, Environment & Sustainability, Defence & Security, and High-tech Consulting.

At S[&]T, there is the tendency to communicate often from a "low" level, meaning a technical level. By communicating at a "higher" level, meaning a general level, it becomes easier to find a uniform message relevant to all market segments and target groups, increasing their reach. The more specific and deeper it dives into a certain market segment, the "lower" the communication can also be, meaning that different types of promotion can be created for each market segment.

Regarding High-Tech Consulting, the promotion lies mainly on the sales team. They attend industry and student events, this last one with the support of the talent acquisition team, where they can engage with actual and potential partners and candidates, build and foster relationships, and showcase S[&]T services and Expertise. They also contact directly other companies with the potential to become partners, and that communication is tailor-made to focus on where our services can be beneficial to tackle a specific problem or need of the specific company. All this is supported by consistent communication on LinkedIn and on the website about how S[&]T can be a trusted partner.

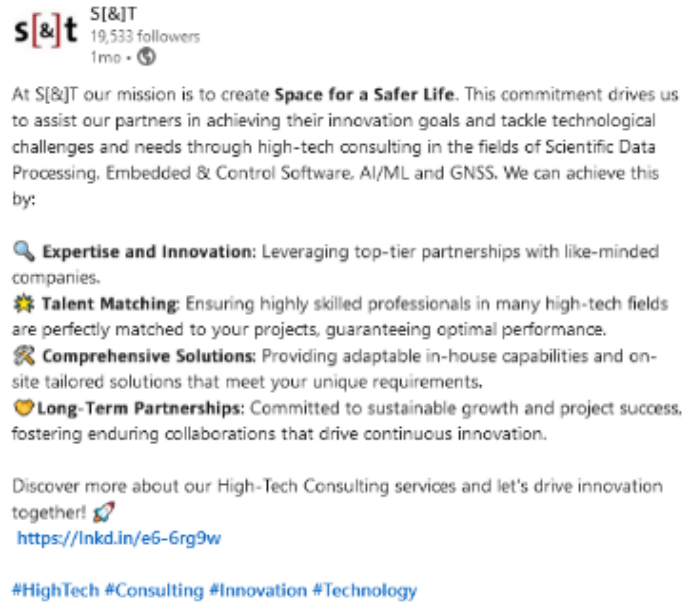


Figure 3 - High-Tech Consulting Promotion

As shown in Figure 3, for High-Tech Consulting the promotion made is focused on how S[&]T services can help our partners achieve their innovation goals and face technological issues and needs, and how that can be achieved. The LinkedIn posts are a condensed version of the website page specific to High-Tech Consulting, to ensure that the message is consistent (S[&]T, 2024).

1.4. SWOT Analysis

It is important to understand the strengths and weaknesses of S[&]T, as well as what opportunities and threats exist in the sector in which it is operating. For this reason, a SWOT analysis was conducted to understand what strategies may be used, as presented in Table 5. For the internal factors such as strengths and weaknesses, this analysis will focus on factors connected to communication and branding. It is important to mention that some of this information was given to me by the Talent Acquisition Team belonging to High-Tech Consulting having account interactions with candidates during events or interviews, and from conversations with the Business Line Manager and the CEO.

STRENGTHS:

- 1 - Tailor-made solutions.
- 2 - Highly skilled Experts.
- 3 - Presence in the European market.
- 6 - Mission-driven company.
- 4 - International company.
- 5 - Partners with high brand awareness.
- 6 - Projects and solutions with a positive impact on society.
- 7 - Long-lasting good reputation with partners like TNO, ESA and NATO.
- 8 - More personal relationships with employees.

WEAKNESSES:

- 1 - Unclear positioning and communication.
- 2 - 'Higher' level of communication unsuitable for some segments.
- 3 - Low brand awareness for some segments.
- 4 - Lack of communication and employer branding strategies.
- 5 - Weak social media presence.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- a - Symbiosis of High-Tech companies in Delft.
- b - Lack of expertise of students and young professionals in practical matters.
- c - Need for highly skilled talents.
- d - Number of followers on LinkedIn.

SO STRATEGIES:

Use internal strengths to gain advantages over external opportunities.

- 2b - Educate candidates in practical matters since S[&]T has the expertise and capacity.

WO STRATEGIES:

Create strategies that use external opportunities to overcome weaknesses.

THREATS:

- a - Competitors with high brand awareness.
- b - Competitors offer higher salaries.
- c - Lack of specialised professionals open to work or looking for a job.
- d - Lack of candidates willing to work in the defence domain.
- e - Competitors with big budgets for recruitment and marketing automation.

ST STRATEGIES:

Create strategies that use strengths to avoid threats.

WT STRATEGIES:

Create strategies that minimise weaknesses to avoid threats.

- 5a - Create communication and employer branding strategies that will help to get a higher brand awareness.

Table 5 - SWOT Analysis

Regarding S[&]T strengths, we can highlight the tailor-made solutions that are provided by highly skilled Experts. This means that the company can provide high-quality solutions tailored to the partners' needs, which is very important communication-wise. The fact that S[&]T is an international European company with a presence in the European market is also a strength that can be used in communications alongside the partners we are working with, and with whom we have a long-lasting good reputation, and use their very high brand awareness in S[&]T's favour. One of the main focuses of the communication is how mission-driven the company is and the positive impact the projects and solutions developed have in society and day-to-day life. Compared to larger competitors, S[&]T can have a more personal relationship with its employees and with candidates.

Looking at S[&]T weaknesses, there are some issues regarding the unclear positioning which leads to unclear communication created on the 'higher level' and that it is, sometimes, unsuitable for some of the segments and target groups, and that leads to low brand awareness in those specific target groups. There is also a lack of communication and employer branding strategies, and the result of that is, for example, a weak social media presence, since S[&]T is only present on LinkedIn.

Externally, S[&]T can use the symbiosis of High-Tech companies in Delft as an opportunity since many are their partners and have higher brand awareness. Also, from information given by the Talent Acquisition team, most of the young professionals and students lack knowledge of practical matters like some types of applications and simple capabilities like writing a motivational letter and building a CV. The need for highly skilled talents allows S[&]T to offer High-Tech Consulting services to its partners and potential partners. The number of followers on LinkedIn, around 19.000 at the time of the writing of this document, gives us a big platform to communicate.

The external threats are a big issue because in this specific case, they do affect S[&]T as a company and are mainly identified during recruitment calls between candidates and the Talent Acquisition team. The competition has higher brand awareness since their communication is clearer and easier to understand than S[&]T's. They are also able to offer higher salaries to their candidates. The next two threats are problems that High-Tech Consulting has been noticing happening recently but have a big impact. There is a lack of highly specialised professionals open to work or even looking for a job because since they are hard to find the companies usually give them high salaries and benefits to hold them, so it is very rare to get in contact with them. There is also a rise in candidates refusing to work on defence vacancies, which are one of the big number of vacancies worked by High-Tech Consulting, due to the Russo-Ukrainian War and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, since the candidates are unsure of the company's position on the conflicts. S[&]T competitors have very big budgets, regarding

recruitment and marketing automation that we can see in their annual reports, due to us being a smaller company, it's very hard to compete with the investment made by the competitors, which puts S[&]T in disadvantage.

After the analysis, there are some strategies that S[&]T can use, but for this communication plan specifically, the ones that will be important are the SO and the WT strategies. The SO strategy will use the company's strengths to gain an advantage over external opportunities, by using highly skilled Experts to train and/or educate candidates in junior positions so that they are focused on the skills and needs of our partners since there is a lack of specialised professionals, and since they already resort to the Talent Acquisition team during events asking for help in simple recruitment skills like building a good CV and writing a motivation letter, S[&]T can use that in their favour. The WT strategy will allow us to minimise weaknesses to avoid threats by creating communication and employer branding strategies that will help S[&]T get a higher brand awareness level.

Chapter V – Communication Plan for S[&]T

1. Formulation of the Communication Strategy

Upon a careful reflection of the analysis previously done, it was identified the necessity to create a communication plan for S[&]T. This means we will focus on the SO and WT strategies identified in the SWOT analysis in Table 5.

The aim is to increase brand awareness so that in the future, these potential candidates see S[&]T as a company with expertise, respected in the industry and a good employer. As a small company with a limited budget, the plan will make it easy to manage costs and be effective and efficient without wasting resources, both monetary and human. The time horizon for this plan will be next year, 2025, when the proposed objectives and actions are expected to be followed, with this plan focusing mainly on just one of the company's target groups. Since the company has no previous formalised communication plan, the plan was created only for just one year, after which evaluations will be carried out to adjust the plan if necessary.

The communication plan presents the objectives proposed with this plan, such as the target audience to be reached, the planning of strategies, the budget and evaluation and control. All these points have been designed to meet the company's main objective: to increase brand awareness.

1.1. Objectives Formulation

The general marketing plan for S[&]T has the following goals:

1. Positioning S[&]T as a strong European brand.
 - Translate corporate identity and communication consistently, both internally as well as externally.
 - Position S[&]T clearly as a provider of data insights for a safer life on Earth.
2. Strengthen marketing understanding and support internally.
 - Intensify internal communication.
3. Position S[&]T as an attractive employer.

With the implementation of the communication plan, S[&]T will be able to work towards goals 1. and 3. However, these goals are vague and aren't measurable, which complicates the evaluation and control. For that reason, this communication plan was prepared following SMART objectives so at least there is some way to control this plan in specific and its results within the company.

For clarity, **SMART** stand for objectives that are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-bound. Below are the objectives of this communication plan:

- **Specific:** Increase brand awareness of S[&]T among potential candidates to position the company as an expert, a respected industry player, and a desirable employer.
- **Measurable:** Achieve a 20% increase in social media engagement (likes, shares, comments, and follower growth), a 15% increase in website traffic (visits, page views, and time spent on educational content pages), and a 25% increase in content engagement (views, shares, and comments on blog posts, videos, and other content).
- **Achievable:** Implement cost-effective strategies within the company's limited budget to manage costs effectively and efficiently without wasting resources, both monetary and human.
- **Relevant:** Focus the plan on one of the company's primary target groups to ensure targeted and effective communication, given the company's small size and specific goals.
- **Time-bound:** Execute the plan over the next year, 2025, with periodic evaluations at the end of the year to assess the effectiveness and make necessary adjustments for future planning.

1.2. Target Definition

The target of this communication plan is potential employees, specifically students and young professionals who are between the ages of 18 and 30, with degrees specializing in fields of the high-tech industry.

Raise brand awareness to this target group through communication will help S[&]T in the long term since they require lower salaries, and are adaptable, which will allow the company to “shape” them in a way that they will fit perfectly with the company's and/or the partner's needs.

2. Formulation of Tactics and Actions

Once the objectives and target for this communication plan have been defined, it is necessary to think about the strategies that will ensure that the objectives set are achieved.

The main communication strategy that will be implemented is the creation of a sub-branding that will appeal to the target group. This is necessary because, even though the S[&]T branding should and will be respected, the company needs to stand out in a way for them to feel attracted and compelled to reach out to S[&]T, online and offline. This sub-branding will influence all the rest of the tactics and actions described.

The next strategy will focus on social media. There is a need to be more present on social media and in the correct channels. S[&]T also needs to create attractive and compelling

content that will truly showcase their mission, expertise, and impact on society and that can educate the students and young professionals. For that reason, there will be tactics and actions for LinkedIn, YouTube and TikTok.

On the website, there is a need to create a specific webpage with the relevant information for the target group, so that they can quickly have an overview of S[&]T but still feel the need to browse the website and social media, knowing the company a little bit better and having the desire to send open applications and register for events with S[&]T. Through these registrations, it also creates a pool of people who can be further contacted for possible vacancies and events and to receive the newsletter.

The events will be a way for S[&]T to attract the target group to visit the company and get in contact with our Experts and partners. By creating internal events like lectures, workshops and networking, the company will be able to offer all the resources needed for the target group to see S[&]T, and its partners, as reliable and respectable in the industry and raise brand awareness among the students and young professionals.

Via the newsletter, S[&]T has the possibility of maintaining regular, hopefully at least monthly, contact with the target group. It is also an easy way of communicating about the company, new accomplishments, new partnerships, and important news in the industry.

The following are the tactics and actions that S[&]T needs to put into practice to achieve the objectives mentioned above. They will need to be implemented by the marketing team and supported by the rest of the company.

2.1. Sub-branding

S[&]T has a Brand Book and a Communication Guideline that are essential to build a consistent brand. It is important to understand the main brand and all its elements to understand why there is a need to create a sub-branding for this target group.

In the Brand Book, all the brand assets are described, the logo, the tagline, the name usage, colour guidance, fonts and communication styles. For this tactic on specific, I will only focus on the ones that will be adapted to create this sub-branding and maintain the rest of them to preserve the brand identity.

Regarding the **communication style**, all corporate communication (internal and external) should be in UK English, because S[&]T is a company based in the Netherlands with offices in Norway and Italy and is focusing on the European Market. The tone of voice used is informative and formal since the company wishes to convey their expertise about specific domains and involves being objective, factual, and emotion-free. To create the sub-branding for young talents and students, it was decided to keep the informative tone of voice because S[&]T still wishes to convey expertise, but use a more informal tone of voice, this will make the company

look more approachable and sociable. It's possible to see the difference in the tone of voice and pictures used to communicate with the different target groups by analysing two LinkedIn posts about two different events.

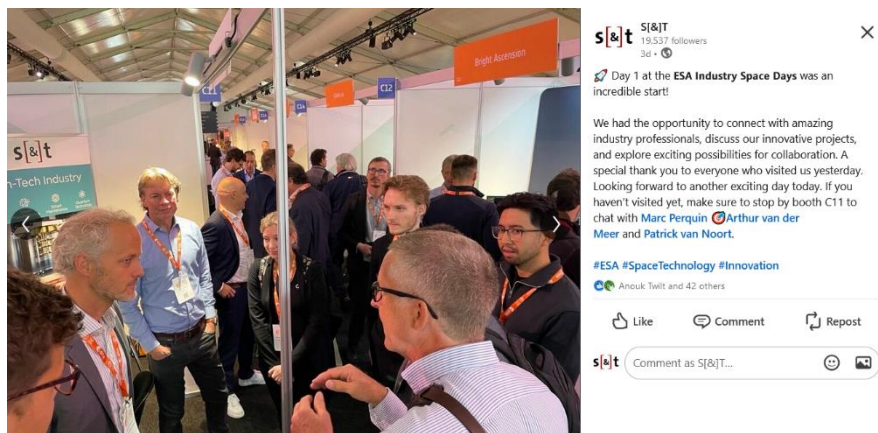


Figure 4 - Industry Event LinkedIn Post

Source: S[&]T LinkedIn (2024)



Figure 5 - Student Event LinkedIn Post

Source: S[&]T LinkedIn (2024)

In Figure 4 is possible to see a LinkedIn post made regarding an industry event that High-Tech Consulting attended, and the picture and tone of voice of the post are also more formal since it is a post targeted to S[&]T partners. In Figure 5 is possible to see a LinkedIn post created for a student event that High-Tech Consulting also attended, but targeted to students, and the picture and tone of voice are less formal, but looking at them side by side, it's possible to see that the S[&]T branding in general is still identifiable and they don't feel disconnected from one another in the LinkedIn page as a whole.

The other brand asset that will be managed to create this new sub-branding is the **brand colours**. The S[&]T brand uses a primary palette, that is composed of two colours, dark red,

the same as the logo, and viridian green. There is also a supporting palette composed of three colours, light cyan, Byzantium and slate grey. The palettes are shown in Figure 6.

PRIMARY PALETTE



Figure 6 - Colour Palettes

Source: S[&]T Brand Book

Since many companies in the high-tech and space industry use red in their communication material, we need to stand out. The supporting palette is rarely used and has a lot of potential, the Byzantium colour is unique in the industry and its meaning can also be used in our favour, this shade stands for creativity, and innovation, emphasizes eco-friendliness and sustainability and represents the warm heart of the company. In that way, we can create material more appealing to the younger talents and stand out by using a unique colour present in the brand colour palette, combined with the usual colour used in S[&]T communication material, the Veridian green.

When the Offline Communication Material action is presented in 2.6, there will be concrete examples of how this new sub-branding will look in action, and how it will connect with S[&]T's usual communication material.

2.2. Social Media

Regarding social media, S[&]T is already very active on LinkedIn and already has a following of around 19.000 people, but having just LinkedIn isn't the ideal scenario, and this is not the social media where the target group is mainly present. For that reason, it was decided to make S[&]T also active on YouTube and TikTok. This decision was made based on practicality since we know that around 11% of global companies use YouTube during the recruitment process to recruit passive candidates and increase employer brand and recognition and have positive results in doing so (Grzesiuk & Wawer, 2018). TikTok was the other chosen social media

because 60% of TikTok users are Gen Z, one of the generations included in the target group, another opportunity identified was that nearly half of Gen Z is using TikTok and Instagram for search and education instead of Google (Wallaroo Media, 2024).

In the theoretical framework, we were made aware that Gen Y and Gen Z are actively looking for companies with social responsibility, and that share the same values as them. For that reason, we also need to share in our social media all the internal events that S[&]T participates in and creates related to sustainability and social issues to show our commitment to the values we are ruled by and attract these generations to see us as a committed company to causes they also care about.

This way, S[&]T will have three different social media channels with different sub-goals to achieve the main goal of increasing brand awareness: LinkedIn will remain as the place to showcase Expertise and interact mainly with partners; YouTube will be an educational channel where S[&]T could not only talk about activities and missions that are being worked on but also educate and help people understand some concepts and necessities of the workforce and market; TikTok would be used as a dissemination channel to add traffic to website and YouTube since there is a possibility to reach more people.

All the social media posts need to be aligned and properly scheduled so that they can be frequent enough and attractive to the target group. Each social media will have a different schedule calendar since the resources need to be properly allocated and the marketing teams have some limitations, so to be realistic, some social media channels will have more content than others, and the content created for one can be translated and adapted to another.

2.2.1. LinkedIn

S[&]T already has a presence on LinkedIn, and it's also used to attract people to S[&]T website since all the LinkedIn posts always have a link to a relevant page of the S[&]T website, in a way to add traffic to it. The idea is to translate the content on the website into posts that showcase our Expertise but start to add some posts about specific events that might be a positive trigger to our target group since that's what still missing on LinkedIn.

During my internship, the company decided to celebrate World Clean Up Day, a global-wide event focusing on the clean-up of a specific area by a company or group of people. Posting about this event is a great opportunity to show how dedicated the company is to its mission because it engages in activities related to creating a safer space instead of just talking about it. This might be a strength that we have compared to a competitor, and we know that the target group is aware of the companies that share their values. Figure 7 is the post made for the World Clean Up Day, already following the sub-branding guidelines presented in point 2.1.



Space for a Cleaner, Safer World

Last Friday, our S[&]T team came together to participate in the global **World Cleanup Day** initiative, and what a fantastic experience it was! We dedicated our afternoon to cleaning up the beautiful **Delftse Hout** area, helping to create a greener, safer environment for our community.

We'd like to extend a special thank you to **De Papaver Delft** (<https://papaverdelft.nl/>) for providing all the cleanup materials. With their support, we were well-equipped with gloves, trash bags, and trash-picking tools, which made our efforts even more effective!

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us. It's amazing what we can achieve when we come together as a team!

Let's continue to make our world a cleaner, better place one step at a time! 🌍🌱

#WorldCleanupDay #Sustainability #Environment

Figure 7 - World Clean Up Day LinkedIn Post

Source: S[&]T LinkedIn (2024)

The schedule for LinkedIn posts is to post, at least, two times a week, but keep a monthly plan of the posts that need to be created and posted, to make it easier to follow and manage. In Table 6 is possible to see one of the monthly schedules for the LinkedIn posts.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
			High-Tech Consulting General Post			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	LiDAR Business Case E[&]S		Resilient Satellite Navigation D[&]S			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	ESA Academy CubeSat Summer School		Adapting Insight E[&]S			
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	Onboard Processing & Analytics		World Clean Up Day			
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
	Superglacial Lake E[&]S		Better Data Access & Insights S[&]S			

Table 6 - LinkedIn Schedule

The schedule is realistic and doable for the time proposed in the communication plan but ideally, there are enough resources in the future so that the posts on LinkedIn can become a daily action.

2.2.2. YouTube

S[&]T YouTube channel will be a way to showcase Expertise more concretely compared to social media posts. The videos will offer more space and time to talk about the specific domains, Expertise and missions worked on through detailed case studies or in-depth discussions that are quite impossible via simple LinkedIn posts.

The content of the videos will focus on all business units since it's also important to educate the target group in general about all that S[&]T does and the impact that our solutions have in defence, sustainability and society in general. Some of the videos will focus more on the domains of the Talent Acquisition team since the channel will also have some lectures and workshops, very similar to the ones talked about in point 2.4.

In Table 7 it is possible to see the schedule for videos posted by S[&]T.

Month	Video Content
JAN	Spoofing and jamming
FEB	How to make a CV and how to write a motivation letter
MAR	IRIDE: Constellation of Constellations
APR	How to improve your LinkedIn profile
MAY	Transforming Norwegian Forest Monitoring with LiDAR-based Deep Learning
JUNE	SKAO: Next-generation radio astronomy
JULY	How to prepare for a job interview
AUG	Revolutionising Maritime Surveillance with ESA IOD REMIS
SEPT	Prediction of Supraglacial Lakes Extent and Depth in Greenland
OCT	Sentinel-5P: Global air monitoring for Copernicus
NOV	Enhancing EarthCARE CRISP-3
DEC	TerraVisie: fighting against environmental crimes

Table 7 - YouTube Schedule

For the time proposed for this communication plan, the only realistic schedule for posting on the company's YouTube channel is by posting once a month, but the ideal would be to have more regular videos posted to engage and educate the target group and raise our brand

awareness and create more type of videos like interviews with partners, and live streams to promote engagement with the target group.

2.2.3. TikTok

The TikTok profile will be an extension of the YouTube channel and a dissemination channel. This means that the videos uploaded on TikTok will be snippets of the YouTube videos and will be a way of attracting the talents to S[&]T's YouTube channel and website, where they will then find the complete video and information. The YouTube videos will be carefully cut into various snippets containing relevant information or information that can trigger or spark interest in the target group.

TikTok is a social media that when properly managed by a company, the content will show up to viewers even if they don't follow the company profile, and for that reason, some factors need to be considered. The length of each video will need to be between 10-20 seconds since this is the length that performs better, they will need to be high-quality image-wise and sound-wise, and some trending hashtags will need to be added, as well as a trending song. All this needs to be done while respecting the S[&]T branding.

Regarding a schedule, for the time proposed in this communication plan, it would be only possible to post on TikTok once a week, since there is only one YouTube video per month. This means that for a month S[&]T would post every week a small snippet of that month's YouTube video and for that reason, the schedule would be the one presented in Table 7. This is not the ideal situation but is also a great way to evaluate if TikTok is the right social media to invest in the future since it requires a lot of resources and monitoring. If S[&]T considers in the end that having a TikTok profile is worth it, then the ideal situation is to create original content for it and post daily.

2.3. Website

The S[&]T website is a crucial channel of communication for the company. The link and connection to it is present in all social media posts, and offline communication, like banners and business cards, to drive traffic to it, so it is important to keep it updated and add to it by the company needs and the market trends.

The website was rebranded at the beginning of 2024, which means it looks modern and attractive visually, has the information updated and is monitored daily. The only thing missing is a specific page to redirect our target group to. The information about all the business units and all the projects and missions S[&]T is involved in is pertinent information that the target group will be interested in reading, but we should give them an entry point to start discovering the website.

That entering point for the target group will be a section added to the “Join us!” page that already exists and highlights career opportunities and the benefits of working for S[&]T. This addition is important due to a very important factor of the target group, most of these young talents will be looking for internships or junior positions, and nowhere on the website is clear that they can send open applications for internship suggestions and there is that possibility.

The new section will add some new testimonials connected to previous people who completed their internship at S[&]T and how that helped them in the future, and some information about the possibility of open applications for internships.

Figure 8 shows the addition to the website of the Call to Action to apply for an internship. This addition will trigger the target group to apply for an internship and show how open S[&]T is to young talents and how we want to promote them to develop their skills and talent.

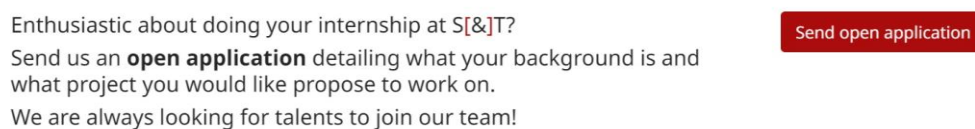


Figure 8 - Call to Action on the website

Source: Own elaboration

2.4. Events

The goal of the internal events is to attract the target group to the company and provide opportunities for them to interact with important players in the area. These events can be divided into three categories: workshops and lectures, networking events and events based on special dates or periods of the year.

Month	Event
JAN	Lecture: What is spoofing and jamming? - Lecture given by S[&]T Expert from the business unit Defence [&] Security - Invite students
FEB	Workshop: How to make a CV and how to write a motivation letter - Workshop given by the Talent Acquisition team - Invite students
MAR	Creating space for a safer space for Women in STEM (International Women's Day) - Lectures from S[&]T and partners about how the companies make sure that women feel safe and how to minimize injustices like wage gap - Invite women in STEM to give statements - Invite alumni, students and employees
APR	Workshop: How to improve your LinkedIn profile

	- Workshop given by the Talent Acquisition team - Invite students
MAY	Lecture: Transforming Norwegian Forest Monitoring with LiDAR-based Deep Learning - Lecture given by S[&]T Expert from the business unit Environment [&] Sustainability - Invite students
JUNE	Creating space for a safer space for the LGBT community in STEM (Pride Month) - Lectures from S[&]T and partners about how the companies make sure that the members of the community feel safe doing their work and at the office - Invite alumni, students and employees
JULY	
AUG	
SEPT	Back to School Event (Start of the School Year) - Invite students and partners - Career Speed Dates: an expert goes around student groups talking about their position, their career journey, and answering questions. - Promote possible internships
OCT	Workshop: Learning C++ - Lecture given by S[&]T Expert - Invite students and give them the possibility of presenting a project
NOV	Lecture: Enhancing EarthCARE CRISP-3 for Optimal Ground Processor Performance - Lecture given by S[&]T Expert from the business unit Space [&] Science - Invite students
DEC	

Table 8 - Event Planning

As shown in Table 8, there is a possibility to have events almost on a monthly base. The months of July, August and December don't have any events planned since they are holiday months, so there is no need to allocate resources since there will be less chance for students to sign up and attend events.

The lectures and workshop events will give S[&]T the opportunity to showcase our Expertise allow the students and young talents to understand what is valuable for S[&]T and the industry and raise brand awareness. This is also a chance to show the projects that we are involved in and the impact they have on society. The events planned for March and June have the aim to show S[&]T values, especially the social value since we know that young talent rates it as an important factor in choosing an employee. By having an event on International Women's Day and Pride Month, S[&]T shows that we truly want to create Space for a Safer Life, and that starts at the office making sure all our employees are valued.

2.5. Newsletter

Since the goal of the newsletter is to maintain a regular relationship and communication, it is important to set this action to be monthly. This way, every month the target group is aware of some of S[&]T activities, new vacancies and possible internships, and updates on missions in which the company is involved. Through the newsletter, there is the possibility to drive traffic to the website and social media, since it is possible to create links to specific web pages and posts. In the next figures, it will be presented some topics for the newsletter. They were already created in the CRM tool that will send the newsletter to the target group, Odoo.

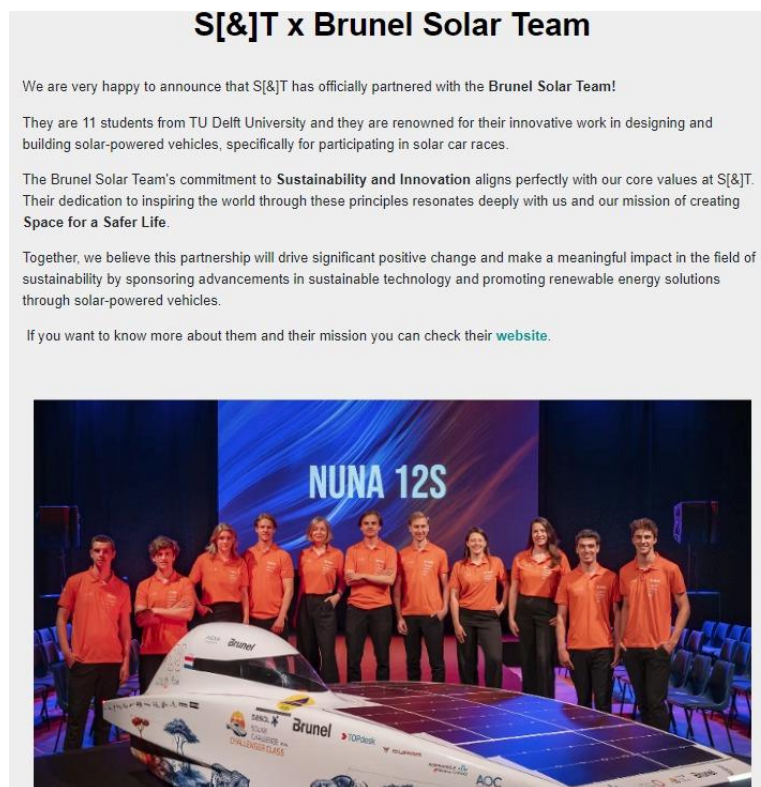


Figure 9 - Newsletter Topic: Partnership

Source: Own elaboration

In Figure 9 it is possible to see an announcement for a partnership with the Brunel Solar Team, a team composed of students and recent graduates that every year build a solar car to participate in car races. By showing this partnership, S[&]T is already showing some type of engagement with young talents and showing how the company promotes and supports sustainability and innovation.

S[&]T Advances to Second Phase of Copernicus Demonstrators Project

You've probably heard about the Copernicus satellite constellation countless times, but did you know S[&]T is now participating in the Copernicus Demonstrators project? This project, funded by EUSPA and led by OHB Digital Services, aims to evaluate the technical feasibility and commercial viability of five proof of concepts and show how useful Copernicus data can be in real-world applications.

S[&]T took part in the project, focusing on Aircraft Emission Measurement and Monitoring. In Phase 1, **they came up with a plan to monitor sulphur dioxide (SO₂) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels around major European airports at increased spatial resolution, helping to promote greener aviation practices.** Now, their innovative idea has been selected for Phase 2, where they'll demonstrate its technical feasibility.

Figure 10 - Newsletter Topic: Mission Updates

Source: Own elaboration

In Figure 10 it is possible to observe an update for a mission S[&]T is involved, which will showcase the Expertise and the impact the company has.

Geo-Data Fusion Hackathon 2024

Last month, our Young S[&]T-ers participated in the Geo-Data Fusion Hackathon 2024. **Anouk, Antigoni, Jake, Olivier, and Vincent**, tackled the challenge of using space and Earth Observation data to monitor urban parking spaces and assess their efficiency.

Why is this important? Stationary vehicles occupy our streets for around 23 hours a day, each taking up to 12.5 square meters. As urban areas grow, the demand for space increases, making it difficult to find room for housing, green areas, and community spaces.

Through brainstorming, workshops, and knowledge-sharing, the S[&]T team developed an innovative solution. Using satellite imagery, they were able to detect cars from space and determine where cars should be in space. Combining these data, they created the **STand STeel** web application. This tool revealed that inefficient parking in the depicted area wastes enough space to accommodate 5.15 student houses.

Many thanks to them for representing S[&]T in this competition!

Figure 11 - Newsletter Topic: Event

Source: Own elaboration

In Figure 11 it is written about a Hackathon that which the younger employees of S[&]T participated, to showcase the opportunities that young talents have within S[&]T and how the company promotes its employees to improve their skills.

2.6. Offline Communication Material

As explained in point 2.1 of the sub-branding, there will be specific communication material to the target group. These communication materials will be banners and brochures and will be mainly used in events, especially university events or student events, focused on students and

young alumni. The designs are side-by-side with the usual S[&]T communication material, to show how well they flow together in terms of branding.

The changes are mainly to the content, on the usual material S[&]T communicates Expertise and in which domains, in this case, the communication can also include that but also needs to focus on the benefits of working for S[&]T, since that is important for the target group. This specific banner will always be used in addition to one of the banners of the other business units, which means that all the rest of the information regarding S[&]T will still be communicated. Regarding the brochures, they will be a translation of the banner but in a format that the target group can keep and use to get in touch with S[&]T later and to research more about the company.

The proposed designs for the banners are shown in Figure 12.

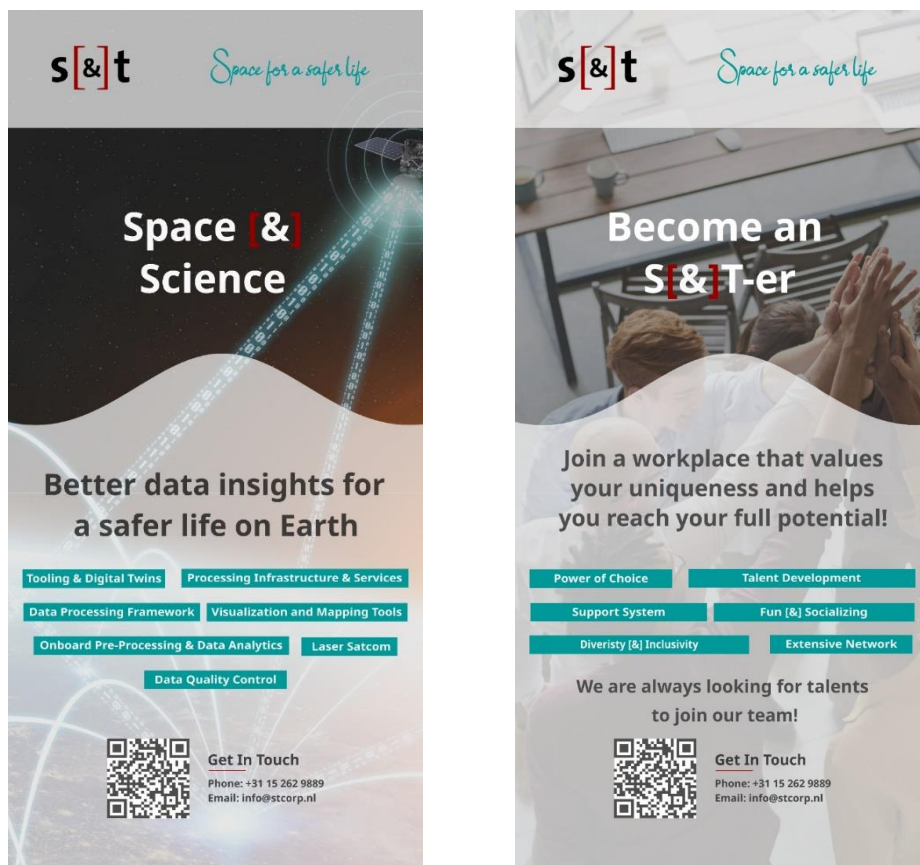


Figure 12 - S[&]T Banners

Source: Own elaboration

The materials chosen for these communication materials must be environmentally friendly, for example, using recyclable paper for the brochures and PVC-free polyester for the banners. This shows the commitment that S[&]T has in creating space for a safer life by choosing to go via the sustainable options available.

3. Budget

Regarding the budget intended for the proposed actions, for each social media channel and online tool, there is an estimated cost of how much S[&]T would have to invest in following the proposed plan, as presented in Table 9.

BUDGET CATEGORIES	QUANTITIES	ESTIMATED TOTAL COST
SOCIAL MEDIA		
LinkedIn	1 account	0€
YouTube	1 account	0€
TikTok	1 account	0€
WEBSITE		
Website	—	—
EVENTS		
Catering	1 per event	120.70€
COMMUNICATION MATERIALS		
Roll-up banner	1	53.42€ (excl. VAT)
Flyers	250	433,59€ (excl. VAT)
E-MAIL MARKETING		
Newsletter	—	—

Table 9 - Budget for the proposed actions

Regarding social media, all the platforms, LinkedIn, YouTube, and TikTok, are free so there will be no cost to use them as proposed.

The newsletter app and website are included in the company's current CRM, Odoo, so there are no additional fees.

The only event cost would be for catering, which will change based on how many students attend. So, the catering cost depends on the final number of attendees, and we can't set a fixed amount ahead of time. But to have a more concise budget plan, let's create a very realistic scenario where for an internal event: around 20 people attend (this is an average number based on previous events), there are some dietary restrictions, and we want to promote sustainable healthy eating to go according to our mission and values. In this case, we would choose a restaurant like SLA that offers salads and wraps, including vegan and vegetarian

options and has a catering service in Delft, where S[&]T is based. According to their website, 2 trays of food would feed the number of people attending and would have a cost of 120.70€ (SLA, 2024).

Regarding communication material, the costs are higher due to opting for sustainable and environment-friendly options, as this aligns with the company's mission.

4. Evaluation and Monitoring

Evaluation and monitoring of this Communication Plan can help better understand the gap between expected and actual performance, ensuring its effectiveness. For that reason, both should be done before, during, and after the implementation of the plan.

To evaluate and monitor social media engagement, we will track likes, shares, comments, and follower growth on social media platforms. Regarding content performance, we will evaluate the performance of blog posts, videos, and other content through views, shares, and engagement. To monitor the website traffic, we will monitor website visits, page views, and the number of open applications for internships. Regarding the evaluation of events, we will measure registration numbers, attendance rates, and participant feedback. To monitor the performance of the newsletter, we will track open rates, click-through rates, conversion rates, and unsubscribe rates.

Conclusion

To finish up my master's in Marketing Management, I decided I wanted to get out of my comfort zone because that's usually how people grow and learn. For that reason, I decided I wanted to do my internship abroad and take advantage of the Erasmus+ program promoted by the Polytechnic Institute of Setúbal. There was the opportunity of going to S[&]T, a company based in Delft in the Netherlands and so I accepted that challenge. Changing countries is hard enough, but I had to choose to go to a country that couldn't be farther from Portugal culture-wise. Where we are warm, nice and like good food, they are cold, way too direct and don't put seasoning in their food. This experience made me aware of how much I love my country and how proud I am of my culture. Living in such an international country teaches me so much because we can only count on other internationals, I was also confronted with my privileges and now I have such a broader notion of life in general. I grew a lot and changed a lot as a person, but that wasn't all.

When I arrived at S[&]T as an Erasmus+ intern, I found myself in an unexpected and exciting situation. Initially, my role was to support the Marketing department in the High-Tech Consulting business unit, with general marketing tasks to then create a Communication Plan, but very quickly, my situation changed drastically. My internship started in October 2024 and my supervisor decided to leave the company in December 2024. With her leaving, I was the only one standing in the Marketing department, and I had less than one month to prepare myself to take care of all marketing and communication activities for the whole company, including the Italian and Norwegian offices, and quickly I was made aware that there were no marketing processes and it was as the marketing department never existed and I had to start from the ground up.

What began as a nine-month internship evolved into something much more significant because instead of having the opportunity to develop and lead the company's strategy to raise brand awareness among students and young professionals, I was trusted with leading the Marketing department all by myself. The months that followed were the hardest, from doubting myself and feeling that I was making all the wrong decisions, in the end, I was capable of the task I had at hand because my dedication to this job ultimately culminated in a permanent role within the company. The support of the CEO and COO of the company was invaluable, and they were the ones who never doubted me and always understood when I needed a positive reinforcement. Working alongside them was the best learning experience I had. Marketing is the backbone of a company and having a general overview of all that is happening makes us able to present better work, but it doesn't make it easy, and having the management always by my side was one of the reasons that I was able to do a good job.

S[&]T is an extremely complex company. Not only it's a company working in a niche market, the data satellite industry, but it also works with and for the defence sector, and all of this has a very big influence on the way Marketing and communications need to work. S[&]T is also a very technical company, with around 90% of the company being technical workers, from scientific software engineers to data scientists, and usually they don't understand what Marketing does and why is valuable. This was one of my biggest battles during my internship. I had to ask for their help all the time, because I am not technical, and it was hard for them to understand what I was doing there and why I needed to "bother" them. What a journey that was, but in the end, we were able to have an amazing time. Technical people have the problem of using logic too much, which works for their jobs, but not in day-to-day life, I had to teach them that there are grey areas, that not everything is black or white, that science and humanities can mix, and that result of that is a great work that makes everybody happy, you just need to open your mind.

During my internship, I was also able to implement the Diversity, Equality and Diversity Committee. From S[&] T's two values, Human and Expert, the Human was missing a lot regarding the internal strategy of the company. This has been an amazing pleasure, to combine Marketing and Communication with creating the Space for a Safer Life that S[&]T promotes. This was once again, a huge battle because why should technical people know inclusive language and the privileges they have? I once again was able to turn them around and now everybody is enjoying diversity days and working on becoming aware of how we can be better for the general happiness of all the company employees.

Regarding the goal of my internship itself, I was tasked with understanding how to engage Generation Y and Z, groups with distinct expectations from employers. These generations not only seek career opportunities but also want to align with companies whose values and missions resonate with their own. However, S[&]T lacked a structured approach to communicate effectively with these potential candidates. Recognizing this gap, I developed a comprehensive Communication Plan to address the challenge. This is at the heart of this thesis, which focuses on the creation of a Communication Plan aimed at raising S[&]T's brand awareness and attracting young professionals. The plan is based on key concepts from Recruitment Marketing and Employer Branding. Recruitment marketing, which is crucial for attracting talent, involves creating a compelling narrative and brand presence that can catch the attention of potential candidates. Employer branding goes a step further, ensuring that the company presents itself in a way that is attractive and authentic, aligning its identity with what young professionals seek in a future employer.

The theoretical framework of this thesis delves into these concepts, providing a review of relevant literature on how recruitment marketing and employer branding can be used to

engage students and young professionals. In the second chapter, I translate this theoretical understanding into actionable strategies through the SOSTAC model, which outlines the situation analysis, objectives, strategy, tactics, actions, and control mechanisms needed to develop a successful communication plan.

The theoretical framework presented makes it evident that to meet the high demand for highly skilled young talent in the high-tech industry and companies, the concepts of Recruitment Marketing, Talent Acquisition, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), and Employer Branding must be integrated and worked closely together. By interacting with potential candidates before they even apply, recruitment marketing initiatives will support and enhance employer branding. This is made possible by raising awareness and enhancing brand recognition. Following application, the procedure will follow talent acquisition guidelines, which will centre on finding and hiring young, highly skilled talent that can fulfil the needs of the organisation. Employer branding initiatives and the IMC framework are related because the latter will help manage stakeholders, communication channels, content, and other brand communication plans. Social media channels and other platforms are vital resources for interacting with possible candidates and for establishing and preserving connections. To strengthen the employer value proposition, IMC will ensure that all branding messages are in line with the company's values, culture, and image. The IMC framework is crucial for maintaining consistency across all communication channels and strengthening the employer's brand image because there are more touchpoints between prospective employees and companies. Despite the apparent alignment of all the concepts, companies will always run into obstacles when implementing them. While there are chances to attract young, talented individuals, there are also disadvantages, including potential legal issues, the legitimacy of the information provided by applicants, and resource allocation concerns. Companies can adapt to market demands and the constantly changing landscape by considering these issues, creating a clear plan that integrates recruitment marketing, talent acquisition, and IMC, and fully utilising social media platforms.

But it doesn't matter how clear and how updated the theory is, implementing strategies in a real company is always complicated, and not straightforward. Every company has special needs, and specific people who need to approve the strategy, management needs to be happy with the decisions and willing to give all the insight so that a strategy is aligned with all other processes of the company. As someone with a pure theoretical background and little experience, navigating this moment of fully understanding the theoretical framework and what needed to be made, wasn't easy at all. S[&]T is not an easy company to understand and to work in, there are many challenges, including a very imitative factor that is working with and for the defence sector. Not all of the theory was able to be translated for S[&]T and a lot of it was adapted to create a communication strategy that also had a lot of "gut feeling" and that

some things made sense because it was “common sense”. Academia and the real world are not always aligned, and to me, it was clear that working in marketing is also trusting in your capabilities and your feelings. Being creative never felt so valuable and important to create a strategy to communicate with a specific target group. There is no guidebook because marketing is subjective, there are some tips and tricks, but nothing can be copied and pasted because companies are like people, there aren't two of the same.

The proposed Communication Plan includes a variety of targeted actions such as a new sub-brand for the target group, enhanced social media strategies for platforms like LinkedIn, YouTube, and TikTok, improvements to the company's website, organizing events, sending newsletters, and producing offline communication materials. It also includes a timeline for implementation and evaluation metrics, aiming for tangible outcomes such as a 20% increase in social media engagement, a 15% increase in website traffic, and a 25% increase in content engagement.

The main strategy is to create a sub-branding that appeals to the target group, ensuring the company stands out and attracts them to reach out. Social media will be a key strategy, with tactics for LinkedIn, YouTube, and TikTok. A specific webpage with relevant information will be created on the website and social media to provide a quick overview of S[&]T and encourage open applications and registration for events. Internal events, such as lectures, workshops, and networking, will attract the target group to visit the company and interact with experts and partners, raising brand awareness among students and young professionals. A newsletter will be used to maintain regular contact with the target group and communicate about the company, new accomplishments, partnerships, and industry news. These tactics and actions will be implemented by the marketing team and supported by the rest of the company. They will be implemented starting in 2025 and they will be heavily monitored so that we can adapt them if needed so that we can understand if the Communication Plan was correctly prepared and applied.

To conclude, this internship was life-changing, and I am eternally grateful for all the obstacles I ran into. They made my international experience so much more valuable, and I will finish my master's not only with this document and knowledge of Recruitment Marketing, Employer Branding and some Talent Acquisition but with a new way of looking at Marketing in general, the possibility to grow even more in my role at S[&]T and feeling very confident in my professional capabilities. I realized how important Marketing is and, how well-prepared the students at the Polytechnic Institute of Setúbal are to work in the real world with real challenges. The incentive given to students and young people to have international experiences is also appreciated because I would never have had this experience without the Erasmus+ program.

Bibliographical References

- Airbus Netherlands. (2024). *Meet Airbus NL*.
<https://www.airbusdefenceandspacenetherlands.nl/nl/>
- Alashmawy, A., & Yazdanifard, R. (2019). A Review of the Role of Marketing in Recruitment and Talent Acquisition . *International Journal of Management, Accounting and Economics*, Vol. 6, 2383-2126.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337888670_A_Review_of_the_Role_of_Marketing_in_Recruitment_and_Talent_Acquisition
- Batra, R., & Keller, K. L. (2016). Integrating Marketing Communications: New Findings, New Lessons, and New Ideas. *Journal of Marketing*, 80 (6).
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1509/jm.15.0419>
- Bejtkovský, J., & Copca, N. (2020). The Employer Branding Creation and HR Marketing in Selected Healthcare Service Providers. *Management & Marketing*, 95-108.
<https://doi.org/10.2478/mmcks-2020-0006>.
- Berthon, P., Ewing, M., & Hah, L. L. (2005). Captivating company: dimensions of attractiveness in employer branding. *International Journal of Advertising: The Review of Marketing Communications*, 151-172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2005.11072912>
- CBS. (2023). *Statistics Netherlands reviews the year 2023*. <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2023/51/statistics-netherlands-reviews-the-year-2023>
- CBS. (2024). *How many people immigrate to the Netherlands?* <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/dossier/asylum-migration-and-integration/how-many-people-immigrate-to-the-netherlands->
- Cioppi, M., Curina, I., Francioni, B. *et al.* Digital transformation and marketing: a systematic and thematic literature review. *Italian Journal of Marketing*. 2023, 207–288 (2023).
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s43039-023-00067-2>
- Dabirian, A., Paschen, J., & Kietzmann, J. (2019). Employer Branding: Understanding Employer Attractiveness of IT Companies. *IT Professional*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 82-89.
<https://doi.org/10.1109/MITP.2018.2876980>
- Eger, L., Mičík, M., Gangur, M., & Řehoř, P. (2019). Employer Branding: Exploring Attractiveness Dimensions in a Multicultural Context. *Technological and Economic Development of Economy*, 519–541. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3846/tede.2019.9387>
- Grzesiuk, K., & Wawer, M. (2018). Employer Branding Through Social Media: The Case of Largest Polish Companies. *Business and Management*.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.3846/bm.2018.42>

- HeadFirst Group. (2023). *HeadFirst Group Annual Report 2023*.
- John, A., & Raj, J. (2020). Employer Branding: A Decisive Means of Employee Relationship Management. *International Journal of Knowledge-Based Organizations*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4018/IJKBO.2020070103>
- Kamadi, Y., Aras, M., Andriani, N., & Bayani, H. D. (2022). Enhancing Brand Awareness Through Digital Communication Strategies. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Information Technology*, 100(23): 7176–7186.
- Katumpe, G. S., & Kyongo, J. K. (2023). Millenials' Workplace Challenges and Global Market Trends. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration*. https://iajournals.org/articles/iajhrba_v4_i3_436_452.pdf
- KNMI. (2024). *Over het KNMI*. <https://www.knmi.nl/over-het-knmi/over>
- Lely. (2024). *Over Lely*. <https://www.lely.com/nl/over-lely/>
- Li, F., Larimo, J., & Leonidou, L. C. (2021). Social media marketing strategy: definition, conceptualization, taxonomy, validation, and future agenda. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 49:51-70. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11747-020-00733-3>
- Mashiah, I. (2021). "Come and join us": How tech brands use source, message, and target audience strategies to attract employees. *Journal of High Technology Management Research*, Volume 32, Issue 2. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hitech.2021.100418>.
- Mude, G., & Undale, S. (2023). Social Media Usage: A Comparison Between Generation Y and Generation Z in India. *International Journal of E-Business Research*, vol.19, no.1: pp.1-20. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4018/IJEER.317889>
- Parsons, T. (2016). Recruitment Marketing Trends Changing Talent. *Talent Culture*.
- Payne, E. M., Peltier, J. W., & Barger, V. A. (2017). Omni-channel marketing, integrated marketing communications and consumer engagement: A research agenda. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 11 No. 2, pp. 185-197. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-08-2016-0091>
- Peter, K., Izsák, T., & Vasa, L. (2020). Attitudes of Z generations to job searching through social media. *Economics and Sociology*, 13(4):227-240. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14254/2071-789X.2020/13-4/14>
- Rajagopalan, D., & Baral, R. (2023). Relationship between integrated communication effectiveness and employee-based brand equity -mediating role of psychological contract fulfillment. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-01-2019-2212>

Rzemieniak, M., & Wawer, M. (2021). Employer Branding in the Context of the Company's Sustainable Development Strategy from the Perspective of Gender Diversity of Generation Z. *Sustainability*, 13(2):828. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su13020828>

S[&]T. (2024). S[&]T: <http://www.stcorp.nl>

S[&]T. (2024). *About us*. S[&]T: <http://www.stcorp.nl/about-us>

S[&]T. (2024). *High-Tech Consulting*. <https://www.stcorp.nl/hightech-consulting>

SLA. (2024). *SLA*. <https://ilovesla.com/>

SRON Netherlands Institute for Space Research. (2024). *Role of the institute* . <https://www.sron.nl/>

Technische Universiteit Delft. (2024). *Over TU Delft*. <https://www.tudelft.nl/>

Thang, N. N., Dung, M. V., Rowley, C., & Bach, M. P. (2022). Generation Z job seekers' expectations and their job pursuit intention: Evidence from transition and emerging economy. *International Journal of Engineering Business Management*, 1-13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/18479790221112548>

Theodora, N. (2021). Relationship Between Integrated Marketing Communication and Brand Equity. *International Journal of Social Science and Business*, 5(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.23887/ijssb.v5i2.33782>

TNO. (2024). *TNO: Innovation for life*. <https://www.tno.nl/en/about-tno/>

Wallaroo Media. (2024). *TikTok Statistics – Updated May 2024*. <https://wallaroomedia.com/blog/social-media/tiktok-statistics/>