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Finding a suitable identity strategy for an emerging business sector platform

- The Mushroom Valley Case -



MSc. Graduation Thesis

Research report on the network characteristics and internal drivers of an emerging business sector network in order to derive an identity strategy.

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Preface

In front of you is my graduation thesis for the Master Management, Economics and Consumer Studies at Wageningen University. This research includes a qualitative and quantitative view on the network characteristics and internal drivers of an emerging business sector platform.

This graduation thesis is the final piece of an interdisciplinary study and provided me with more knowledge about my preferences for the work field. I have conducted this research with much pleasure. Combining literature study and collecting case specific data from a quantitative survey and qualitative interviews have given me the opportunity to include multiple interest and skills in one research. Thanks to this research I have improved my critical attitude, research skills and business knowledge in a short period of time. It has been a very instructive period during which I have needed and improved the skills I have learned during my study.

I would like to thank everyone who helped and supported me during the process. I would like to specially thank my supervisor Jos Bijman for his time, great guidance and critical opinion. I would also like to thank Annemarie Groot Kormelinck and Jacques Trienekens as contributors to this research. Finally, I would like to thank the management and members of Mushroom Valley for their time and cooperation in the survey and interviews.

I wish you much pleasure in reading this report.

Anne Vrolijk

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Executive Summary

Background: Partnerships are seen as an effective way of overcoming market imperfections. They allow combining resources in order to tackle larger projects, or multi-faceted projects, than would be possible for an individual member. By doing this, partnerships provide multiple advantages related to resource availability, achieving complementarity, avoiding wasteful repetition of resources and legitimacy and contribute to an individual organization's effectiveness and efficiency. Business sector platforms are a type of such partnership. It is known that a partnership consists of (1) development as well as (2) delivery of a strategy or a set of projects or operations. This means that for new platforms or partnerships, an identity strategy is one of the factors of success as well. The way members in the network respond to these opportunities depends on the phase in the network life-cycle they are in. Emerging sector platforms and business networks with more business oriented objectives are less visible in this set of researches and form a research gap. This research will focus on business sector platforms in the defining stage. Mushroom Valley Foundation, a young sector platform in the south of the Netherlands which lacks an true and unambiguous identity strategy, will function as a case. This paper tries to close the knowledge gap regarding suitable identity strategies for emerging business sector platforms, by studying different network characteristics and internal drivers of success within the case platform.

Objective: The aim of this research is to (1) describe the current network of Mushroom Valley, (2) explore the network characteristics and internal drivers of platform Mushroom Valley, and (3) create three scenarios that show suitable directions for new identity strategies for Mushroom Valley. The central research question therefore is: What is a suitable identity strategy for emerging business sector platform Mushroom Valley, based on network characteristics and internal drivers?

Method: This research follows a descriptive, qualitative and quantitative design. Four types of data collection methods are used, known as; (1) literature review, (2) desk research, (3) survey and (4) seven semi-structured interviews. Interviews are conducted with six different members within Mushroom Valley and one 'field expert' of the sector. The combination of data collected from literature and interviews, has formed a knowledge base which was necessary to analyse the process and answer the research questions. For this reason there were iterative loops of data collection and data analysis.

Results: Mushroom Valley is a heterogeneous network with a wide range of objectives. Members are interested in positioning the mushroom through the platform, as well as start innovation processes. However, the mushroom sector is not easy to move and business sensitivity is a big issue. The loyalty towards the platform is high, but this does not yet result in proud expression of the membership.

Conclusion: Some important conclusions of the research are;

1. Involve growers into the network of Mushroom Valley.
2. Leave the regional way of thinking behind and focus on the Netherlands as one.
3. Address responsibility of members, together you are the network.

In order to create a new identity strategy, Mushroom Valley has to choose which direction it wants to follow. Doing everything is no longer an option. This research suggested three scenarios; (1) focus on reputation management, (2) facilitate innovation or (3) form a bridge between education and the work field.

Keywords: Network, Emerging platforms, Mushrooms, Sector, Identity strategy

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1. Introduction

This chapter introduced the topic of, and need for, this research. After discussing the background information, a problem statement is formulated. Section 1.3 describes three research objectives which result in a set of research questions in Section 1.4.

1.1. Background

This paper addresses the importance of the members in guiding emerging business sector platforms. Where platforms are created in order to dynamically respond to emerging market opportunities (Carneiro, Almeida, Azevedo, Kankaanpaa, & Shamsuzzoha, 2010), it are the members that are key in successfully managing the process (McQuaid, 2000).

Business sector platforms are a type of partnership. Several researches emphasize the strengths of partnerships and networks. Partnerships are seen as an effective way of overcoming market imperfections. They allow combining resources in order to tackle larger projects, or multi-facetted projects, than would be possible for an individual member. By doing this, partnerships provide multiple advantages related to resource availability, achieving complementarity, avoiding wasteful repetition of resources and legitimacy (McQuaid, 2000) and contribute to an individual organization's effectiveness and efficiency (Webb, 1991). On top of that, partnerships improve sympathy and knowledge about partner organizations. It may cause the individual member to lose full control over its own resources, but in return will give the individual also more influence over a larger, more differentiating, set of resources (McQuaid, 2000).

However, collaborations bring along a set of difficulties as well. The process of partnerships is generally classified as 'slow and painful', due to the trouble various partners have to agree on actions and responsibilities (Huxham & Vangen, 2002). Merging public and private management practices and visions within one partnership, or a partnership without a clear contract, may cause troubles over time (McQuaid, 1994, 2000).

In order to overcome these difficulties and fully utilize the strengths of partnerships, it is important to recognize a clear and unambiguous *corporate identity*. A corporate identity refers to an organizations unique characteristics, which are imbedded in the behaviour of members of the organization (Riel & Balmer, 1997). The central question in this is 'what do you want to BE' instead of 'what do you want to ACHIEVE'. The gap that is created between the actual and desired corporate identity, can be narrowed through arranging the corporate identity set of communications, symbolism and behaviour (Riel & Balmer, 1997).

In order to pursue the desired corporate identity, it is urgent to create a strategy that is aligned with the current corporate identity. What 'identity' and 'strategy' have in common is that it connects individuals to an organisation, by both enabling and constraining them. "Identity refers to an organization's central, distinctive, and enduring character, typically anchored to its mission, whereas strategy refers to an organization's objectives and the activities intended to achieve them" (Ashforth & Mael, 1996, p. 19). An identity can serve as source or origin for a strategy.

According to theory, multiple factors can influence corporate reputation and network performance (Snehota & Hakansson, 1995). This research focusses on a set of influences of partnerships and is built on the idea that members act intentionally by applying means in order to achieve ends. These ends can vary from earning money to more reputation oriented objectives (Riel & Balmer, 1997). The central question in this is what is important for the member? *Network characteristics like (historical) roots, communication- and network structure, and internal drivers like objectives and expectations of members* are important influences of partnership success (Carroll & Steane, 2000; Cots, 2011; Freeman,

Wicks, & Parmar, 2004; McQuaid, 2000; Provan & Kenis, 2007; Riel & Balmer, 1997; Rowley, 1997). By correctly managing these influencers in the corporate identity strategy, a constructive reputation with platform stakeholders can be established and the tendency to invest in the platform will increase (Balmer, 1995b; van Riel, 1995).

The way members in the network respond to opportunities depends on the phase in the network life-cycle (Carneiro et al., 2010) they are in and emphasizes the theoretical and managerial relevance of understanding the different phases of business sector platforms. It is known that a partnership consists of (1) development as well as (2) delivery of a strategy or a set of projects or operations, even though each partner may not be equally involved in all stages (McQuaid, 2000). This means that especially for *emerging platforms* or partnerships, an identity strategy is one of the key factors to success.

This research will focus on business sector platforms in the defining stage. The case used to retrieve more knowledge regarding emerging business sector platforms is Mushroom Valley. Mushroom Valley is a young business platform, focussed on the mushroom sector in the area 'Horst aan de Maas', in the south of the Netherlands. The platform, originated in April 2017, is still in the defining stage. The management of Mushroom Valley is aware of the importance of having a true and unambiguous identity strategy. However, the wide variety of members in the platform, makes it hard for the management to retrieve their corporate identity and create a suitable identity strategy.

Mushroom Valley

In the beginning of the 19th century, mushrooms cultivation found its way in the province of Limburg. Over the years, a more matured industry started to emerge in the 1950s. By constructing growing rooms and conserving the mushrooms, the cultivated mushroom sector expanded. The founding of Mushroom Growing Association (Champignonkwekersvereniging) and the establishment of Mushroom Experimental Station (Proefstation) boosted the education and research regarding mushrooms in the region. Over time, this has resulted in the origin of the Trade College for Mushroom Growing (Vakschool voor Champignonteelt) and the opening of a new, larger Experimental Station. Both acquired a global reputation over the past years (Mushroom Valley, n.d.-b).

The infrastructure of the mushroom chain has continued to show strong growth and the name Horst is acknowledged as a mark of quality by the international mushroom world. "The mushroom sector therefore continues to play a role today that is of immense economic significance for the region" (Mushroom Valley, n.d.-b). To secure the leading position for the future, the municipality of Horst aan de Maas started researching the possibilities of developing a platform within the sector; a platform aimed at safeguarding the economic activity built up historically in this region. In 2017, more than 20 companies active as different relations in the mushroom sector chain, combined their strengths. This resulted in Mushroom Valley, an international platform for the mushroom growing sector, to promote the potential and strengths of mushrooms on a global scale by combining expertise, resources, products and technology. Globally, around 80% of players active in the mushroom sector already benefit from the expertise, raw materials and technology supplied by partners of the platform (Mushroom Valley, n.d.-c).

The ambition of Mushroom Valley is to, together with all partners, generate new insights regarding research, education and development of the mushroom sector. This ambition is translated to a couple objective, which can be divided into six themes (Mushroom Valley, n.d.-a); (1) Profiling and positioning, (2) Education and employment, (3) Practical research, (4) Creating a network of ambassadors, (5) Developing a database, and (6) The market. The mission statement and its elaboration can be found in figure 1.

The mission statement of Mushroom Valley:

"Mushroom Valley is aimed at serving as a catalyst for the operational management of all mushroom-related activities in the Horst aan de Maas region and its wide environment" (Mushroom Valley, 2017).

WHAT

"A joint venture (platform) of breeding, suppliers, technology, growers, processors, government and knowledge institutions from the region Horst aan de Maas and surroundings, in the field of mushrooms; Called Mushroom Valley" (Mushroom Valley, 2017).

HOW

"By joining forces and knowledge, by working together. Together you are stronger." (Mushroom Valley, 2017)

WHY

"Together we can preserve and strengthen the built-up economic position of the mushroom industry and with that also the region Horst on the Maas and surroundings. By joining forces we can continue to research, innovate and share knowledge in our region, so that we remain pioneers worldwide in the mushroom sector, also in the future." (Mushroom Valley, 2017).

Figure 1 - Mission statement Mushroom Valley (2017)

In the ambition statement (2017), Mushroom Valley expresses multiple objectives related to profiling and positioning, collaborating with education and securing knowledge, and practical research. The elaboration of these objectives can be found in Appendix 8.2.

The platform is managed by project manager Jan Janssen, from integrated business consultancy company Brendaris. The complete management of the platform works part-time and together fulfill around two fte. The management is aware of the fact that developing a suitable identity strategy is key in order to develop the platform further and create a sustainable sector platform with long term objectives.

However, the diversity of partners suggest a wide variety in objectives and expectations. Combining these with the network characteristics (historical) roots, communication- and network structure, is hard for the platform. The current mission statement and objectives set by the platform are broad, ambiguous and make members wonder what the added value of the platform is and/or should be. The urge for creating an identity strategy that will fully utilize their network capabilities is growing.

Although there is considerable research on different types of partnerships - e.g. business networks (Todeva, 2006) and public-private partnerships (Carroll & Steane, 2000) – most of these researches describe partnerships which' objectives vary upon policy making and urban development, to fulfilling purely financial business opportunities. Much of these researches conducted over the last couple of years is done after societal problems, policy making or urban development (e.g. Jeavons, 1992; McQuaid, 2000; Nel, 2017; Paton, 1996). However, emerging sector platforms and business networks with more business oriented objectives are less visible in this set of researches and form a research gap. What are suitable identity strategies for these emerging business sector platforms in order to grow into a future-proof, matured platform?

1.2. Problem statement

As a result of research conducted over the last decades, a lot is known about partnerships and networks. Every partnership has the potential for synergy; 'the sum is greater than then the parts' (McQuaid, 2000). However, depending on the type of partnerships they can bring along some disadvantages or noteworthy risks as well. The process of partnerships is generally classified as 'slow and painful', due to the trouble various partners have to agree on actions and responsibilities (Huxham & Vangen, 2002). In order to overcome these difficulties and fully utilize the strengths of partnerships, it is important to recognize a clear and unambiguous corporate identity. By creating a strategy that is fully aligned with the identity of the network, a desired corporate identity can be created. Various influences of partnership success are indicated by former research, e.g. roots, objectives and expectations of members, the communication- and network structure (Carroll & Steane, 2000; Cots, 2011; Freeman et al., 2004; McQuaid, 2000; Provan & Kenis, 2007; Riel & Balmer, 1997; Rowley, 1997).

However, not all networks succeed in recognizing their corporate identity and creating a suitable strategy. Merging public and private management practices and visions within one partnership, or a partnership without a clear contract, may cause troubles over time (McQuaid, 1994, 2000). At the moment, business sector platform Mushroom Valley has passed its first anniversary. After a year of compiling a network, the question (from members) is rising what Mushroom Valley is going to do next. A true and unambiguous identity strategy is lacking for this platform.

This paper tries to close the knowledge gap regarding suitable identity strategies for emerging business sector platforms, by studying different network characteristics and internal drivers of success within the case platform. This paper makes three important contributions to the literature of network theory and/or management practices; (1) a description of the current network of Mushroom Valley, (2) insight in the network characteristics and internal drivers of emerging business sector platform Mushroom Valley, and (3) three scenarios that show suitable directions for new identity strategies for the platform. By doing this research, more knowledge regarding business sector platforms has been generated, which will contribute to the set of theories about general network and platform theories that is already out. The use of stakeholder theory can provide insights into available opportunities and critical boundaries created by (key) stakeholders towards the realization of inter-organizational collaboration (Wubben & Isakhanyan, 2011).

1.3. Research objectives

As discussed above, the research objectives of this paper are:

1. To *describe* the current network of Mushroom Valley.
2. To *explore* the network characteristics and internal drivers of platform Mushroom Valley, based on scientific perspectives and empirical data.
3. To *create* three *scenarios* that show suitable directions for new identity strategies for Mushroom Valley.

1.4. Research questions

From the above mentioned research objectives, the main research question is derived. The main research question of this paper is:

What is a suitable identity strategy for emerging business sector platform Mushroom Valley, based on network characteristics and internal drivers?

In order to answer the main research question, the following sub research questions have been formulated:

1. What are network characteristics of business sector platform Mushroom Valley?

- a. Who are the members of platform Mushroom Valley?
- b. What are the rights and obligations of members of Mushroom Valley?
 - i. What are requirements to become member?
 - ii. What (financial) investments are required from members?
 - iii. What does the platform offer their members?
- c. Which *network structure* is present in the platform?
- d. What is the function of the *geographic location* of the network for the platform and its members?
- e. How is the communication internally and externally arranged and valued by its members?

2. What are internal drivers of emerging business sector platform Mushroom Valley?

- a. What are the *objectives* of members to join the platform?
- b. What are the *expectations* of members towards the platform?
- c. What are the *expectations* of members towards the management of the platform?
- d. What is the *willingness to invest* of members in the platform?

3. What are examples of well-functioning business sector platforms?

- a. What does literature say about the influence of objectives and expectations on network functioning?
- b. How does the mushroom sector landscape look like for Mushroom Valley?
- c. What are examples of comparable sector platforms?

4. Based on network characteristics and internal drivers, which future scenarios are suitable for emerging business sector platform Mushroom Valley?

2. Literature review

In this chapter prior scientific researches regarding corporate identities, influencers of sector networks and partnerships will be discussed. This will result in a research framework in Section 2.2 and a theoretical framework in Section 2.3. To finalize this chapter, the key concepts and definitions will be presented.

2.1. Prior research

Corporate Identity

Literature provides us with a wide variety of understandings of what is meant by corporate identity (Bernstein, 1986; Chajet, 1989; Schultz, Tannenbaum, & Lauterborn, 1994). According to the Cambridge dictionary, corporate means "*shared by a whole group and not just a single member*" ("Corporate," n.d.). This paper is focussing on networks in sector platforms. In networks, a group of individual identities together create a new corporate identity. Three main developments in this area found in literature are (1) the graphic design paradigm, (2) integrated communication paradigm and lastly (3) the interdisciplinary paradigm. All three paradigms tend to follow a separate line of development. However, more and more these different understandings are combined into one multidisciplinary approach (Balmer, 1994, 1995b, 1995a; van Rekom, 1993; van Riel, 1995). The three different paths will be discussed in the next paragraph.

The graphic design paradigm finds its origin in organizational terminology, logos, the company house style and visual identification. This focus on effectiveness of visual and marketing communications, initiated the discussion whether there should be consistency in formal corporate communication too (Riel & Balmer, 1997). Multiple researchers argue that (managing) the corporate communication set is completely different from, and more complicated than, the marketing communication set (Bernstein, 1986; Grunig, 1992). The understanding of corporate identity nowadays has slowly extended and is now recognized as the way in which an organization's identity is exposed through behaviour, communications, as well as through symbolism to internal and external viewers (Riel & Balmer, 1997).

However, these different paradigms made both academics and consultants realize that creating a unambiguous definition of identity can be tricky (Riel & Balmer, 1997). For this reason, the International Corporate Identity Group (ICIG) has decided to not come up with a definition of corporate identity, but solely give a statement about the multidisciplinary nature of the area. The complete "Strathclyde Statement" can be found in Appendix 8.1. The definition comes down to the fact that a corporate identity refers to an organization's unique characteristics. These characteristics are imbedded in the behaviour of members of the organization. Amongst others - Balmer (1994, 1995b, 1995a), van Rekom (1993) and van Riel (1995) - argue that managing an organization's identity is of strategic importance which requires a multidisciplinary approach. The gap that is created between the actual and desired corporate identity, can be narrowed through arranging the corporate identity set of communications, symbolism and behaviour.

Corporate identity management (CIM)

In this paper, identity strategy can be seen as a set of activities to reach set future objectives (strategy) which is based on the essential characteristics of the network (identity). The central question in this is 'what do you want to BE' instead of 'what do you want to ACHIEVE'. By recognizing the true identity of the platform, a suitable strategy can be created. Without a clear identity, it is unclear whether a strategy suits the members and origin of the platform. By correctly managing the corporate identity, a constructive

reputation with a platform stakeholders can be established and the tendency to invest in the platform will increase (Balmer, 1995b; van Riel, 1995). Early research proofed a positive correlation between a good reputation and an organizations competitive advantage (e.g. Caves & Porter, 1977; Fombrun & Schanley, 1990; Klein & Leffler, 1981). In order to acquire a constructive corporate reputation which will result in improved organizational performance, multiple aspects should be taken into account while managing corporate identity: the (historical) roots, the personality, the corporate strategy and the three facets of the corporate identity set (behaviour of members, communication and symbolism) (Riel & Balmer, 1997). Besides this, reputation and performance are influence by their environment. This environment is a mix of competitor behaviour, stakeholders and/or customers, and regulation (Riel & Balmer, 1997). Figure 2 is retrieved from van Riel and Balder (1997) and shows the relation between corporate identity formation, reputation and organizational performance.

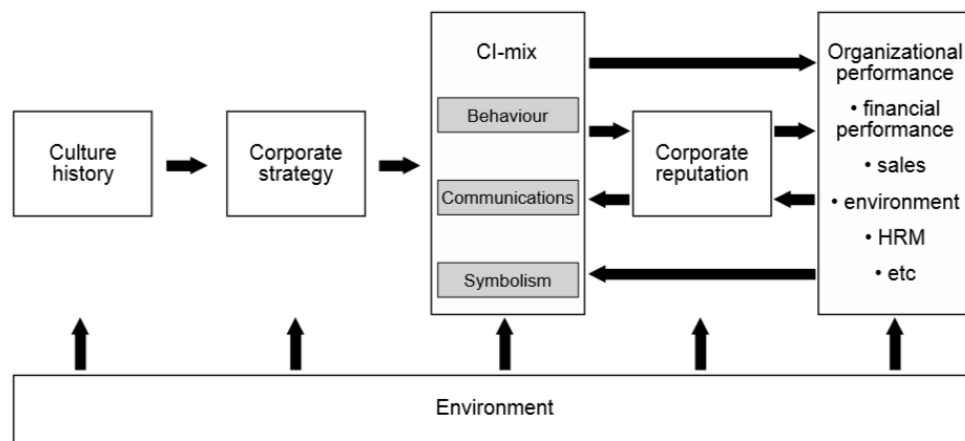


Figure 2 - Interaction between corporate identity formation, reputation, improvement and organizational performance (retrieved from van Riel & Balder, 1997)

Determining a corporate identity

A partnership is the outcome of an interaction process where members develop over time and reach a common objective and commitment. For that reason, partnerships should be looked at considering different variables (Snehota & Hakansson, 1995). This research focusses on a set of influences of partnerships and is built on the idea that members act intentionally by applying means in order to achieve ends. These ends can vary from earning money to more reputation oriented objectives. The central question in this is what is important for the member? By asking this question directly, the underlying values of decisions and preferences become clear. The objective of this question is to describe the behaviour of members and expose significant insights about the main values of individual members (Riel & Balmer, 1997).

According to prior research, network aspects, objectives and expectations are important influencers of partnership success (Carroll & Steane, 2000; Freeman et al., 2004; McQuaid, 2000). It is known that a partnership consists of (1) development as well as (2) delivery of a strategy or a set of projects or operations, even though each partner may not be equally involved in all stages (McQuaid, 2000). This means that for new platforms or partnerships, an identity strategy is one of the factors of success as well. The way members in the network respond to these opportunities depends to the phase in the network life-cycle (Carneiro et al., 2010) they are in and emphasizes the theoretical and managerial relevance of understanding the different phases of business sector platforms.

Carroll and Steane (2000) elaborate on the important role that *expectations* of members towards the benefits of partnerships serve. They motivate members to joint discussions about forming a partnership in order to achieve objectives that would not be feasible for individual companies. By having certain beliefs in a partnership, a basis formed for the agreement, which will help the partnership shape. Insights about appropriate and tolerated behaviour will form a norm for the partnership. Lastly, altering beliefs can function as a change agent when set objectives are no longer adequate. Values and ideology of an agent that are openly shared, influence motivations, beliefs, norms of behaviour and new expectations regarding the partnership. However, there is a lack of empirical data available concerning the questions how partners' expectations precisely impact partnerships.

The specific *objectives* of stakeholders in an inter-organizational network are studied by the means of stakeholder theory. Stakeholders are any groups or individuals who can influence and who are affected by a business (Freeman & Reed, 1983; Freeman et al., 2004). Stakeholder theory proposes that objectives drive the stakeholders behavior (Freeman et al., 2004) and that the consideration of (key) stakeholder objectives in strategies raises the chances of resolving business related challenges (Parmar, Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, & De Colle, 2010). By researching the specific objectives of stakeholders, the future directions of the business can be studied (Freeman, Harrison, & Wicks, 2007).

The common objective of a partnership is often multifaceted, which requires a joint response from a set of private and public key members in order to be effective and efficient (McQuaid, 2000). Economic, social, innovative and other problems are often interrelated, overlapping and mutually reinforcing. This makes that solutions aimed at one aspect of the complete system have lower success rates, due to the counteracting impacts of other factors. In public-private partnerships, the public sector is not chasing purely commercial objectives (social partnership) (McQuaid, 2000). Heterogeneity may arouse conflicts due to dissimilar objectives (Fadeeva, 2004) and can increase the risk of conflicts and opportunistic behaviour creating less reliable relations (Gulati, 1995; Powell, Koput, & Smith-Doerr, 1996). This may cause potential difficulties for new platforms. However, heterogeneity may also provide opportunities by combining diverse but complementary resources (Beckman & Haunschild, 2002; Corsaro, Cantù, & Tunisini, 2012). Creating an alignment of stakes between heterogeneous stakeholders and tackling (potential) conflicts requires additional resources (Fadeeva, 2004; Freeman et al., 2007; Lozano, 2007). A platform management can diminish conflicting objectives and create added value for all stakeholders (Parmar et al., 2010), but should also be aware that it may increase this conflicting objectives unintentionally.

Expectations and objectives are internal drivers that members have in order to join the platform. By also including the *willingness of investment* in this research, a more complete picture can be created and conclusions about the feasibility of these objectives and expectations can be drawn. This research focuses on the identity of the platform. Since a network identity is derived from multiple individual identities, it is more important to focus on the internal drivers than on the external drivers for this case. The external drivers are for this reason left outside the scope of this research.

In order to understand the functioning of inter-organizational networks, it is important to consider the *network structure*, including the governance of the network. With functioning of a network, the process by which certain network conditions lead to numerous outcomes on network-level is meant (Provan & Kenis, 2007). It is important to understand this process since only then network outcomes can be explained (Provan & Kenis, 2007; Ahuja, 2000). Organizational network theory enables clarifying social and behavioral phenomena at network level by looking at these relations between organizations and analysing the complex structures of these organizational relations (Bergenholtz & Waldstrøm, 2011; Borgatti & Foster, 2003; Provan, Fish, & Sydow, 2007). Since business sector platform

Mushroom Valley includes members that serve different social levels - e.g. public, business and science - it is important to take these types of relationships into account as well (Nel, 2017; Todeva, 2006). Network theory claims that relations in a network can shape the network structures and enable or disable the formation of new relations to reach individual and/or mutual objectives (Borgatti, Mehra, Brass, & Labianca, 2009; Salancik, 1995). Understanding inter-organizational relations at network level is considered of great value, since the network perspective can provide insights into network level dynamics not that might not be noticeable at dyadic level (Cots, 2011; Rowley, 1997).

According to de Man (2004) members of a network can fulfill three different positions in the network, known as group member, bridge, and orchestrator. Group members are equal partners in a network, who have relationships with all other partners in the network. The advantages of this position may be clear; due to short lines between members there is timely access to information and knowledge, specialization can be relatively high, and the relationships are considered reliable. However, with this many equal partners dependency might be a threat for the network. Also entering the network is difficult for new partners and the network is vulnerable to competence destroying innovation or replacement. Bridges are institutions who are located between two unconnected members in the network. This will enable access to a variety of information and knowledge, hedge risks and will limit the number of alliances that need to be managed. This network position however also brings along low trust and commitment, which often will result in limited exchange of key information. Lastly, orchestrators are core partners in the network. This position in the network provides the best access to information and the ability to withhold cooperation. One member is held responsible and will carry a large share of the management burden (de Man, 2004).

Networks are no legal entities and imperative governance – as is common for organizations - is often lacking. This makes that networks are considered to differ in their structural patterns of relations (Provan & Kenis, 2007). Provan and Kenis (2007) have determined three types of network governance:

1. Shared participant governance is governed by the network members, with no distinct and unique authority entity. These kind of networks are highly decentralized, needing (almost) all members of the network to interact on a fairly equal basis in the process of governance and take responsibility for managing internal and external relationships as well as operations.
2. Since this decentralized type of governance can be time consuming and inefficient, many networks are guided by a lead organization. This more centralized governance structure often occurs in vertical buyer-supplier relationships when there is a single powerful member and several weaker players in the network. The powerful member in the chain then coordinates all network-level activities and key decisions, in order to achieve network objectives. These network objectives are often affiliated with the objectives of the lead organization. Asymmetrical power is characteristic for this type of network.
3. The last type of network governance is Network Administrative Organization (NAO). This structure is based on the idea that a separate administrative entity is set up specifically to govern the network and its activities. Despite the centralized lead, members are still actively interacting with each other. The big difference with the lead organization model is that the NAO is no member organization of the network with its own individual objectives or targets. The network is externally governed through mandate or by the members, for the single objective of network governance (Provan & Kenis, 2007).

Table 1 provides an overview of the three governance structures indicated by Provan and Kenis (2007) with their key predictors of network functioning.

Key Predictors of Effectiveness of Network Governance Forms

Governance Forms	Trust	Number of Participants	Goal Consensus	Need for Network-Level Competencies
Shared governance	High density	Few	High	Low
Lead organization	Low density, highly centralized	Moderate number	Moderately low	Moderate
Network administrative organization	Moderate density, NAO monitored by members	Moderate to many	Moderately high	High

Table 1 - Key predictors of Effectiveness of Network Governance (derived from Provan and Kenis, 2007)

In order to acquire a constructive corporate reputation which will result in improved organizational performance, multiple aspects should be taken into account while managing corporate identity including the (historical) roots (Riel & Balmer, 1997). The case platform is *geographical located* based on historic reasons. This is supposed to be an essential element of the platform and will be included in this research.

As discussed in the beginning of this section, multiple researchers argue that (managing) the *corporate communication set* is a way to expose an organization's identity (Bernstein, 1986; Grunig, 1992). The gap that is created between the actual and desired corporate identity, can be narrowed through arranging the corporate identity set of communications, symbolism and behaviour. For this reason this corporate communication set is included in this research.

These three concepts - network structure, geographic location and the corporate communication set – together are characteristics that are network specific.

2.2. Research framework

Verschuren and Doorewaard (2010, p.16) define a research framework as “a schematic representation of the most important research phases”. This framework provides the steps that need to be taken in order to achieve the research objectives. Table 2 shows the research framework for this research.

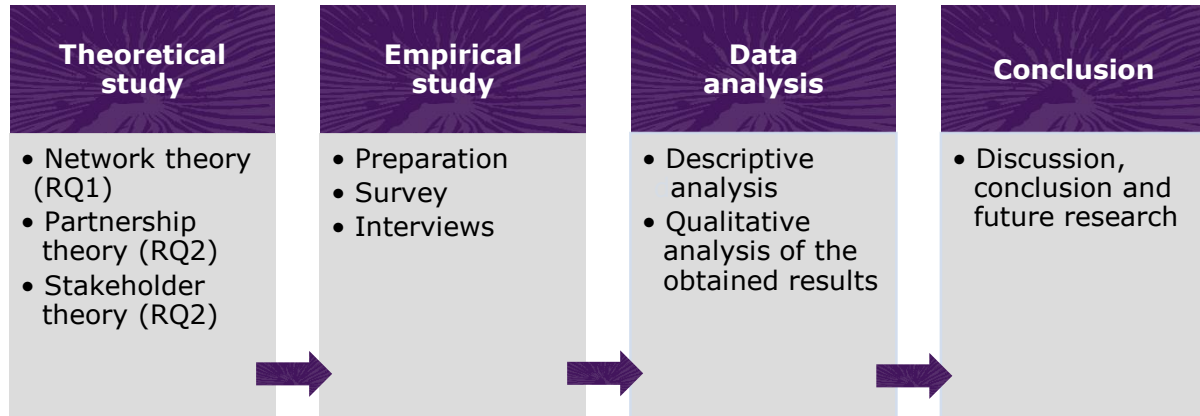


Table 2 - Research framework

2.3. Theoretical framework

According to Verschuren and Dorrewaard (2010), a theoretical framework is a theoretical framework which contains a set of presumed relationships between the key concepts of the research.

Figure 3 provides the theoretical framework of this research. The researcher assumes that utilizing strengths of network characteristics and internal drivers of an emerging business sector platform that are discussed in Section 2.1, has a positive effect on the different scenarios that show the consequences of identity strategies for emerging platforms. In several studies (Huxham & Vangen, 2002; McQuaid, 1994, 2000) indicators influencing the success of a partnerships are described. The indicators used in this research are network structure, geographic location, corporate communication set, objectives, expectations and the willingness to invest.

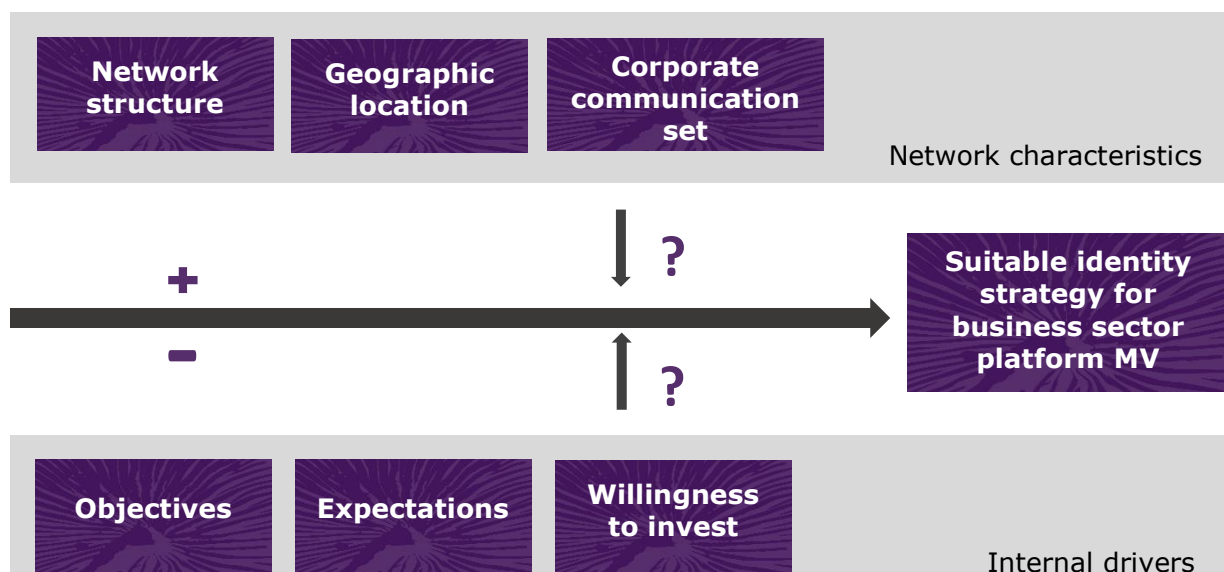


Figure 3 - Theoretical framework

2.4. Key concepts and definitions

In this section the key concepts are discussed to define their meaning in this research. Figure 4 provides a schematic overview of the how the concepts network, relationship, member and platform relate to each other.

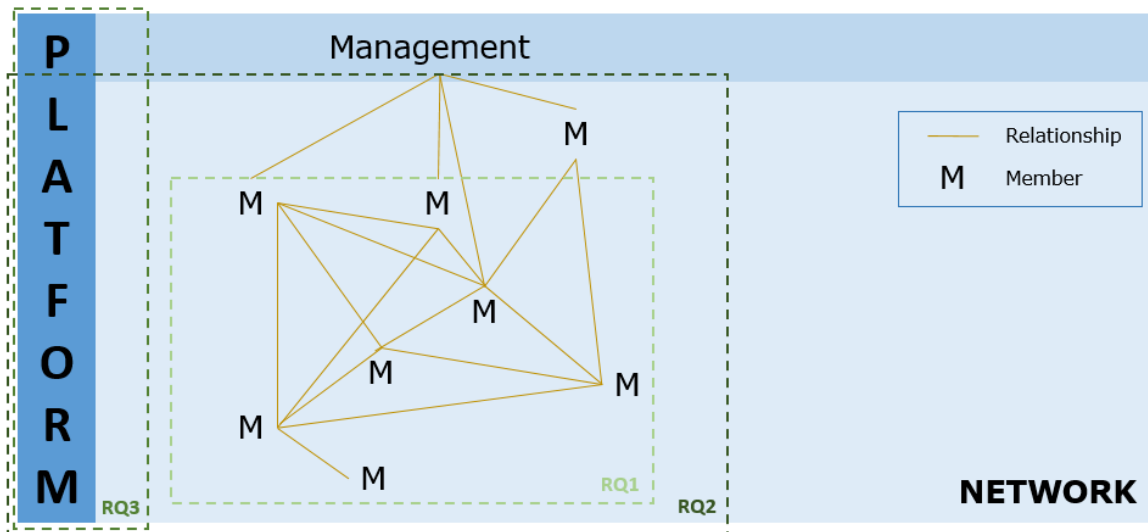


Figure 4 - Graphical representation of the different concepts used

Business network

With a *network* the “emergent system of relationships between self-organising members” is meant (Todeva, 2006). They involve (self-organising) members who collaborate and develop joint objectives together (Giroux & Suter, 2010; Todeva, 2006). *Business networks* can be seen as interlinked resources, activities and members. Their social structure of ties facilitates relationships and interactions between individual firms and business members (Todeva, 2006).

Business network relationship

A *relationship* is defined as an developing property of the connection between members (Holm, Eriksson, & Johanson, 1999; Todeva, 2006). A *partnership* is a special form of a business relationship. In this paper the term partnership denotes the long-lasting cooperation between two business partners for an exchange of resources (Holm et al., 1999). From an economic development viewpoint, partnership can be defined as a structure with participation or funding from more than one agency (Sellgren, 1990). A more overarching definition comes by Carroll and Steane (2000): “Partnerships are cooperative ventures that rely upon agreement between members in return for some positive outcome for each participant which could be some economic or social objective or potential for synergy”. This definition raises the questions; who are the members in the partnerships and what are the needs of these agencies in order to reach an agreement? The spectrum of (public-private) partnerships may contain multiple different relations; from governments, business, voluntary organisations and non-profit sector, to the local community (Osborne, 2002). Partnerships are seen as an effective way of overcoming market imperfections. They allow combining resources in order to tackle larger projects, or multi-faceted projects, than would be possible for an individual member. By doing this, partnerships provide multiple advantages related to resource availability, achieving complementarity, avoiding wasteful repetition of resources and legitimacy (McQuaid, 2000) and contribute to an individual organization’s effectiveness and efficiency (Webb, 1991). On top of that, partnerships improve sympathy and knowledge about partner organizations. It may cause the individual member to lose full control over its own resources, but in return will give the individual also more influence over a larger, more differentiating, set of resources (McQuaid, 2000).

Partnerships are the result of a set of specific historical, economic, social and political aspects. However, there are also some common trends that drive partnerships. Fluctuating global economic patterns, government funding and changing economic structures are influencing the nature of partnerships. Above all partnerships between private organizations and (quasi-)public and/or public agencies are affected by these trends (McQuaid, 1994, 1999; Weaver & Dennert, 1987). It is known that a partnership consists of (1) development as well as (2) delivery of a strategy or a set of projects or operations.

Business sector platform

Business sector platforms are a type of partnership. In this report, *business sector platform* is defined as the business network of members including the management that governs the platform. Where platforms are created in order to dynamically respond to emerging market opportunities (Carneiro et al., 2010), it are the members that are key in successfully managing the process (McQuaid, 2000). All members of the platform are linked to one specific business sector. For the case used in this research - Mushroom Valley - all members are related to the mushroom sector.

Corporate Identity

A *corporate identity* refers to an organizations unique characteristics. These characteristics are imbedded in the behaviour of members of the organization. Amongst others - Balmer (1994, 1995b, 1995a), van Rekom (1993) and van Riel (1995) - argue that managing an organization's identity is of strategic importance which requires a multidisciplinary approach. The gap that is created between the actual and desired corporate identity, can be narrowed through arranging the corporate identity set of communications, symbolism and behaviour.

Identity strategy

It is known that a partnership consists of (1) development as well as (2) delivery of a strategy or a set of projects or operations, even though each partner may not be equally involved in all stages (McQuaid, 2000). This means that for new platforms or partnerships, an *identity strategy* is one of the factors of success as well.

What *identity* and *strategy* have in common is that it connects individuals to an organisation, by both enabling and constraining them. "Identity refers to an organization's central, distinctive, and enduring character, typically anchored to its mission, whereas strategy refers to an organization's objectives and the activities intended to achieve them" (Ashforth & Mael, 1996, p. 19). An identity can serve as source or origin for a strategy. In this paper, identity strategy can be seen as a set of activities to reach set future objectives (strategy) which is based on the essential characteristics of the network (identity). The central question in this is 'what do you want to BE' instead of 'what do you want to ACHIEVE'. By recognizing the true identity of the platform, a suitable strategy can be created. Without a clear identity, it is unclear whether a strategy suits the members and origin of the platform.

Internal drivers

This research focuses on the identity of the platform. Since a network identity is derived from multiple individual identities, it is more important to focus on the internal drivers than on the external drivers for this case. The external drivers are for this reason left outside the scope of this research.

Expectations and objectives are internal drivers that members have in order to join the platform. With *expectations* the anticipated outcomes or directions of the platform are meant. Expectations of members serve an important role towards the benefits of partnerships. They motivate members to joint discussions about forming a partnership in order to achieve objectives that would not be feasible for individual companies. By having

certain believes in a partnership, a basis is formed for the agreement, which will help the partnership shape. Insights about appropriate and tolerated behaviour will form a norm for the partnership. Lastly, altering beliefs can function as a change agent when set objectives are no longer adequate.

With *objective* the (strategic) reasons for agencies to engage in the partnership are meant. Each partnership has its own characteristics and, as such, all parties must be clear as to their own individual objectives to be achieved from the platform (Liu & Ko, 2011). The specific objectives of stakeholders in an inter-organizational network are studied by the means of stakeholder theory. Stakeholders are any groups or individuals who can influence and who are affected by a business (Freeman & Reed, 1983; Freeman et al., 2004). Stakeholder theory proposes that objectives drive the stakeholders behavior (Freeman et al., 2004) and that the consideration of (key) stakeholder objectives in strategies raises the chances of resolving business related challenges (Parmar et al., 2010). By researching the specific objectives of stakeholders, the future directions of the business can be studied (Freeman et al., 2007).

By also including the *willingness of investment* in this research, an even more inclusive picture can be created and conclusions about the feasibility of these objectives and expectations can be drawn. Willingness to invest is the amount of preparedness a member wants to put into the network. The willingness to invest can be expressed both in monetary values as well as the amount of effort or knowledge the member is willing to put in.

Network characteristics

The three concepts - network structure, geographic location and the corporate communication set – together are characteristics that are network specific. The case platform is *geographical located* based on historic reasons. This is supposed to be an essential element of the platform and will be included in this research. The *corporate communication set* is a way to expose an organization's identity (Bernstein, 1986; Grunig, 1992). The gap that is created between the actual and desired corporate identity, can be narrowed through arranging the corporate identity set of communications, symbolism and behaviour.

In order to understand the functioning of inter-organizational networks, it is important to consider the *network structure*, including the governance of the network. With functioning of a network, the process by which certain network conditions lead to numerous outcomes on network-level is meant (Provan & Kenis, 2007). In social science, it is common to classify partnerships according the social level they operate in. Examples of these different partnership relations are e.g. private-private, public-private, public-public, business-science, public-science and public-social partnerships (Nel, 2017). In this, the term public refers to all institutions which exercise legitimate authority over populations. This is often bound to a geographical area. Private institutions are all institutions that are not owned by the state. Business partners are organizations of which the main objective is to generate profits for their owners, which can either be private individuals or state agencies (Carroll & Steane, 2000). According to de Man (2004) members of a network can fulfill three different positions in the network, known as group member, bridge, and orchestrate. Networks are no legal entities and imperative governance – as is common for organizations – is often lacking. This makes that networks are considered to differ in their structural patterns of relations (Provan & Kenis, 2007). Ways to categorize platforms regarding their type of governance are; (1) shared participant governance, (2) lead organization governance, and (3) network administrative organization governance.

3. Research design and methodology

This chapter starts with the research design of this paper. The methodology of data collection is discussed in Section 3.2. Section 3.3 discusses the operationalisation of concepts and Section 3.4 finalises this chapter with the methodology of data analysis.

3.1. Research design

In order to meet research objectives – describe the current network of Mushroom Valley, define network characteristics and internal drivers, and work out a set of scenarios - a mixed method case study design is followed. Quantitative research has enabled data regarding the complete network of Mushroom Valley. Qualitative research aimed to describe, interpret and explain the behaviors, experiences and 'products' of those involved through methods that disturb the natural environment as little as possible. This in order to be able to describe, understand, and interpret the meaning and behavior of people as good as possible (Boeije, 't Hart, & Hox, 2009). Mushroom Valley has functioned as case, since it is a business sector platform in the defining stage. A case study facilitates a holistic, deep exploratory research regarding a certain case (Kumar, 2011).

Data collection has resulted from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data has been gathered from interviews and a survey, secondary data results from written sources (further specified below). This data has formed the input for social network analysis, aimed to describe and explore the patterns apparent in the social relationships that members of a network form with each other (Scott, 2017).

Since the research objective was to describe scenarios for identity strategies for business sector platforms, inductive reasoning was needed to identify new opportunities. Inductive reasoning is an open approach in which conclusions are drawn from observations, where no underlying assumptions stand in the way of identifying creative opportunities (Kumar, 2011).

3.2. Methodology data collection

Three data collection methods has been combined to gather data during this research; desk research, a digital survey and seven semi-structured interviews. Multiple data sources has been used to address a wide range of aspects, and provide a more convincing and robust overview of the complete network. By using method triangulation, the reliability of the research has increased (Boeije et al., 2009). The considerations regarding these methods are discussed in this section. Table 3 provides an overview of the data collection method that has been used per (sub) question.

	Desk	Survey	Interview
Q1. What are network characteristics of business sector platform MV?			
a Who are the members of platform MV?	X		
b What are the rights and obligations of member of Mushroom Valley?	X		
i What are requirements to become member?	X		
ii What (financial) investments are required from members?	X		
iii What does the platform offer their members?	X		
c Which links amongst members are present in the network?		X	
i What type of relationships are present in the network?	X	X	
d What is the function of the geographic location of the network for the platform and its members?		X	X
e How is the communication internally and externally arranged and valued by its members?	X	X	X
Q2. What are internal drivers of emerging business sector platform Mushroom Valley?			
a What are the objectives of members to join the platform?		X	X
b What are the expectations of members towards the platform?		X	X
c What are the expectations of members towards the management of the platform?		X	X
d What is the willingness to invest of members in the platform?		X	X
Q3. What are external examples of well-functioning business sector platforms?			
a What does literature say about the influence of objectives and expectations on network functioning?	X		
b How does the mushroom sector landscape look like for Mushroom Valley?	X		X
c What are examples of comparable sector platforms?	X		X
Q4. Based on network characteristics and internal drivers, which future scenarios are suitable for emerging business sector platform Mushroom Valley?			
	--- analysis ---		

Table 3 - Used data collection method per (sub) question

Desk research

In the starting phase of the research, key organisational documents linked to case platform Mushroom Valley are screened to provide a good, holistic, impression about the platform. Data has mostly been collected via business websites, sector publications and organisation documents of Mushroom Valley. Examples of information sources reviewed in this desk research are the ambition statement of Mushroom Valley (2017), the websites of Mushroom Valley (n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c), Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel (n.d.-b, n.d.-d, n.d.-a, n.d.-c), Feed Design Lab (n.d.-b, n.d.-a) and LTO (n.d.).

Survey

In order to describe multiple aspects of the platform, it is important to involve all members of the platform. This is done via the quantitative research method survey. At the moment of the survey, Mushroom Valley consisted of 29 members. Since the spokesperson of Legro was changing and no new spokesperson was appointed yet, Legro was left outside the scope of the survey. This resulted in 28 partners that have received an e-mail with the request to participate in the research through the survey. The response rate of the survey is 100%. The language of the survey is Dutch in order to prevent miscommunication and encourage elaborate answers. The survey is digital and was send out to all members of Mushroom Valley through e-mail. The survey questions can be found in Appendix 8.3. All results collected through the survey are discussed in Chapter 4.

Semi-structured interviews

Conducting interviews is a primary research method for qualitative research. After collecting a broader scope of the platform via the survey, interviews enable the researcher to generate more in-depth insights. The interviews conducted were semi-structured of nature. Fully structured interviews generate often uniform information, allowing comparison between the various respondents (Vaus, 2011). When the objective is to gather in-depth qualitative information, the use of semi-structured interviews is more appropriate. Prior to the interviews, an interview guide is set up which provided structure in the questions, while a flexible approach was used towards the respondents to leave room for spontaneous promptings (Brinkmann, 2014). This will enabled the interviewer to lead the discussion during the interview to topics related to the research and at the same time to go deeper into the most important points presented by the interviewee.

The interview questions are formulated based on data obtained from desk research as well as the survey. The questions are discussed with academic supervisor, in order to create the most qualitative interview guide. The interview guide can be found in Appendix 8.4. All interviews are conducted face-to-face, in order to encourage respondents to provide as much additional, relevant information as possible. To gather as much data as possible, the language of the interview was Dutch. Since all interviewees are Dutch, it is assumed that this would provide the most elaborate answers and lower the risk of miscommunication. The interviews are audio recorded to enable transcription afterwards.

The interviewees are selected via purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is an effective non-probability sampling that is often used in mixed methods design. It selects interviewees based on the qualities the informant possesses (Tongco, 2007). In this research a variety of interviewees are chosen with the objective of collecting specific (in-depth) information based on the findings of the survey conducted. Based on the core business of the network member, categories are formed. These categories enable the researcher to select a variety of key informants based on e.g. their financial commitment to the platform, different objectives mentioned in the survey and the number of relations present in the network. To ensure reproducibility of the method in order for the results to contribute to a greater understanding of theories, a systematic way of choosing the interviewee is used and described in detail (Tongco, 2007).

Selecting interviewees

The network of Mushroom Valley can be categorized according to the members' core business. Roughly there are four categories; (1) Installations and machinery, (2) Compost, substrates, breeding and crop protection, (3) Processors and packaging, and (4) Education, regional and consultancy. In order to collect the most qualitative and all-inclusive data from interviews, it is important that all four quadrants are represented by interviewees. A more detailed selection of interviewees is based on the results of the survey conducted.

The network of Mushroom Valley represents all kinds of companies and institutions; from big multinationals to rather small companies, from processors to education, and so on. A lot of those organisations are related to each other and work together to improve their business. This research focusses on relations that dichotomous and directional. Dichotomous relations are labeled binary, they are either present or absent for all pairs of members (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). The strength and frequency of the interactions are not considered in this research. The number of relations an organisation has in the sector, can possibly influence the added value an organisation perceives from the platform Mushroom Valley. "Prominent actors are those that are extensively involved in relationships with other actors. This involvement makes them more visible to the others" (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). This research is not predominantly interested in whether this prominence is due to the receiving (being the recipient) or the transmission (being the source) of this number of ties – what is important here is that the member is simply involved. A central member is defined as one involved in many ties. This definition of centrality was first developed by Bavelas (1948, 1950), but later wider adapted by Wasserman and Faust (1994). The definition of centrality naturally yield on sociological and economic concepts such as access and control over resources, and brokerage of information. This makes it interesting for this research to select one interviewee who is a prominent member (**Euroveen BV**, 16 relations) and one interviewee who is not a prominent member (**Hofmans**, 4 relations). Hofmans is also one of the two members who have terminated their contract after the starting period of three year. Discussing the process that has led to this decision might provide valuable information and made this member particularly suitable for an in-depth interview. Euroveen BV provided some contradictory answers in the survey, which can be discussed during the interview. Due to privacy reasons the given answers are not discussed in the paper on individual level.

Christiaens Group provided some surprising and seemingly contradictory answers in the survey as well. This in combination with the fact that Christiaens Group is one of the biggest partners of the platform based on revenue and market share, this member is also included in the set of in-depth interviews.

Results of the survey also provide the researcher with more knowledge of the network overall. Data collected through the survey show that the topic 'research and innovation' is important for a lot of members in the network. Wageningen University and Research and HAS Hogeschool are the two parties in the network that are with their core business directly relatable to research. HAS Hogeschool is member of the network for a longer time and is already in collaboration with Mushroom Valley to facilitate an education programme related to mushrooms. Wageningen University is a relative new partner. Taken the results of the survey into consideration, it might be valuable to talk more in-depth with Wageningen University and Research in order to see whether both parties can help each other with the common desire of the platform to be active in the topic 'research and innovation'. For this reason **Wageningen University and Research** has been contacted to participate in an in-depth interview.

With Christiaens Group and Euroveen BV, two partners who are in the highest category of contribution fee (€ 9.000) are included in the interviews. Hofmans represents the lowest

contribution fee category (€ 3.000). There are only two partners who pay € 6.000 contribution to Mushroom Valley; Limbraco and Mertens | Phormium. Since the investment differs between members of the platform, it might be that the expectations towards the (level of) output of the platform will differ also. This makes it interesting to include all three contribution categories in the interviews. Since the 'Compost, substrates, breeding & crop protection' quadrant is already covered in two interviews, **Limbraco** is asked to participate in the interview as middle sized company.

The only core business section that is not covered in the set of interviews yet is the quadrant of 'Processors and packaging'. For this section **Scelta Mushrooms** will be included in the interviews. Scelta Mushrooms is one of the four partners that expect that Mushroom Valley will no longer exist over two years. However, they are willing to stay member for the next couple years. It can be interesting to research those seemingly contradictory answers.

Besides looking for the identity of the network by interviewing members of the platform, it might add value to look at the landscape Mushroom Valley is in. Since ZLTO was not willing to participate in this research, a manager of Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel has been contacted to function as expert of the sector and possible competitor of Mushroom Valley.

Table 4 provides a schematic overview of the selection criteria per interviewee.

#	Company	Core business	Contribution	# relations	Survey inconsistency
7	Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel	Field expert	n/a	n/a	n/a
6	Euroveen BV	Compost, substrates, breeding & crop protection	High	16	Inconsistency
3	Hofmans	Compost, substrates, breeding & crop protection	Low	4	
5	Wageningen University and Research	Education, Regional and Consultancy	n/a	7	
2	Christiaens Group	Installations and machinery	High	13	Inconsistency
4	Limbraco	Installations and machinery	Middle	5	
1	Scelta	Processors and packaging	High	13	Inconsistency

Table 4- Overview of the selection criteria per interviewee

While conducting this research on the identity strategy of Mushroom Valley, two (other) projects are initiated within Mushroom Valley. The communication and marketing agency Drops, part of the project management team of Mushroom Valley, is focussing on motivating youth to choose for a career in the mushroom sector. Besides that, Kevin van Berlo (project manager) is constructing an educational track related to mushrooms. For both projects, communication with partners is required. In order to minimize the required time from partners, mutually agreement is made between all three projects about who is going to interview who. Despite the fact that combining questions into one interview guide and involving all partners in all projects is unfeasible due to too different topics, information will be shared. Kevin van Berlo will contact **Delphy** and **Mushroom Office** in

order to construct an educational track together, especially those contact moments will be taken into consideration during this research besides the above mentioned interviews.

Horst aan de Maas is actively involved in Mushroom Valley. This means that each first Monday of the month representative participates in a meeting. This meetings, in addition to informal conversations, will contribute to collecting information about municipality Horst aan de Maas.

3.3. Operationalisation theoretical concepts

The six concepts from the theoretical framework are network structure, geographic location, corporate communication set, objectives, expectations and willingness to invest. In this section, the operationalisation of these theoretical concepts will be discussed.

Research Question (RQ) 1 is the overarching question related to network characteristics like network structure, geographic location and corporate communication set. After collecting general data about the case platform through questions 1a and 1b via desk research, these specific theoretical concepts are introduced. Questions related to relations amongst members in the network, provide 'relational data'. They are focused on contacts, ties and connections, relating from one member to another (Scott, 2017).

Network structure: Organizational network theory enables clarifying social and behavioral phenomena at network level by looking at these relations between organizations and analysing the complex structures of these organizational relations (Bergenholtz & Waldstrøm, 2011; Borgatti & Foster, 2003; Provan et al., 2007). Dedicated to this concept is research questions RQ 1c; Which network structure is present in the platform? The network of Mushroom Valley includes members of all different social levels – e.g. public, business and science. Understanding inter-organizational relations at network level is considered of great value, since the network perspective can provide insights into network level dynamics not that might not be noticeable at dyadic level (Cots, 2011; Rowley, 1997). According to de Man (2004) members of a network can fulfill three different positions in the network, known as group member, bridge, and orchestrate. In order to make conclusions about these social and behavioral phenomena, network level dynamics and network positions, it is important to map all relations that are present in the network. As can be seen in table 3, this data is collected through the survey, since by this way all members are involved. Three specific interview questions (interview members) are dedicated to this concept too. Despite the fact that this qualitative form of data collection will not enable the researcher to map the network structure, the interviews will provide more in-depth knowledge about the network functioning. The questions asked in the interviews with members are asking for perceptions and opinions.

Survey:

- *With which members of Mushroom Valley do you regularly work together?*
Members are asked to categorise other members based on their relationship. This will provide data that is needed to map the network structure.
- *Has the relation with companies whom you have intensive cooperation or regular contact changed since the presence of platform Mushroom Valley?*
By asking this question, conclusions can be made later related to the added value of Mushroom Valley.

Interview:

- *Do you notice a difference in the treatment of certain members in the platform? If so, what do you notice?*
- *Are there possible partners that you are missing in the network? If so, why do you miss this partner and what can this partner add to the network?*
- *At this moment, the primary sector is not part of the network. Would you like to see this changed? If so, in which form would you like to see them represented?*

Geographic location: In order to acquire a constructive corporate reputation which will result in improved organizational performance, multiple aspects should be taken into account while managing corporate identity including the (historical) roots (Riel & Balmer, 1997). Mushroom Valley is geographical located on historic reasons. This is supposed to be an essential element of the platform and will be included in this research. For Mushroom Valley it is important to know how members perceive this regional focus. RQ 1d is examining this theoretical concept; What is the function of the geographic location of the network for the platform and its members? This question is asked to all members in the survey and is discussed more in-depth in the interviews with members. The interview questions that are dedicated to geographic location are asking for perceptions and opinions.

Survey:

- *The member network of Mushroom Valley is currently mainly positioned in and around the municipality of Horst aan de Maas. To what extent do you see this as an advantage or disadvantage in achieving goals?*
 - *In your opinion, does Mushroom Valley need its own physical Mushroom Valley home base for practicing its duties and achieving objectives?*
- Both questions are asked as open questions, in order to receive an open view on this issue. Members are forced to answer.

Interviews:

- *In the survey you have indicated that you see the regional focus of Mushroom Valley as a (advantage / disadvantage). Can you elaborate on this and would you like to change this regional approach? If so, how would you like to change this?*
- *To what extend is having a network within the regional mushroom sector important for your company?*

Corporate communication set: Managing the corporate communication set is a way to expose an organization's identity (Bernstein, 1986; Grunig, 1992). In order to collect information regarding this concept, RQ 1e is included; How is the communication internally and externally arranged and valued by its members? The gap that is created between the actual and desired corporate identity, can be narrowed through arranging the corporate identity set of communications, symbolism and behaviour. For this reason this corporate communication set is included in this research. In order to meet objective 1 - describe the current network – it is important to collect data about the current communication channels. Which ones are used and which are preferred by the members? The most data is collected via the survey, since questions related to this concept can be asked objectively. However, during the interviews with members the topic is also discussed in order to collect more in-depth information about experiences members have with communication channels of Mushroom Valley.

Survey:

- *Which of the following communication options do you currently use or did you use in the past year?*
 - *Which communication option(s) do you prefer?*
- The questions are straight forward and do not need to be asked delicately. All communication options Mushroom Valley currently has are listed in the answer possibilities.

Interviews:

- *When you would like to establish a new contact within the network, how would you approach this? Which communication medium would you use?*

Research Question (RQ) 2 is the overarching question related to the internal drivers of emerging business sector platform Mushroom Valley, e.g. objectives, expectations and willingness to invest. This data can be seen as 'attribute data' that relates to attitudes, opinions and behavior, or 'ideational data' describing meanings, motives, definitions and typifications involved in actions (Scott, 2017)

Objectives: According to theory, multiple factors can influence corporate reputation and network performance (Snehota & Hakansson, 1995). This research focusses on a set of influences of partnerships and is built on the idea that members act intentionally by applying means in order to achieve ends. These ends can vary from earning money to more reputation oriented objectives (Riel & Balmer, 1997). The central question in this is what is important for the member? Objectives drive behavior (Freeman et al., 2004). By researching the specific objectives of stakeholders, the future directions of the business can be studied (Freeman et al., 2007). With this an important aspect of the corporate identity is touched. "Identity refers to an organization's central, distinctive, and enduring character, typically anchored to its mission, whereas strategy refers to an organization's objectives and the activities intended to achieve them" (Ashforth & Mael, 1996, p. 19). An identity can serve as source or origin for a strategy. This identity strategy is a set of activities that will pursue future objectives. Dedicated to collect data regarding the objectives of members to join Mushroom Valley is RQ 2a; What are the objectives of members to join the platform? In the survey and the interviews with members, the question is asked what the objectives were to join the platform. Also the transition of objectives over the last year(s) is questioned. Besides these direct questions, more subtle objectives are collected through questions related to (dis)advantages, preferred action points, and members' own position in how to achieve these objective.

Survey:

- *What was your objective to join platform Mushroom Valley?*
Answer options are retrieved from the ambition statement of Mushroom Valley (2017). Mushroom Valley committed to several themes, the answer possibilities to this survey question related to these themes. However, also some individual objectives were added in order to collect data about the possible 'hidden' agenda of members.
- *What do you think should be the core focus of Mushroom Valley?*
Answer options are related to the themes Mushroom Valley has committed itself to. By allowing only one answer option, members are forced to choose and lay focus on the real essence for them.
- *Arrange the themes that Mushroom Valley has linked to the extent to which they are important to you.*
By asking the first question, members are able to come up with creative ideas. Through asking the following two questions, members are forced to categorize their objectives towards the current ambition of the platform.

Interview:

- *What advantages do you have for membership at Mushroom Valley?*
- *Are there also disadvantages to Mushroom Valley membership? If so, what are they?*
- *Mushroom Valley is broadly oriented and active within different topics. Which topic(s) is/are important to you within Mushroom Valley?*
- *Besides the current activities, what would you like to see more of Mushroom Valley?*
- *If you were in charge, what would you change or do differently within Mushroom Valley?*

- *You indicated that (result survey) was the reason for your company to join Mushroom Valley, can you elaborate on that?*
- *Are there changes in your vision regarding the usefulness of Mushroom Valley membership? If so, what are those changes?*
- *What steps have already been taken in order to achieve the by you mentioned objectives?*
- *Do you ever drop (knowledge) issues at Mushroom Valley, or do you ever want to initiate joint projects? If so, can you elaborate on that?*
- *What role does Mushroom Valley play in developing this network for your company?*

Expectations: With *expectations* the anticipated outcomes or directions of the platform are meant. Expectations motivate members to joint discussions about forming a partnership in order to achieve objectives that would not be feasible for individual companies (Carroll & Steane, 2000). By having certain believes in a partnership, a basis formed for the agreement, which will help the partnership shape. Insights about appropriate and tolerated behaviour will form a norm for the partnership. Values and ideology of an agent that are openly shared, influence motivations, beliefs, norms of behaviour and new expectations regarding the partnership. For this reason it is important to collect data about the expectations members have. Both RQ 2b and 2c are focussed on collection data regarding the expectations members have. RQ 2b is specified towards the platform; What are the expectations of members towards the platform? RQ 2c is specified towards the management of the platform; What are the expectations of members towards the management of the platform? Data collection methods survey as well as interviews have been used for these research questions. Questions regarding the expectations of members are asked directly in both conducted data collection methods. Distinction is made between the expectation towards the platform and towards the management. However, in the interview also a question is asked regarding challenges for the platform. This will more implicitly generate information about the expectations of the platform, what are they indirect incapable of?

Survey:

- *What do you expect form the project management of Mushroom Valley in the pursuit of these themes and objectives?*
Answer options are generated together with the project management of Mushroom Valley. By asking them to get involved in this question, multiplied the answer possibilities. However, there is also left room for open answering this question which might provide new insights.
- *What are your expectations with regard to the platform? In two years Mushroom Valley will be...*
- *When entering into a membership at Mushroom Valley, the intention was expressed to evaluate the membership after 3 years. When a mid-term review is being held, do you think the cooperation between you and Mushroom Valley will continue in the coming years?*

Interviews:

- *What is, according to you, the biggest challenge for the platform?*
- *Which steps an Mushroom Valley take to contribute to the by you mentioned objectives? In which time frame is this possible? When is the objective met?*
- *You have indicated that you expect Mushroom Valley to have achieved the following in two years (result survey). Why do you think Mushroom Valley will (not) reach these (give example) objective(s)?*

Willingness to invest: By including this concept in the research, an even more inclusive picture can be created and conclusions about the feasibility of these objectives and expectations can be drawn. Willingness to invest is the amount of preparedness a member wants to put into the network. The willingness to invest can be expressed both in monetary values as well as the amount of effort or knowledge the member is willing to put in. To collect data regarding this theoretical concept, RQ 2d is included; What is the willingness to invest of members in the platform? The question regarding willingness is asked in the survey, as well in multiple forms in the interviews with members. Besides the direct question are you willing to invest and what are you willing to invest, more subtle questions like what are you currently investing are included in the interviews. Also the level of involvement and awareness of own capacities are included. The level of involvement may be related to their willingness to invest. Also, when members do not see the added value of their contribution, their willingness might be lower too.

Survey:

- *In order to contribute to a strong platform Mushroom Valley, we are as company prepared to invest time/money/knowledge/nothing.*

Interviews:

- *In which way is your company currently active within Mushroom Valley?*
- *To what extent do you feel involved in Mushroom Valley? How do you feel this?*
- *How do you see the role of your company in (not) achieving these objectives?*
- *Do you ever drop (knowledge) issues at Mushroom Valley, or do you ever want to initiate joint projects? If so, can you elaborate on that?*
- *You have indicated in the survey that you are willing to invest time/money/knowledge (result survey) in Mushroom Valley. Where do you want to invest in?*

Research Question (RQ) 3 is more externally focussed than RQ's 1 and 2 and relates to examples of business sector platforms.

RQ 3a and RQ 3c can be answered by purely studying prior scientific literature. RQ 3b; How does the mushroom sector landscape look like for Mushroom Valley? This question can be answered by a combination of desk research and the interview with the field expert. All questions asked in this interview (see Appendix 8.4), relate to this research question and have the aim to collect as much information about the sector as possible.

Research Question (RQ) 4; Based on network characteristics and internal drivers, which future scenarios are suitable for emerging business sector platform Mushroom Valley? This question can be answered by analysing collected data and does not need additional data collection.

3.4. Methodology data analysis

To process the data collected through the survey, descriptive statistics is used. Mainly frequencies and descriptions are used to provide an overview of the platform. The data collected from interviews are field notes and audio records, which have resulted in transcripts of the interviews. These transcripts have enabled the researcher to give meaning to words and interpret the results. The data has functioned as basis to identify relevant themes; inductive analysis. Existing research and theories are used to improve the search strategy (Boeije et al., 2009). The researcher has categorised the data, after which those are coded. These codes are presented in Appendix 8.7. To start, the chosen categories were formed by the variables used in the research questions. However, after this first round of coding additional categories were added and changed into (research) questions.

4. Results

In this chapter the results collected from desk research, the online survey and seven qualitative interviews will be discussed. The first three research questions will be answered throughout the chapter. It starts with the identified network characteristics of business sector platform Mushroom Valley. Desk research and survey output will function as basis, after which interview results provide a more in-depth result. After the elaborate description of members' rights and obligations, network structure, the function of the geographic location and the communication internally as well as externally, the internal drivers of Mushroom Valley will be discussed. This involves the objectives, expectations and willingness to invest of members of the platform. In Section 4.3 examples of well-functioning business sector platforms are presented.

4.1. Network characteristics of business sector platform Mushroom Valley

a. Who are the members of platform Mushroom Valley?

Anno July 2018, the platform consists of 29 members and 7 supporters. The set of members contains different kinds of companies, varying from breeders, suppliers of machinery, systems and technology, consultants and education sector. A complete list of members at the start of this research can be found in Appendix 8.5.

Figure 5 provides a schematic overview of the members of the platform, categorised by their core business.

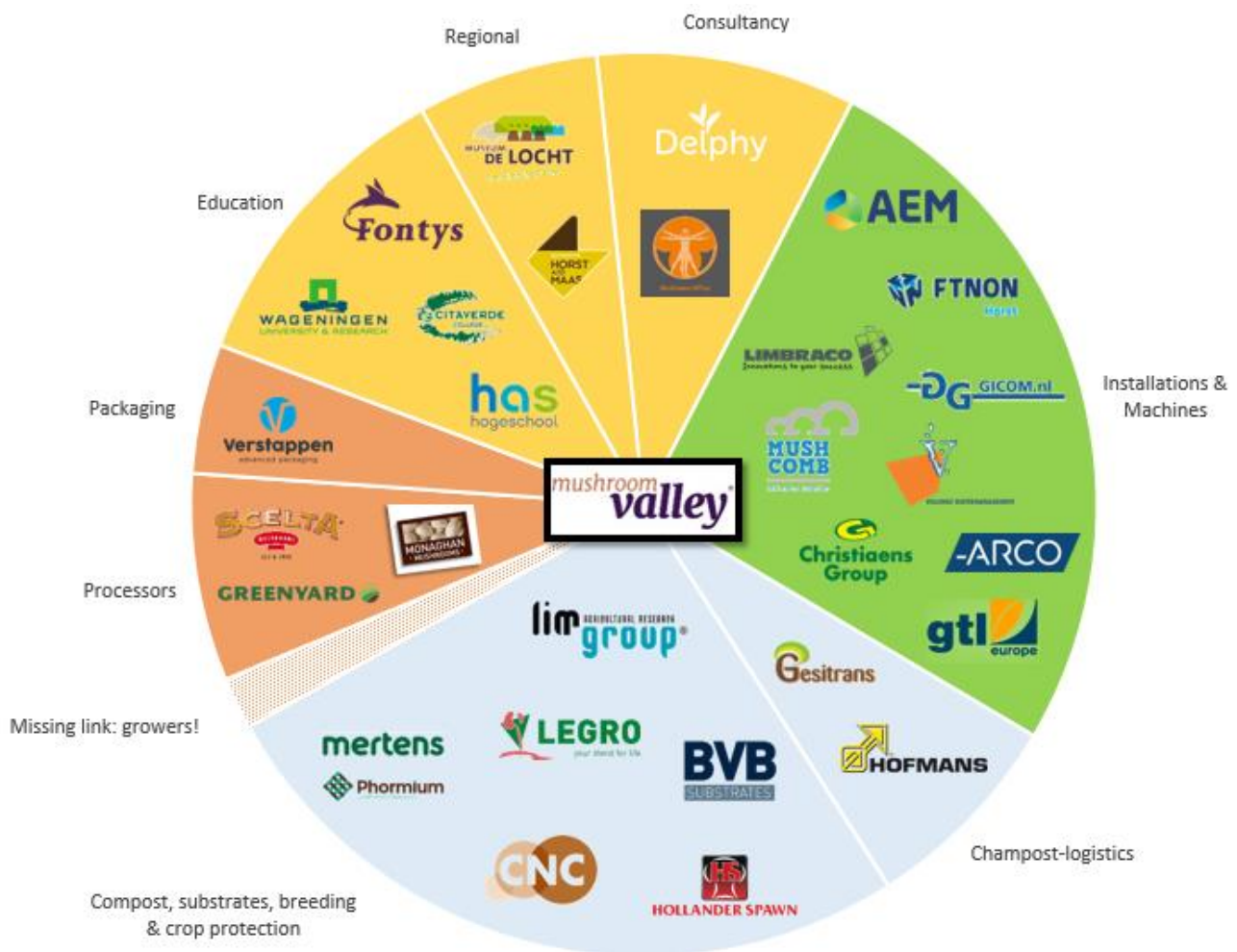


Figure 5 - Overview of the members of the platform Mushroom Valley, categorised by their core business

At the moment the primary sector is not involved in the current network. In all interviews the question is asked whether or not the interviewees miss companies in the network. All interviewees agreed that the primary sector should be present in the network. "For us the relationship with the primary sector is very important, I know that at the moment this is still a bit underdeveloped within Mushroom Valley", according interviewee 1. The objective of these interviewees might be the same, the interest on why the primary sector should be involved are different amongst members. Interviewee 1 speaks from a standing point of customer relations; "Since we are their customers, I would really like to be able to involve my suppliers in the process." Interviewee 6 pays more attention to the overall objectives of the platform; "In my views, it is a must to have growers in. You have to make that connection between the entire chain in order to be able to combine the right parties." Interviewee 7 points out that excluding this link in the supply chain might harm the sector. He claims that the primary sector, at the founding of Mushroom Valley, was surprised that they were not involved; "Why are you going to set up something without involving us? It seemed like a bit of an old boy's network".

b. What are the rights and obligations of members of the Mushroom Valley?

From the ambition plan of Mushroom Valley (2017), a set of restrictions to become member of the platform can be derived:

1. The platform consists of breeders, suppliers, technologists, growers, processors, governmental and knowledge institutions related to mushrooms – also known as the periphery. All members should fit these categories.
2. The platform is, according their ambition statement, limited to the region Horst aan de Maas. All members should want to contribute to this regional targets.
3. All members should be willing to join forces and strive for research, innovation and knowledge sharing.

Mushroom Valley has organized multiple meetings for their partners over the last year; kick-off meeting, inspiration meetings, member meetings. After experimenting and considering feedback and attendance numbers, the management team decided to only host member meetings four times a year in the future. During this member meetings, members will be updated about the activities done by the management team and there will be informative speakers from the sector. Every meeting takes place at plants from members. By doing this, members get the chance to see other companies and discuss with each other.

All members of the platform contribute financially. The number contributed depends on the revenue of the company, varying from € 3.000 per year for smaller firms to € 9.000 per year for firms with a revenue over € 5.000.000. The current budget of Mushroom Valley - approximately € 200.000 – is funded by the support of its members (Personal Communication).

*c. Which **network structure** is present in the platform?*

In the survey members were asked to list the organisations they work together with. This could be an intensive collaboration, but also regular contact moments.

Christiaens Group, Euroveen BV, Mertens | Phormium, Monaghan Mushrooms, Scelta Mushrooms and Vullings Systemen are the six most connected companies with at least 13 relationships within the network. Gicom, Greenyard and Hofmans are the least connected partners, with respectively 2, 2 and 4 relationships within the network. The number of relationships of each member can be found in Appendix 8.6.

Figure 6 provides a schematic overview of these network relationships. A solid line represents intensive collaboration, a dotted line represents a less intensive collaboration. Lines are drawn when both organisations listed the other organisation as relation.

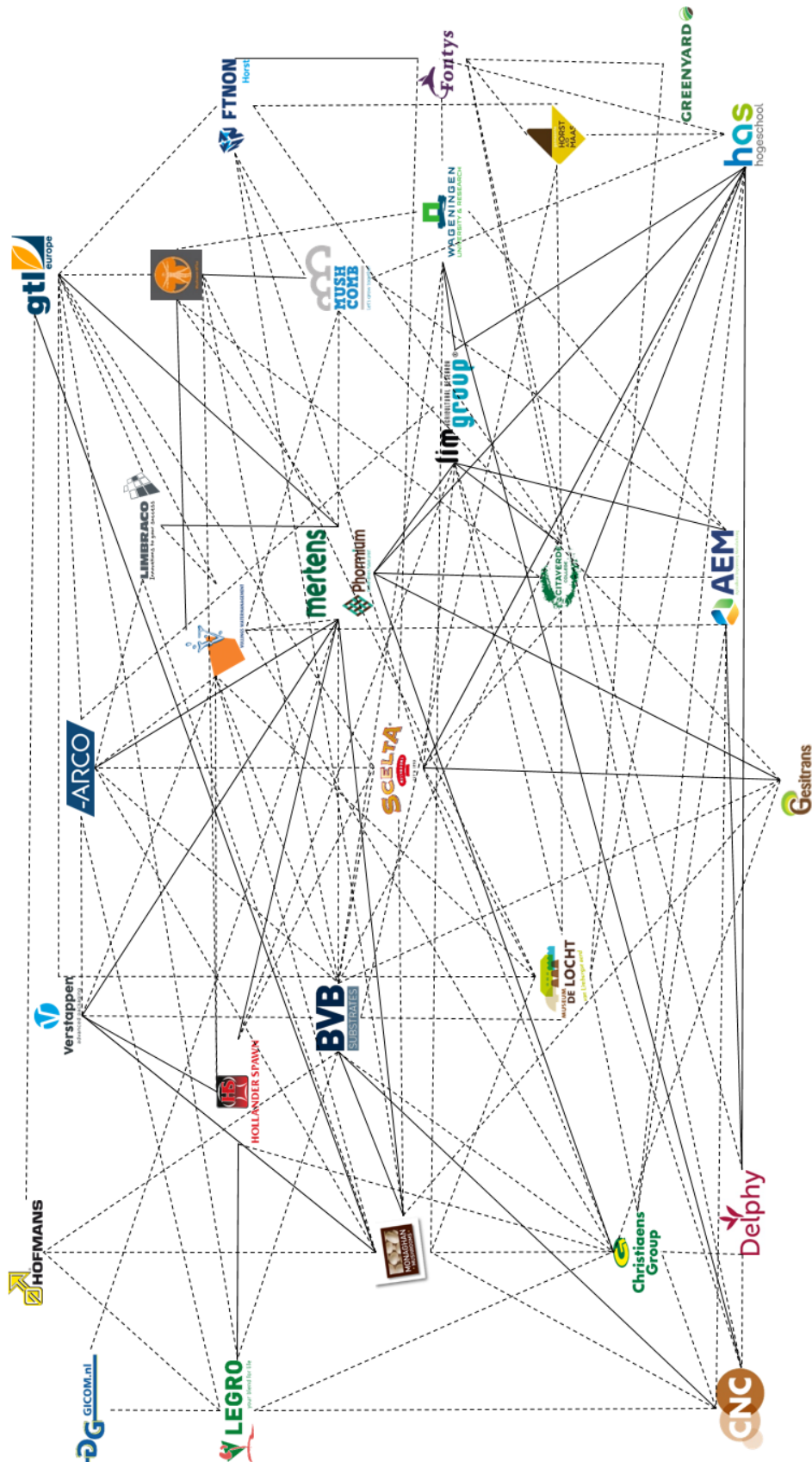


Figure 6 - Network structure of Mushroom Valley

In order to keep the network structure visual more clear and readable, figure 7 shows the network without educational institutions.

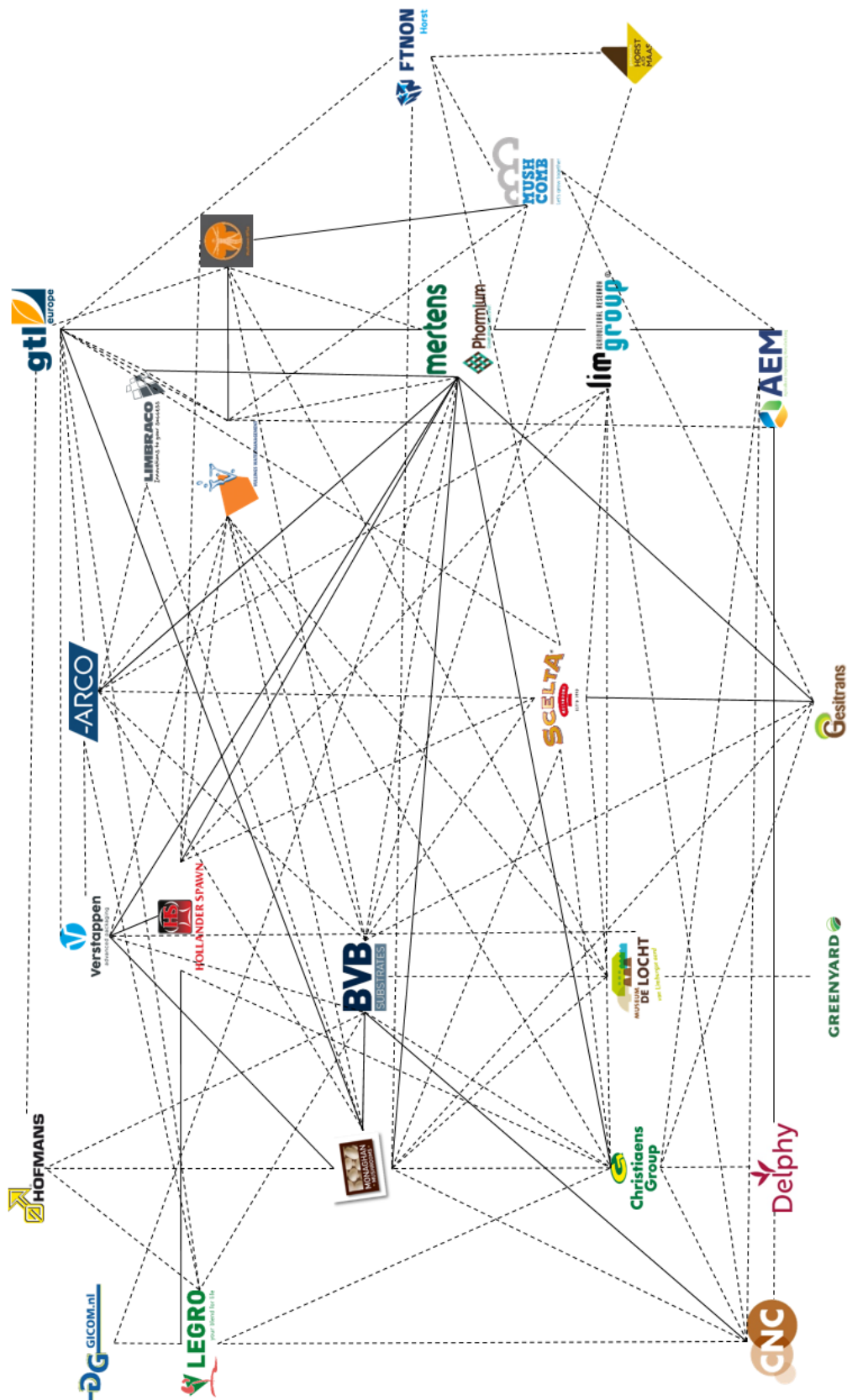


Figure 7 - Network structure of Mushroom Valley, without educational institutions

The member network of Mushroom Valley includes supplying-, market- and consultancy-businesses, educational and research organizations, governmental institutions and a non-profit establishment. Different relationships like public-private, business-science, public-social are present within the platform. Also different type of relationships, like group member or bridge, can be identified in the network. More on this can be found in the conclusion in Chapter 5.

The different partnerships combine institutions with rather different motives, values and objectives. In order to reach all different objectives set by Mushroom Valley, it is important that these different partnerships are present within the platform. "You are talking about the full length of the mushroom supply chain" as interviewee 1 mentioned. Interviewee 1 acknowledges that Mushroom Valley is doing a good job in establishing networks. "The network was already there, but reasonably limited. The network has become bigger in that sense", according to interviewee 4. A smaller portion of the network state that building up the network does not happen sufficiently (interviewee 3). The results of the survey support this statement of the interviewee.

- Three members indicate that cooperation has risen since the presence of Mushroom Valley.
- 23 members indicate that cooperation has become more intensive since the presence of Mushroom Valley.
- Five members indicate that cooperation has become less intensive since the presence of Mushroom Valley.

The most noticeable change in the level of cooperation can be found with HAS Hogeschool. This member has started one new relationship and intensified four other relationships. Also the municipality of Horst aan de Maas saw an intensification of their relationships with three different partners.

However, some members of the network are more sceptical about the added value of Mushroom Valley for the mushroom sector. "It {respectively our commitment to the platform} was mainly for us to belong to the network, but actually not much is happening there", says interviewee 3. A possible cause in the different perceptions of members towards the network might be mentioned by interviewee 3; "If you are in the network, say the 'Horster' network, people know each other a little better. If you are there as a stranger, then it is quite difficult".

"Obviously knowing people makes certain thing easier" according to interviewee 1, however "the real importance of having a regional network is moderate" as stated by interviewee 4.

d. What is the function of the **geographic location** of the network for the platform and its members?

As came forward from the ambition plan of Mushroom Valley, the platform is focussed on the region Horst aan de Maas and its surrounding.

Figure 8 shows the geographic location of all members of the current network.

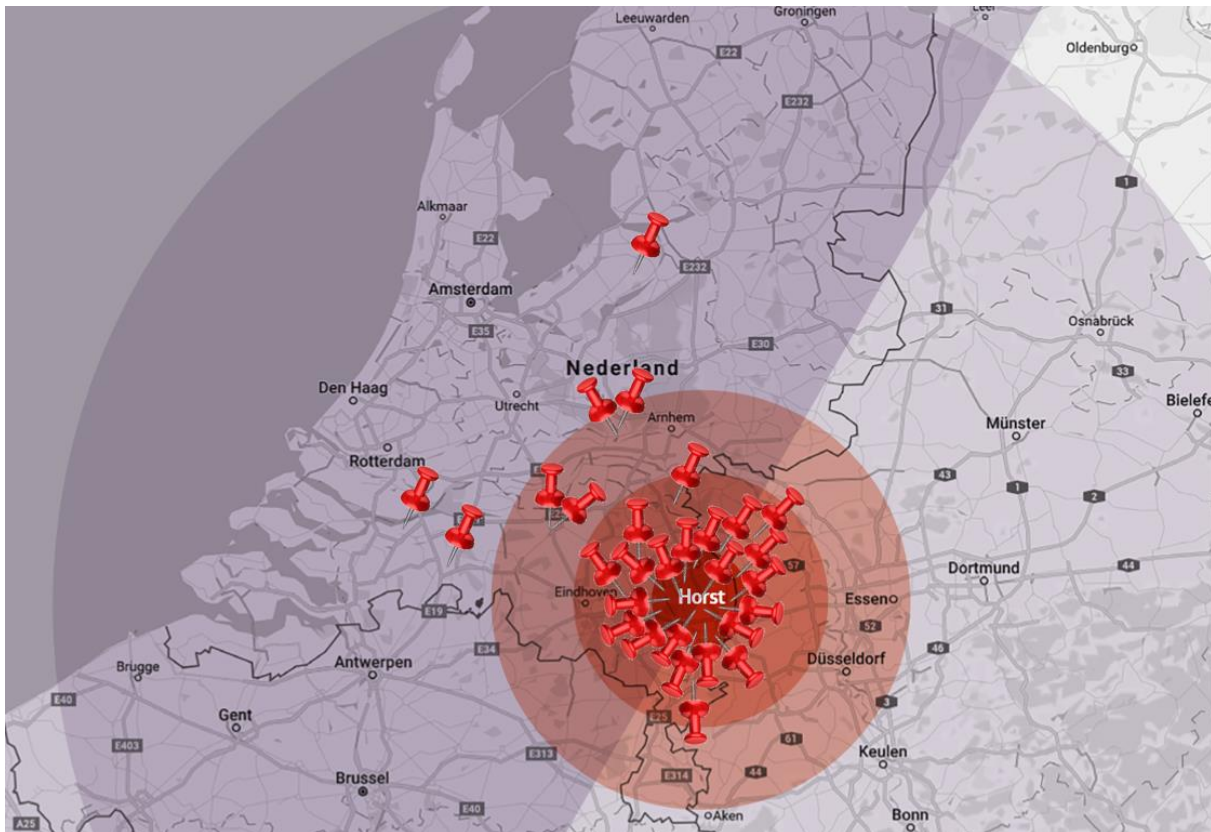


Figure 8 - Geographic location of all members of the current network of Mushroom Valley

The members of the network of Mushroom Valley are mostly positioned in and around the municipality Horst aan de Maas, due to historic roots. The 28 respondents see more or less an equal share of benefits (22 members) as they see disadvantages (24 members) in the positioning of Mushroom Valley in and around the municipality of Horst aan de Maas in achieving objectives, as can be seen in figure 9.

The most heard explanation of advantages in the survey were:

1. With a local network there is a focus on the target group and it causes short communication lines.
2. Horst aan de Maas has a rich history with regard to mushroom cultivation and suppliers are mostly located in Horst aan de Maas.
3. Horst has a good name internationally in the mushroom sector.

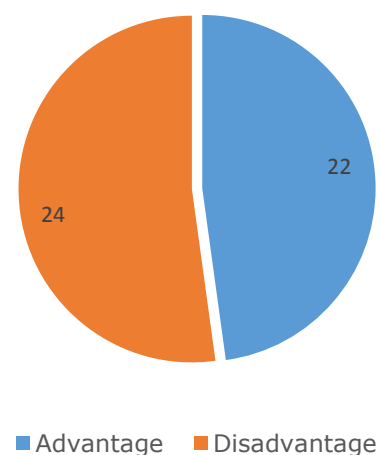


Figure 9 - Result on survey question "Is the regional focus of Mushroom Valley an advantage or disadvantage according to you?"

However, as is shown by the equal share of disadvantages, there are also some members who would like to leave the regional roots of Mushroom Valley behind. Interviewee 1 indicates; "A lot of people have nothing to do with Horst aan de Maas. [...] I would strive for national representation immediately".

The most heard explanation of disadvantages in the survey were:

1. Mushrooms are a world market, Mushroom Valley should represent the Netherlands.
2. The region is too narrow.
3. There is an overload of small mushroom sector platforms.

Almost all members agree that from historical viewpoint Horst aan de Maas had a leading market position. However, due to the loss of mushroom education and the 'proefstation', the region is no longer be seen as the (only) mushroom region of the Netherlands. Also interviewee 1 states this; "this region is important from the past, Horst aan de Maas no longer exists on the current global market. [...] Internationally, the Netherlands still exists, we have a 4th place when it comes to the export of mushrooms." Interviewee 5 adds to this that the region Boekel and Kerkdriel have become major players in the mushroom sector as well. However, multiple interviewees refer to the fact that the Netherlands is still the leader regarding knowledge of the mushroom sector and that it might not be Horst aan de Maas that is in the minds of competitors all over the world, but the Netherlands definitely is (interviewees 1, 4, 6).

e. *How is the communication internally and externally arranged and value by its members?*

In order to manage the new corporate communication set in order to expose an organization's identity, it is required to research the communication structure of Mushroom Valley. The gap between the actual and desired corporate identity can then be narrowed through changes in communication.

Mushroom Valley currently maintains multiple communication channels. Figure 10 provides an overview of the communication channels used by members over the last year, according to the members themselves. Of the 29 members who filled out the survey, 22 have indicated that they have used the newsletter over the last year. A little bit less, 18 members say to use the mobile application Bundeling.

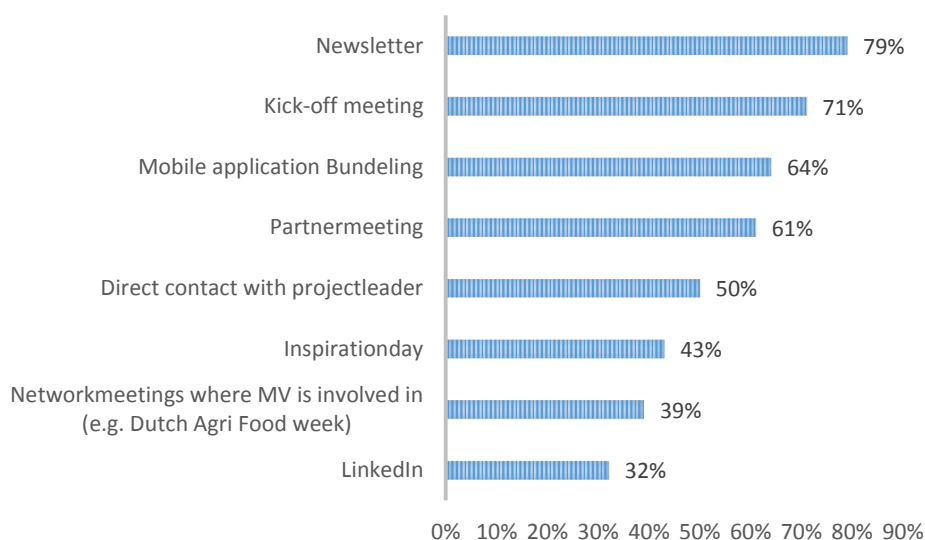


Figure 10 - Result on survey question "Which of these communication channels did you use over the last year?"

Members indicate that they have attended a member meeting over the last year. Table 5 provides an overview of the actual attendance at meetings over the last year. At the first meeting (26-03-2018), the total number of partners and supporters was 30. Over the period, this number has grown to 26 at the end of 2018. This should be taken into account when interpreting the numbers.

	# TOTAL	1 26-03-2018	2 24-05-2018	3 03-09-2018	4 26-11-2018
Engineering	9	7	4	4	4
Breeding	8	3	4	5	2
Sales	4	2	1	1	1
Education / Consultancy/ Regional	8	3	0	4	6
Supporters	7	2	3	1	3
	36	17	8	15	16

Table 5 - Overview of the attendance numbers of member meetings over the last year

These results show the reliability of the survey results. Indeed a maximum of 17 members have attended a member meeting.

In the survey the question was asked which communication channel was preferred by the members. A clear winner in this was member meetings (22 members), followed by direct communication with the project leader (16 members) and the newsletter (12 members). Interviewee 4 explains the added value of member meetings for him; "What I think about the knowledge story? Mushroom Valley does not really provide information. So the meetings add a bit because you talk with others from other sectors that have to work with mushrooms".

Despite the fact that the newsletter is in the top three of preferred communication channels, there is also some criticism. "If I now look at the Mushroom Valley newsletter, it is a summary of what all members are doing separately", according to interviewee 1. Interviewee 3 agrees with this; "In my opinion, if you really want to be a newsletter, it should look different for the sector, it needs more".

Only 8 members indicate that Bundeling is one of their favorite ways to communicate with the platform, as can be seen in figure 11. "I installed it {respectively Bundeling application}, but it is too much like a closed world in itself to me", as interviewee 1 indicated. He adds that Bundeling is something that is focused internal, while Mushroom Valley is specifically a platform that should think external. "I just don't use it", he finishes his answer with. Also interviewee 3 is not really happy about the application; "I tried to make contact via Bundeling, that did not work, so now I call directly or mail directly. I have invited 2 or 3 people but still have not received a confirmation [...] I don't need Bundeling for that". Interviewee 4 agrees with the above mentioned statements and uses Bundeling mainly to read.

The added value of the application is not clear to the members. "Bundeling is exactly the same as LinkedIn, I mean it is nice and I think I have somewhere in the eight hundred contacts in LinkedIn, but if someone is looking for it can speed up the search but that is the only content I see in it", according to interviewee 6.

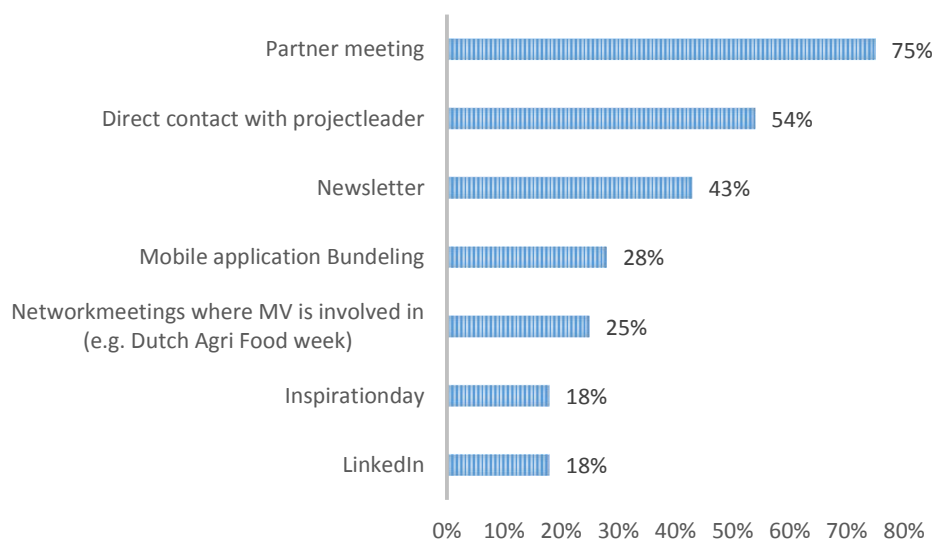
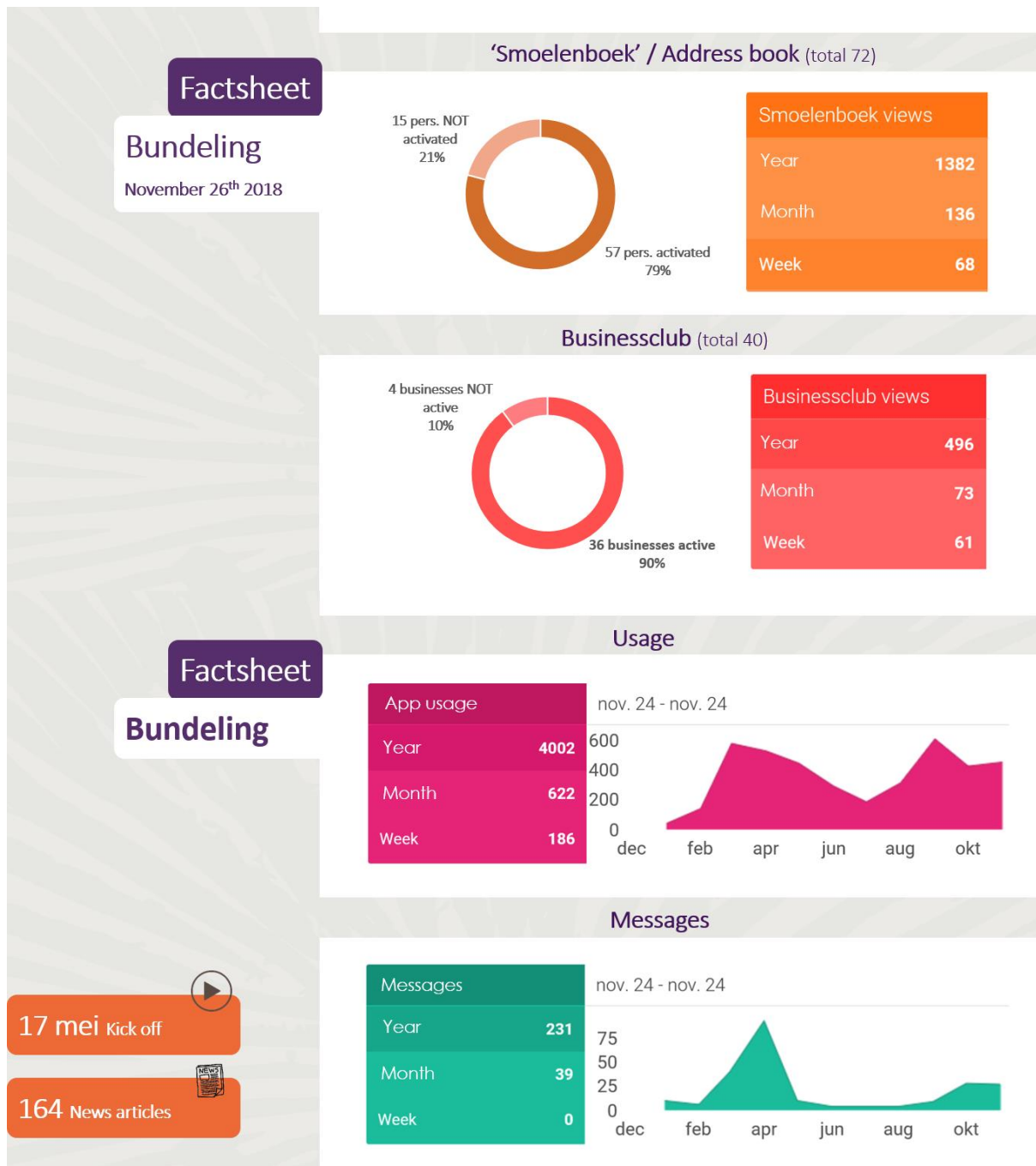


Figure 11 - Result on survey question "Which communication channels has your preference?"

On the next page, a fact sheet is presented about the usage of Bundeling (figure 12).



4.2. Internal drivers of emerging business sector platform Mushroom Valley

a. What are the **objectives** of members to join the platform?

Literature has proven the significance of having common objectives in order to successfully create a corporate identity strategy. This research focusses on a set of influences of partnerships and is built on the idea that members act intentionally by applying means in order to achieve ends. These ends can vary from earning money to more reputation oriented objectives. Since Mushroom Valley is a heterogeneous network, conflicts may arise due to dissimilar objectives and can increase the risk of conflicts and opportunistic behaviour creating less reliable relations. This may potential difficulties for the emerging platform. The platform management can diminish conflicting objectives and create added value for all stakeholders, but in order to do that it should be familiar with the objectives.

All 29 members were asked about their objective(s) to become member of Mushroom Valley. As can be seen in figure 13, the three main objectives to become member of Mushroom Valley are:

- (1) To jointly facilitate education and training aimed at the mushroom sector and to give it a place in the region (54%)
- (2) To jointly position the mushroom sector, as a whole, in a positive and trendy setting (50%)
- (3) To enable research and innovation together (50%)

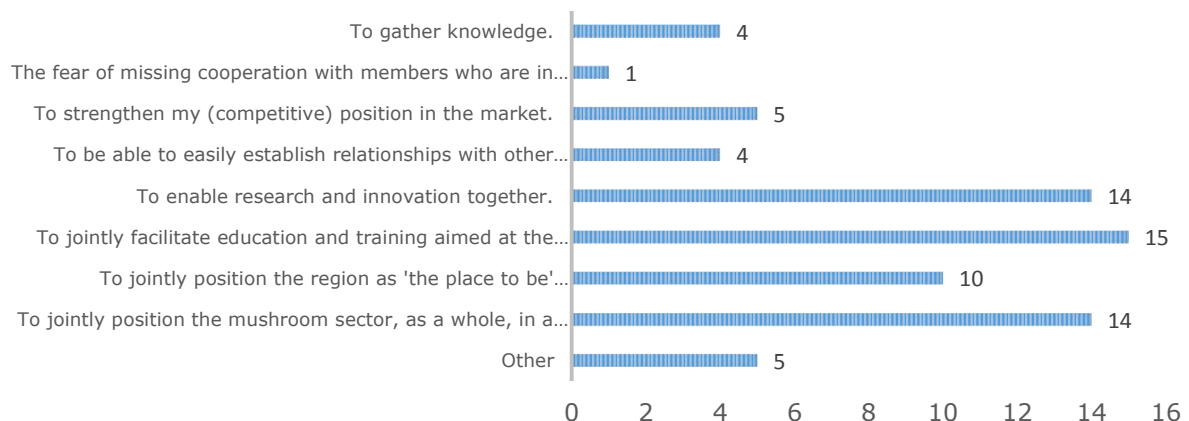


Figure 13 - Result on survey question "What was your (company's) objective to become member of Mushroom Valley?"

Noteworthy is the fact that the four highest objectives, are objectives to boost the mushroom sector as a whole. The four less mentioned objectives are objectives targeting the individual, related to (competitive) position, fear of missing out, receiving knowledge and creating relationships.

Five partners have chosen the category 'other'. Their main objectives to become members are;

- "Combining forces",
- "Generic mushroom promotion and acquiring consumers knowledge internationally",
- "Fear of missing out cooperation is too negative, but in Mushroom Valley I see a platform to cooperate",
- "To keep abreast of developments in the sector",
- "Important that potential customers come to Horst and come in contact with us, so that we can show them our products and sell them. In addition, it is important to

remain ahead of technology and continue to develop. This is only possible if we keep in touch with our customers.”

Interviewees agree on one main issue; focus on specific objectives. “You now have to focus on something, because a lot of everything equals nothing”, according to interviewee 3. Interviewee 1 expresses this desire in the following way; “Book small successes instead of diving into everything at ones, I feel that it is currently going into all sort of directions [...] I think you should specialize very quickly”. However, what should be that focus?

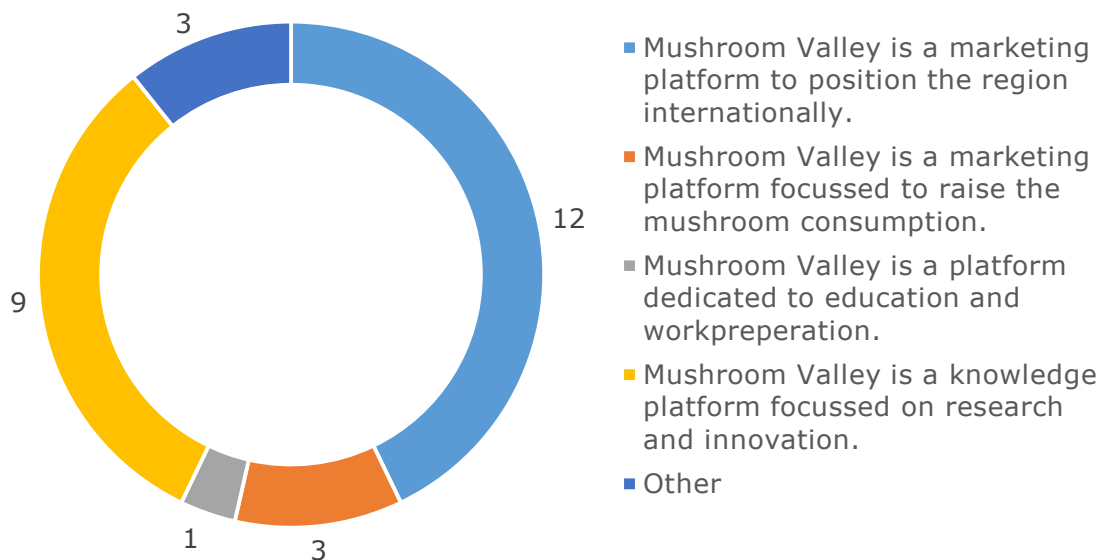


Figure 14 - Result on survey question "What should, according to you, the core focus be of Mushroom Valley?"

Figure 14 shows that 75% of the network believes that the core focus of Mushroom Valley should be either to function as a marketing platform that positions the region internationally, or to function as a knowledge platform focussing on research and innovation. Interviewee 4 even concludes that Mushroom Valley failed this over the last year; “At the time {respectively at the start} it was said to suppliers; ‘it will be fine, I will get you together’, and that has not happened’.

Remarkable is that the partners that want to see focus on positioning the region, consists almost purely partners from the ‘Installation and machinery’ quadrant and the ‘Consultancy’ section. There is only one exception in the group of ‘Installation and machinery’ who believes the main focus should be on research and innovation.

The group of 9 members that wants to see research and innovation as main focus consists of 1 ‘machinery and installation’, supplemented with purely higher education facilities, regional organisations and half the ‘compost, substrates, breeding and crop protection’ quadrant.

Three partners have chosen for the category ‘other’. They see Mushroom Valley preferably as a:

- (1) “marketing platform to position the region internationally, but also focusses on raising the mushroom consumption”,
- (2) “platform to position the region internationally in the field of knowledge, innovation and business”,
- (3) “sector network”.

Members recognize that focussing is not easy for a sector platform with a diverse group of members like Mushroom Valley. The biggest challenge is in the fact that all members have different objectives and common grounds are hard to find (interviewee 2, 4, 5, 6). "The biggest challenge then is getting people together who may have shared interest and not too many conflicting interest", as interviewee 5 says.

At the start of Mushroom Valley, the project management developed an ambition plan with six themes they are committing to, as discussed in Chapter 1. In the survey, members were asked to what extent these different themes were important to them. Table 6 shows the ranking of these themes. In this ranking, anchor 1 was for the theme that was perceived as most important and anchor 6 was for the team perceived as least important by the members.

1	Profiling and positioning	2.14
2	Innovation and research	2.96
3	Stimulating market development	3.00
4	Education and job-preparation	3.50
5	Creating a network of ambassadors	4.25
6	Developing a database of the mushroom sector	5.14

Table 6 - Result on survey question "Rank the themes on level of importance to you (1 most important, 6 least important)"

Almost 90% of all respondents have placed 'profiling and positioning' in their top three of themes that they find important for Mushroom Valley to be committed to. Two-third of the partners has put 'stimulating market development' in their top three. Opinions differ about how this should be achieved. Where interviewees 2 and 4 really wants to see Mushroom Valley at fairs, interviewees 1 and 5 do not see any added value in this. "What makes Dutch mushrooms so special? Why is a Dutch mushroom better than a Polish mushroom for example? You can go to a trade fair, but you have no message to deliver! You have no base where you can say 'a Dutch mushroom is better than a Polish mushroom'" (interviewee 5).

More than half (57,1%) of the respondents has put developing a database of the mushroom sector at place 6. No one has put this at the top of their list. Interviewee 1 explains why; "I do not think that Mushroom Valley can go into those tasks {respectively developing databases}. Simply from the expertise that you need for that, it becomes very difficult for Mushroom Valley to facilitate that sort of things. And no, we do not have those expectations either".

Since all individual objectives are now clear, the platform management can diminish conflicting objectives and create added value for all stakeholders. How this can be done is stated in Chapter 5.

b. What are the *expectations* of members towards the platform?

Values and ideology of an agent that are openly shared, influence motivations, beliefs, norms of behaviour and new expectations regarding the partnership. Since expectations of members towards the benefits of partnerships can motivate members and create a basis for the agreement, which will help the partnership shape, it is important to map the expectations of all members of the network. These insights can be used to form a norm for the partnership.

Figure 15 gives a graphical representation of the expectations of members towards the platform. 13 respondents of the survey (46,4%) expects that Mushroom Valley will become 'the place to be' in the field of knowledge, innovation and technology for the mushroom sector in two years. "A piece of awareness needs to be created, people have to say; 'wait a minute... that is true... that region is where all the knowledge is located!' It is noteworthy that from the 10 organisations who became member of the platform with the objective to achieve this objective, four do not expect that this really will happen.

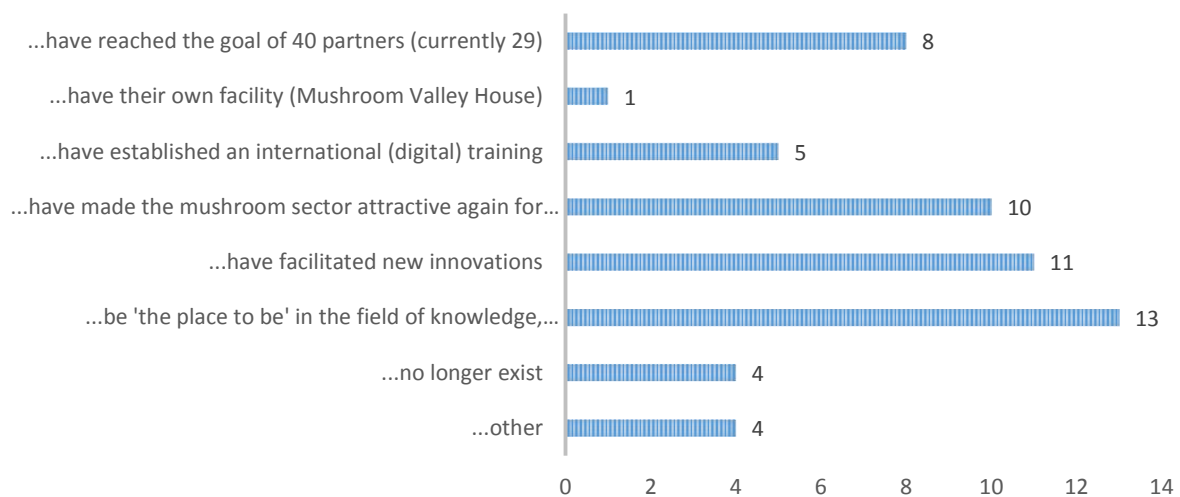


Figure 15 - Result on survey question "What are your expectation towards the platform, in two years Mushroom Valley will..."

This same holds for facilitating new innovations. From the 14 partners who became member in order to achieve innovation, five do not believe this will be reached in the coming two years. "We are all looking for new methodologies, but if we now look at the current situation in which we still work with circular raw materials, they there must first be something else that is better than what we have now" (interviewee 5).

Four members expect that Mushroom Valley does not have what it takes to survive, and therefore will no longer exist in 2020. These four members are working in different parts of the mushroom sector. "We are not going to make it at the expense of the Polish industry, because they are all young men, with deep pockets apparently, who can get money easier than the average older industry here" (interviewee 5).

Explanations or additional expectations were given:

- "Hopefully still exist, but in order to achieve this it is necessary to incorporate the primary sector in the platform. This will be crucial in order to become future-proof."
- "Promotion of the mushroom and innovation are fundamental aspects for the Dutch cultivation and competition."
- "Position the Dutch supplier even more in the mind of the worldwide mushroom sector, and boost consumption globally."
- "Strong doubts whether it add value for the company, there are no activities that will increase turnover now or in the future for us."

These expectations towards the platform influence the loyalty of members. 78,6% of the network has the intention to continue their membership, partly based on the results achieved in the next two year. The biggest group of members (50%) stated that they will continue their membership if (almost) all objectives have been reached. "Then this movement has proven itself" (survey). Results are shown in figure 16.

- If after three year (almost) all goals have been achieved, our membership ends.
- If after three year (almost) all goals have been achieved, we will celebrate this success together by continuing our membership.
- Obtaining successes has no influence on whether or not we will continue our membership. After this period we would like to continue our contribution and extend our membership.
- Obtaining successes has no influence on whether or not we will continue our membership. After this period, we say goodbye to Mushroom Valley.

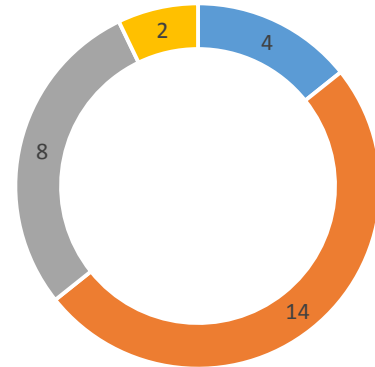


Figure 16 - Result on survey question "Are you planning on continuing your membership after the initiated three year period?"

The eight members who are extending their membership unrelated to outcomes, explain their opinion:

- "If Mushroom Valley contributes to making the Netherlands 'the place to be', facilitates education, and makes progress regarding Big Data – so all three pillars – than it is a continuously process and we will definitely stay member." (survey)
- "The sector will always have a need for research and innovation." (survey)
- "After three year, we are not finished yet!" (survey)
- "Three year is too short to reach all objectives, it will take more time." (survey)
- "For us, Mushroom Valley does not necessarily succeed if we initiate enough new projects or create enough innovation." (interviewee 6)

For four members (14,3%) it is important to see that the objectives are durable and need continuously support. The group of members that says that they will end their membership, if (almost) all objectives have been achieved, gave some explanation on it:

- "Objectives of suppliers are different from knowledge institutions." (survey)
- "At the moment, the added value of Mushroom Valley for the company is too limited. Apart from achieving objectives, we have to look carefully at what a future should look like. The decision has not been taken, but the consideration will certainly come in the long term. There is too much industry orientation, too much machine construction and too little cultivation and marketing." (survey)
- "Too little output." (survey)

Two members have already decided to stop the partnership after this period; "I do not expect that I will discover or hear many new things in the coming year and there is also relatively little I have to say, also because there are still only a limited number of people at these meetings", according to interviewee 3. Interviewee 1 adds to this; "I think Mushroom Valley will no longer exist in two years, because there are too many interests and a lack of focus". Another argument for this decision was given in the open answer option of the survey; "The financial contribution does not outweigh the benefits of participating in the network." The option to open answer the survey question showed also the importance of including the primary sector in whether or not members will continue their membership; "It is important that the primary sector connects to the platform. When this is achieved, we see opportunities to continue membership. If this is not the case, we will pass."

c. What are the **expectations** of members towards the management of the platform?

With 53,6%, the majority of the members values it when the project management of Mushroom Valley establishes relationships between the member network and the outside world, as can be seen in figure 17. This is in line with the expectations of interviewee 5; "What Mushroom Valley could do is facilitate". It is appreciated when the project management of the platform raises money and subsidies for research and innovation in the mushroom sector (50,0%). The 14 members of the network that expect the project management to raise money and subsidy for research and innovation involve members from all quadrants of the platform (figure 5). Education organizations as well as 'Processors and packaging', 'Compost, substrates, breeding and crop protection, 'Consultancy', and 'Installations and machinery' expect this from the project management.

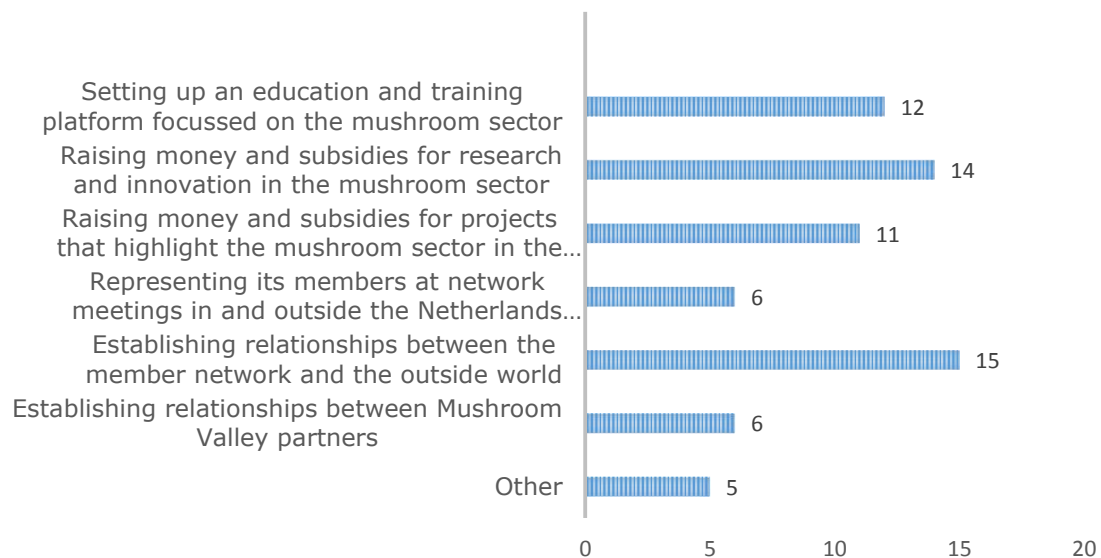


Figure 17 - Result on survey question "What are your expectations towards the management of the platform?"

Establishing relationships between Mushroom Valley partners and representing its members at network meetings in and outside the Netherlands, is not something a lot of partners are expecting from the project management of the platform (both 21,4%). The six members that do expect from the project management that they represent their members at network meetings in- and outside the Netherlands, are a varied group of members. They include members varying from the lowest till the highest contribution fee category, and from 'education' to 'installations and machinery' and 'compost, substrates, breeding and crop protection'.

Five members of the network had another or additional expectation of the project management of Mushroom Valley:

- (1) "Connecting its members with the world",
- (2) "Raising subsidy for promotion of mushrooms in multiple countries",
- (3) "Stimulating the consumption (market and promotion of the mushroom)",
- (4) "Raising subsidy for education",
- (5) "On the one hand positioning Mushroom Valley internationally, on the other hand communicating Big Data regarding the mushroom sector worldwide to their members."

Interviewee 4 would like to see the project management to spend some time in facilitating the innovation process; "Maybe the job of the management of Mushroom Valley to organize something per sector and not always with all members together. Bring technique together on a separate afternoon".

d. What is the *willingness to invest* of members in the platform?

By researching the willingness to invest a more complete picture can be created and conclusions about the feasibility of objectives and expectations can be drawn in Chapter 5. The willingness to invest financially in addition to the contribution fee, is low. "It is a severe investment for the return you get. [...] At the moment, the costs do not weigh against the benefits", according to interviewee 2. Only one respondent claims to be open for this option. "If you really want to make your voice heard in the sector - we have also argued for it - the contribution has to be raised in order to have a professional manager on the road for three or four days a week to stimulate projects. I think Mushroom Valley can be a very suitable platform for that", according to interviewee 6.

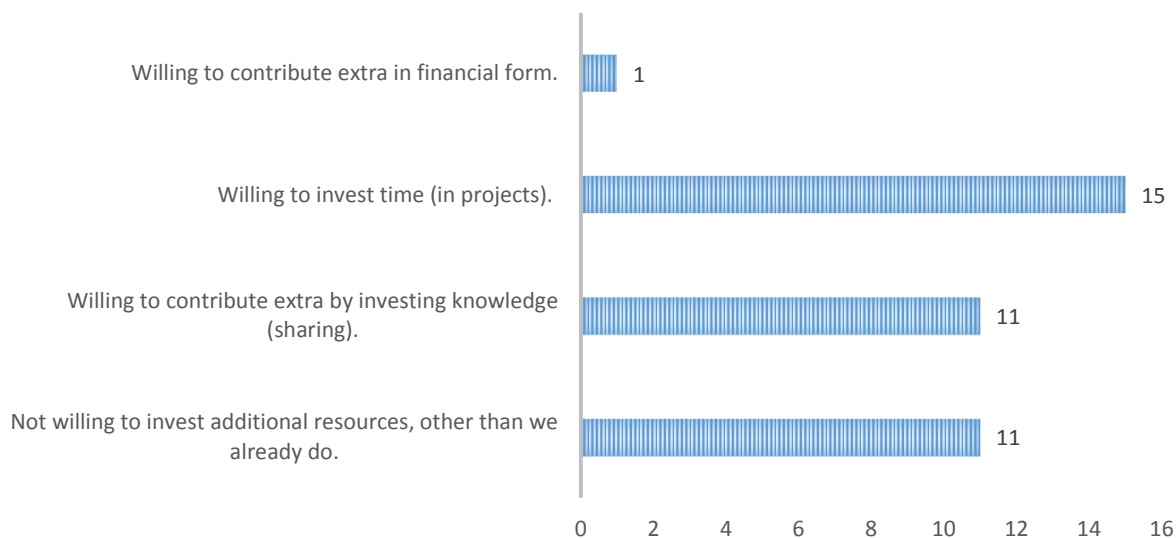


Figure 18 - Result on survey question "In order to reach objectives, we are..."

As can be seen in figure 18, with a small lead, most partners (15) are willing to invest time (in projects) over contributing by investing knowledge (11). However, when talking more in depth during the interviews, it turned out that competitive sensitivity is a hot issue. "Information sharing is found to be business-sensitive. [...] If you suggest ideas, at least from our sector, then the rest knows what you are doing and you do not want that" (interviewee 4). Interviewee 6 agrees with this statement; "The problem is, especially with competitive topics, how I want to distinguish myself and contribute my knowledge. Am I going to make my competitors stronger?"

11 Members (39,3%) of the respondents claims to be unwilling to invest additional resources, other than they already do.

Members of the network are also not always aware of their own capabilities. "I do not think that we, as [COMPANY NAME], can do anything to put the Netherlands on the map again. Of course, partly the issue has to be tackled by the sector itself, and growers will have to resolve this themselves.", as said by the CEO of one of the biggest companies in the platform. The tendency of the current network is to follow other companies, but without first movers the sector keeps on waiting. "If the sector has an idea, then we want to do our best to make a success of it. We would like to advise and give our vision on the matter, but we are not going to pull the case. Because if a company pulls the business, then there will be support. If a company wants something, then I know for sure that they are investing manpower in it" (interviewee 5).

4.3. Examples of well-functioning business sector platforms

a. What does literature say about the influence of objectives and expectations on network functioning?

Networks are usually founded to dynamically respond to emerging market opportunities. Members have **expectations** – beliefs and opinions - about the benefits of a partnership. The expectations of a member towards the benefits of partnerships, serve some important roles (Carroll & Steane, 2000). They (a) *motivate* members to joint discussions about forming a partnership in order to achieve objectives that are out of the league of individual members. By having certain beliefs in a partnership a base is formed for the agreement, which will help the partnership (b) *shape*. Insights about appropriate and tolerated behaviour will form a (c) *norm* for the partnership. Lastly, altering beliefs can function as a (d) *change agent* when set objectives are no longer adequate. Values and ideology of an agent that are openly shared, influence motivations, beliefs, norms of behaviour and new expectations regarding the partnership (Carroll & Steane, 2000).

Not having clear **objectives** is often a major cause of failure for partnerships. According to Carroll and Steane (2000), many partnerships agree on broad objectives, but leave room for interpretation in the description of more detailed objectives. Partners may develop a different understanding of the objectives, which can lead to misunderstanding, lack of guidance, and possible conflict between partners. This absence of clarity of objectives and the direction to go, may increase the probability of perception of other members having a 'hidden' agenda. However, variance in focus between members do not have to be problematic, although conflicts between objectives are common. It is critical for partnerships to be transparent about where priorities lie (Carroll & Steane, 2000).

b. How does the mushroom sector landscape look like for Mushroom Valley?

The mushroom sector, in the South of the Netherlands, is represented through three main initiatives; Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel, (Z)LTO 'vakgroep paddenstoelen' and Mushroom Valley. An overview is shown in figure 19. All three initiatives are aware of the fact that the consumer market is changing; buyers have higher demands and the importance of sustainable production in combination with increasing space pressure and challenging demands on operations and logistics require an adequate response. The awareness is growing about the fact that companies or governments cannot do this on their own. The strength has to be found in collaborating with other partners in the supply chain. By combining business communities and government, the threats of the mushroom sector can be turned into opportunities (Paddenstoelenpact, n.d.-c). In this section, all three initiatives and their differences will be discussed.

Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel is part of Greenport Gelderland, an initiative that originated around a decade ago and created an infrastructure imitated by the province. The province Gelderland wanted to support a couple of 'speerpuntbranches' by developing a number of departments. Greenport is the overarching organisation behind the five departments; greenhouse horticulture in Bommelerwaard, greenhouse horticulture in Heusen-Angeren, fruit trees, avenue trees and mushrooms. All these departments are related to the region where the Greenport is active. In the municipality Maasdriel there is a pretty substantial concentration mushroom companies, comparable to the north of Limburg and the region Uden, Boekel. Paddenstoelenpact is active in the region Maasdriel and is a joint venture between various organizations, including the municipality of Maasdriel, Rabobank Bommelerswaard, (Z)LTO and sector representatives. These three organisations make an external contribution and the province makes an addition to the budget (Personal Communication, 19/11/2018).

The common objective of these parties is to preserve, strengthen and renew the mushroom sector in the area Maasdriel. Maasdriel region is the third region in the Netherlands regarding the production of mushrooms. In order to maintain this strong position, the collaboration believes that entrepreneurs must innovate, by product and process (Paddenstoelenpact, n.d.-c). The main ambition is to make the mushroom cluster Maasdriel an (even more) important, innovative and sustainable region in the Netherlands (Paddenstoelenpact, n.d.-a). Mushroom growers do not have to be member of the ZLTO in order to be supported by Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel. With this, interviewee 7 indicates the difference between Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel and Mushroom Valley; "Mushroom Valley is an initiative that originates in the Southeast, especially on the initiative of the periphery. In that respect, we are a totally incomparable situation because we have been initiated by the province and we are in the interest of growers, but not through memberships and not dependent of the growers."

What does Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel concrete do for the mushroom sector? Annually there is one meeting, a barbeque, where everyone is allowed to show up. Twice a year Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel has a management meeting at a grower where the location managers are allowed to join (Personal Communication, 19/11/2018). "We take a look with the entrepreneur, how his plans can be implemented. In many cases this means that together with that entrepreneur we are looking for financing in the form of a subsidy and then in the form of that subsidy he gets the means to attract external expertise. Because you see, one of the implementation possibilities that we have within the Greenport is the Greenport innovation fund", according interviewee 7. According to this interviewee, a fund of 1.7 million euro has been assigned to support projects for the upcoming three year.

The board consists of ZLTO representative, in this case Ko Hooijmans, Rabobank representative, and the municipality of Maasdriel. The alderman of the municipality is the chairman of the Paddenstoelenpact (Personal Communication, 19/11/2018).

The **ZLTO** is - the regional division of the national LTO - combines 14,500 farmers and growers in the south of the Netherlands (Zeeland, Noord-Brabant, Limburg and Zuid-Gelderland) (ZLTO, n.d.). LTO Nederland is the largest entrepreneurial organization in mushroom cultivation. More than 60% of the entrepreneurs in mushroom cultivation is member of one of the regional LTO organizations. The 'vakgroep paddenstoelen' has come up with a set of objectives for 2020. These objectives are related to innovation, strengthening the market, sustainability, entrepreneurship and knowledge (LTO, n.d.). The connection between (Z)LTO and 'Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel' can be found in the person of Ko Hooijmans. Hooijmans is chairman (Z)LTO 'vakgroep paddenstoelen' and involved in the management team of the 'Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel'.

The criticism on ZLTO is raising. "I think that the construction like ZLTO has at the moment, is starting to have a rather dated character", as interviewee 1 stated. Interviewee 5 adds to that that "ZLTO is acting a bit like a firefighter for the problems at the moment, there is not really a long term plan." The ZLTO is playing as an advocate for the mushroom sector, which brings along advantages but also disadvantages. Interviewee 1 concludes it as follow: "Given that the ZLOT is representing one group of primary producers, you are automatically classified as being the same." Being the same is fateful for a profit making company, since by being not distinctive, price will become leading. Mushroom Valley has the mindset of changing the sector into a more innovative and sustainable sector. According to interviewee 5 "ZLTO is not the right partner to help alternative pathways, they have a very different task." Where Mushroom Valley tries to connect and innovate together with other sectors, this will not be an option for ZLTO according to interviewee 5; "ZTLO is an association of mushroom growers, working on other crops will be difficult, mushroom growers will say: spend your time on my current problem, because that is what I pay you for."

The biggest **difference** between the platforms can be found in the type of members. Where the ZLTO 'vakgroep paddenstoelen' has around 100 members from the primary sector, Mushroom Valley has around 30 members from the periphery. Janssen (project manager Mushroom Valley) mentions that Mushroom Valley does not want to compete with the (Z)LTO 'vakgroep paddenstoelen', however a collaboration could be beneficial to both parties. In the recent past, the (Z)LTO and Mushroom Valley collaborated - with Scelta Mushrooms and Delphy - on organizing the national mushroom days 2018. According to Janssen, Mushroom Valley does not have anything to offer the primary sector at the moment. However, for the future there might be opportunities to include the primary sector into Mushroom Valley by offering them a membership without financial fees as a first step (personal communication, 17 September 2018).

Another difference between the initiatives is the way of financing. Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel is funded by Rabobank Bommelierswaard and the province, which brings an estimated cash flow of € 100.000 – € 150.00. LTO NL 'vakgroep paddenstoelen' collects subscription fees from their members in the primary sector (estimated cash flow of € 100.000), and Mushroom Valley is built on approximately € 100.000 - € 150.000) dues from members in the periphery (J. Janssen, personal communication, 17 September 2018).

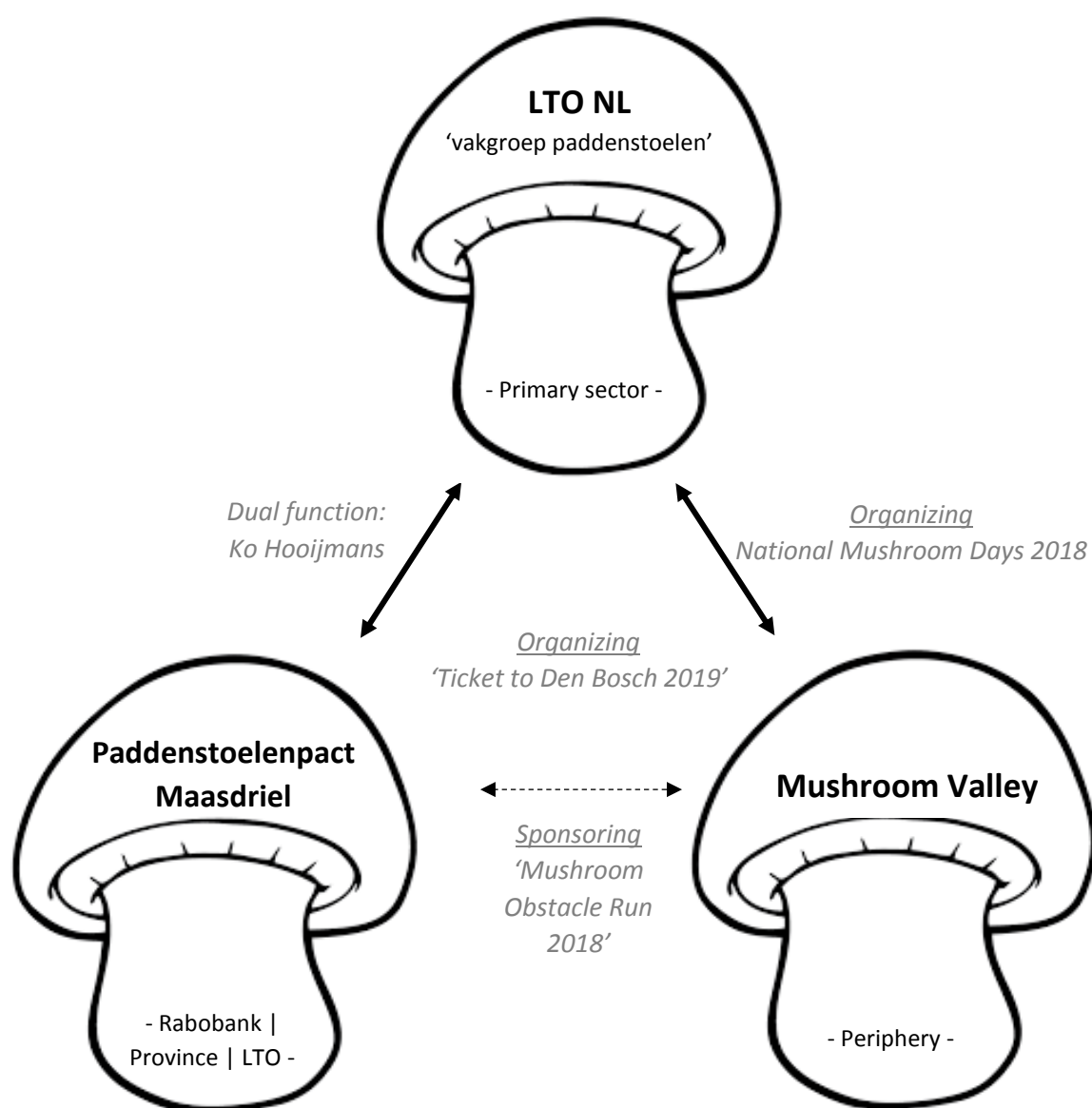


Figure 19 - Overview of the landscape of the mushroom sector or Mushroom Valley

Trends

Despite the fact that there is not much information out there about trends in the mushroom sector, insiders in the sector together sketch a pretty clear picture for the future.

The mushroom sector is traditionally to be found in the south of the Netherlands. "If you look at the mushroom industry in the Netherlands, so the growers but also the supplying companies, it is a very well developed system that provides very high yields. Nowhere in the world the amount of mushrooms harvested from one ton of compost is comparable to the amount of the Netherlands.", as interviewee 5 indicates. He follows his story up with the knowledge that the mushroom sector in the Netherlands has become a mature market which is no longer grow. Sales is strongly dependent on consumption. The profit margins for growers is relatively low and the predictions are not very good according interviewee 5. "There will probably be a concession for excavating the casing soil in Northern Germany, so it means that the casing soil has to come from further, which will make it more expensive. Even if you will start working with alternatives, you will not be facing cheaper options."

The group of mushroom growers in the Netherlands is unrelenting to aging (Personal Communication; interviewee 6). "I think there are quite a lot of children who are not willing to take over the family business", according interviewee 5. Interviewee 6 adds to that that the sector severely needs working force.

Since the loss of 'productschappen' in the Netherlands, growers do no longer invest money on new initiatives collectively. "The research infrastructure in Europe has been eroding for years now" (interviewee 5). He also mentioned possible reasons why this happens. Research projects are mostly long-term projects which will take a few years. As grower in this market you do not know whether or not you will still exist in 5 years. Investing money into research of for example 4 year is than not a logical way to go.

The situation in the Netherlands has been made extra difficult by the recent developments in the mushroom sector worldwide. "The Chinese are embracing mushroom cultivation at a dizzying pace. [...] At the moment, Dutch companies are building a lot in Russia, because of the boycott on Western fruit and vegetables. This gives an enormous impulse to Russian horticulture. So at the moment there is a temporary market growth in Russia and China." according to interviewee 5. For this reason he predicts that over the next five years, a lot of growers will close their business.

These trends can cause a need for innovation, sees also interviewee 6; "there is too little labor potential, so you have to go to modernization, to another cultivation system". The mushroom sector as it is at the moment in the Netherlands is facing challenges, but what can be alternatives to focus on according the interviewees? Interviewee 5 would like to focus on a diversity of crops; "The king's oyster mushroom is becoming a pretty big market. [...] Organic cultivation, which has much higher margins, can be interesting. [...] Almond mushrooms can be grown on compost, which might provide an interesting alternative market to look at." Another trend and possible way to go is mentioned by interviewee 7; "What strikes me is the number of growers who start working with side businesses like packaging, recreation or producing compost themselves".

c. What are examples of comparable sector platforms?

Feed Design Lab is a practical research and education center for innovation and sustainability in the animal feed sector. It combines research, production and training in one location. Over 100 national and international companies act as together in the Feed Design Lab and actively participate in the network. Together they have built a pilot plant which can be used for technological testing, production of test- and experimental feed, and demonstrations. The plant is similar to a compound feed plant, but the execution is smaller. All parts can be used separately as it is modular. The main activities of the Feed Design Lab are renting the pilot plant, providing training and developing projects (Feed Design Lab, n.d.-a).

At Feed Design Lab, training courses with open registrations are organized and tailor-made courses are developed in the field of animal feed production and (process) technology. Practice experience is incorporated in every course. For partner companies, projects are developed that contribute to the objective of achieving a sustainable animal protein chain. The focus here is on the use of new raw materials, health and new technology (Feed Design Lab, n.d.-a).

The Feed Design Lab organizes three to four exclusive partner events per year, varying from workshops to innovation- and knowledge sessions, business trips and business drinks (Feed Design Lab, n.d.-a). In return, partners make an annual contribution. Partners decide for themselves their level of involvement and whether or not they want to collaborate with others in a joint project or a private confidential test. Feed Design Lab advises its partner companies on trial design, training development, implementation and follow-up of test results.

The Feed Design Lab has two different types of partnerships; chain partners and community partners. The 10 chain partners together form the Advisory Board. The advisory board makes the activity program, advises the board on development of Feed Design Lab and is an important advisory body for the management of Feed Design Lab. The Advisory Board chooses the board of the Feed Design Lab foundation. Chain partners invest € 10.000 annually, this in contrast to community partners who only pay € 3.000 annually. Chain partners as well as community partners are part of the Feed Design Lab network, are invited to exclusive partner events and can participate in specific Feed Design Lab Projects. There is intensive contact between the organization and its partner companies, the vision of the partners regarding future developments and necessary innovations determines the activities that are organized (Feed Design Lab, n.d.-b).

When searching for information about the Feed Design Lab, multiple business websites show up that show that they are proud partner of the initiative. This in contrary to the partners of Mushroom Valley, who do mostly not mention Mushroom Valley on their website.

The Mushroom Council is an organization of fresh market producers or importers in the United States of America, created and funded through a commodity checkoff program. All partners together produce or import annually over 225,000 kilo mushrooms. The Mushroom Council is under supervision of the Agricultural Marketing Service of America. They lead research and promotion programs which are aimed to expand, maintain and develop markets for individual agricultural commodities in the United States and abroad. These industry programs are initiated and funded by the industry groups that they serve (The Mushroom Council, n.d.-a).

They focus on national promotion of fresh mushrooms, through consumer public relations, foodservice communications and retail communications. "Many different venues are used to promote fresh mushrooms to consumers, such as working with professional chefs in developing and promoting new recipes, working with produce department managers to maintain the highest quality mushroom product for customers and sending out thousands of brochures each year to consumers hungry for new mushroom ideas" ("The Mushroom Council," n.d.-b). The website of The Mushroom Council is dedicated to inspire, inform and explain everything about the mushroom. With recipes, informational video's about nutritional aspects, explanation about sustainably and up-to-date news items, the website invites to dive deeper into the world of the mushroom. Besides the website, all other social media channels are actively used as well; Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube.

In order to achieve their objectives, The Mushroom Council has initiated multiple events as 'Mushroom Masters: A Tournament of Taste' and the 'National Mushroom Month' (The Mushroom Council, n.d.-a). This last one took place recently; September 2018. The Council has officially called this month to Mushroom Month. For this occasion, the Mushroom Council was sharing the health and taste benefits of making mushrooms the main ingredient in consumer's favorite meals. "Throughout September, we will be conducting a variety of social, digital and PR activities, including new recipe how-to videos, infographics, social media events and media outreach spotlighting our favorite mushroom-centric bowls on menus nationwide," explained Amy Wood, public relations specialist for the Mushroom Council to The Produce News (Dimartino, 2018). The Mushroom Council wants to remind consumers that they can always upgrade meals with fresh mushrooms.

On top of the promotion, The Mushroom Council puts a lot of effort in creating content like reports on mushroom impact ("The Mushroom Council Unveils Report On Mushroom Impact," 2017).

5. Conclusion and recommendation

5.1. Introduction

Based on the results of this research, multiple conclusions can be drawn in order to answer the main research questions;

(RQ1) What are network characteristics of business sector platform Mushroom Valley?,
(RQ2) What are internal drivers of emerging business sector platform Mushroom Valley?,
(RQ3) What are examples of well-functioning business sector platforms?, and
(RQ4) Based on network characteristics and internal drivers, which future scenarios are suitable for emerging business sector platform Mushroom Valley?

Research questions 1 and 2 will be discussed in Section 5.2. Section 5.3 will elaborate on research question 3. After this, research question 4 will be introduced in Section 5.4 where three scenario's will be discussed. To finalize this chapter, several recommendations will be made.

5.2. General conclusions platform Mushroom Valley

Network characteristics

This research has focussed on three network characteristics; (1) network structure, (2) geographic location and (3) corporate communication set.

Network theory claims that relations in a network can shape the *network structures* and enable or disable the formation of new relations to reach individual and/or mutual objectives (Borgatti et al., 2009; Salancik, 1995). So, in order to understand the functioning of inter-organizational networks, it is important to consider the network structure, including the governance of the network. With the presence of private-private, public-private, public-public, business-science and public-social partnerships, the network of Mushroom Valley can be classified as heterogeneous. Mushroom Valley contributed significantly to new relations among members and has intensified old relations and strengthened the network structure.

Multiple roles are present within the network structure of Mushroom Valley. As can be seen in figure 6, the majority of the members are connected to a huge share of the other members in the network. However, there is no member who is connected to all other members and therefore fulfill the role of group member for 100% according to the categorisation by Man (2004). Euroveen BV, Mertens | Phormium and Monaghan Mushrooms can be identified as most close to this role, with respectively 16, 16 and 15 relations. Both Gicom, Greenyard and Hofmans can be classified in the role of bridges. Gicom forms a bridge between Mertens | Phormium and Legro. Greenyard forms a bridge between Fontys and Museum de Locht. Hofmans fulfills the role of bridge between (a) GLT Europe with Christiaens Group as well as Legro, and Monaghan Mushrooms with Legro. FTNON is the bridge between Monaghan Mushrooms and Mush Comb, and GTL Europe with Fontys as well as Citaverde. The rest of the members, who are not mentioned here specifically, fulfill partly a role of group member and partly the role of bridge.

Part of a network structure is the way of governance (Provan & Kenis, 2007). Mushroom Valley does not have a clear orchestrator position, since there is no central player in the network based on its market power, brand name or position in the supply chain. The governance of the network is arranged through a Network Administrative Organization (NAO). The management of Mushroom Valley is set up specifically to govern the network and its objectives. Members are still actively interacting with each other, but the network

in the end is externally governed. This type of structure is funded through mandate and its members for the single objective of network governance. Accompanied with this governance structure, moderate density of trust and objective consensus are moderately high. The need for network-level competencies is high.

In order to acquire a constructive corporate reputation which will result in improved organizational performance, multiple aspects should be taken into account while managing corporate identity including the (historical) roots (Riel & Balmer, 1997). The case platform is *geographical located* based on historic reasons. This is supposed to be an essential element of the platform. The majority of the members would like to see a more national focus instead of the regional focus. In the current form, a big portion of the members of Mushroom Valley does not see the added value of the platform. The importance of having a regional sector network is questionable.

As discussed in the beginning of this article, managing the *corporate communication set* is a way to expose an organization's identity (Bernstein, 1986; Grunig, 1992). The gap that is created between the actual and desired corporate identity, can be narrowed through arranging the corporate identity set of communications, symbolism and behaviour. Members would like to see a different format for the newsletter with more content on platform level instead of member level. The mobile application Bundeling is not used widely among members, and members do not see the added value of the application. Some members see the possibilities the application can fulfill but also see that it is not used for that, since this group of active users is limited. Mushroom Valley needs more members to actively use the tool in order to convince the late-adapters to join as well.

Internal drivers

This research has focussed on three internal drivers; (1) objectives, (2) expectations and (3) willingness to invest. With the expectations the hopes towards the platform as a whole and towards the management specific are both taken into account.

Stakeholder theory proposes that *objectives* drive the stakeholders behavior (Freeman et al., 2004) and that the consideration of (key) stakeholder objectives in strategies raises the chances of resolving business related challenges (Parmar et al., 2010). By researching the specific objectives of stakeholders, the future directions of the business can be studied (Freeman et al., 2007). Heterogeneity may arouse conflicts due to dissimilar objectives (Fadeeva, 2004) and can increase the risk of conflicts and opportunistic behaviour creating less reliable relations (Gulati, 1995; Powell et al., 1996). This definitely is a risk for Mushroom Valley and may cause potential difficulties for the future of the platform. The fact that Mushroom Valley should focus its activities has become really clear during the research. Both informal communication with members, the survey as well as the interviews indicate the urgent need for focus. However, members do recognize that focussing is not easy for a sector platform with a diverse group of members like Mushroom Valley.

Having no clear objectives communicated by the platform can harm Mushroom Valley. In the mission statement, on the website, and in presentations of the management board, an enormous selection of objectives are presented. Most of these objectives are relatively broad and leave space for interpretation in the description of more detailed objectives. The danger for Mushroom Valley is that members will develop different understandings of the objective, which may result in misunderstanding and possible conflict among members.

This research focusses on a set of influences of partnerships and is built on the idea that members act intentionally by applying means in order to achieve ends. These ends can vary from earning money to more reputation oriented objectives. According to data

collected, the main objectives to become member of the platform are related to research and innovation, education and training, and better positioning the sector. Creating a database is not a priority of the members.

These objectives result in the *expectation* that Mushroom Valley will become the 'place to be' for mushrooms, facilitate innovations and have made the mushroom sector attractive again for youth (potential) employees. It is important to recognize these expectations, since expectations serve an important role towards the benefits of partnerships (Carroll & Steane, 2000). Expectations can motivate members and a basis can be formed for the agreement, which will help the partnership shape. Despite the frequently asked question by members 'what is in it for me', they are mainly in the platform for group beneficial objectives. The significance for a platform to have a common objective, may become clear. However, the common objective of a partnership is often multifaceted.

The current members of the platform expect of the management team of Mushroom Valley to establish relationships between the network and the outside world, set up education and training facilities, and raise money and subsidies for research and innovation. Members do not expect the management to help them to establish relationships amongst members. However, there are partners who see this as a missed opportunity. Especially partners who are not from this region or less familiar to the sector, will appreciate it to get involved more into the network. If Mushroom Valley will choose to increase the network by including more institutions from outside Horst aan de Maas, it has to invest in the network synergy.

Due to the fact that expectations of members serve an important role in network functioning, it is important to manage these expectations well. If members are in the network with a too wide variety of expectations, this will harm the process. Members will be unmotivated to joint discussions about objectives that are out of the league of the individual member. With mismanaged expectations, the network will not form a harmonious shape and no norm will be considered, based on appropriate and tolerated behaviour. For Mushroom Valley, the expectations of members cover a big range. Some are in line with the platforms objectives, some are not. Considering the effects and role of expectations, this can be seen as a weakness of the platform. However, when set objectives are no longer adequate, altering beliefs can function as change agent. In order to achieve this, norms of behaviour and new expectations regarding the partnership have to be openly shared.

By also including the *willingness of investment* in this research, an even more inclusive picture can be created and conclusions about the feasibility of these objectives and expectations can be drawn. Members are pretty loyal towards the platform. Despite the fact that the overall trend is that concrete results are lacking, 79% of the platform indicates their willingness to stay member. However, for 50% of the members this will be related to reaching objectives over the next year. At the current policy, Mushroom Valley has a wide variety of objectives. Realistically it is not possible to achieve all these objectives in the next year. Since membership of the partners depend on the objectives that will be reached, it is important to choose your battles and focus on them. The high participation rate of this research (100% for survey), shows the involvement of members towards the platform. The loyalty is limited in regard to the financial resources already invested by the members of the platform. Most members however are willing to invest time when needed.

Competitive sensitivity withhold members to share more information with Mushroom Valley or its members. Despite the fact that a lot of members predict that the sector should innovate, the overall trend is that members are not willing to invest in collaboration

regarding innovation. Distrust to each other is high and the urgent need for change is not always noticeable. The sector screams for innovation, but is unwilling to cooperate in order to achieve this. Mushroom Valley has the opportunity to provide the sector with insight about the need for innovation and can function as facilitator.

Members expect Mushroom Valley to improve its added value and reach set objectives, but are not always aware of their own capabilities to support the platform. At the moment CEO's, high managers or communication employees are matched with the platform. Mushroom Valley wants involved, collaborative projects, with input from companies itself. Since mostly operational managers and other practical staff deals with projects, vacancies, etc., there seems to be a mismatch between the target group of Mushroom Valley and the actual targeted group of members.

Members are not explicitly proud to be member of Mushroom Valley. Of the 29 members that participated in this research, just 2 members had a 'proud member of Mushroom Valley' notification on their website.

5.3. General conclusions mushroom sector

The mushroom sector in the Netherlands has developed strongly over time. Where the Netherlands had a leading position for a long time, competitive foreign companies are now entering this top of the market. The need for innovation and positioning the Dutch market becomes more visible throughout the sector.

The mushroom sector, in the South of the Netherlands, is represented through three main initiatives; Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel, (Z)LTO 'vakgroep paddenstoelen' and Mushroom Valley. All three initiatives have a different target group and objectives. Also the governance structure, network, geographic focus and budget are different. Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel is really limited to the region Maasdriel, since the initiative is based on funding of Greenport Gelderland which has to benefit the province. The criticism on ZLTO is rising as companies see their structure as outdated and static. The target group of this initiative are the mushroom growers and the main objective of the ZLTO is to represent their members. Mushroom Valley is the only initiative that originated by the collaboration of the periphery. Their objectives are not so much to represent their members, but to facilitate the sector where needed.

5.4. Three scenarios

Based on the conclusions of research questions 1, 2, and 3, research question 4 will be answered in this section; Based on network characteristics and internal drivers, which future scenarios are suitable for emerging business sector platform Mushroom Valley?

Three different scenarios will be discussed here in order to create a sustainable, business platform for the mushroom sector in the Netherlands. In order to create these scenarios, findings from literature, interviews and the survey are grouped. The question used was; Which findings can be solved or utilized by the same approach? By grouping the complete list of results and conclusions, three scenarios became clear which include the objectives and expectations current members have. During the research, a lot of informal contact with the management team of Mushroom Valley occurred. Since this research is conducted in a timeframe of six months, logically plans of Mushroom Valley have developed over time. All three scenarios are suitable and acceptable within the current practise of Mushroom Valley.

Scenario 1 – Reputation management

WHAT – In this scenario, the main objective of the platform is to create a reputation change of the mushroom sector in the Netherlands. This can be done by focussing on promoting the product as well as the work environment. This scenario fulfils an objective that is widely supported by the network, which indicates that for this direction not many changes in the network will or has to be made.

HOW – Mushroom Valley claims it wants to promote the Dutch mushroom over competitive, foreign mushrooms. In the current way of working, there is no link visible between Mushroom Valley and the Netherlands. The corporate communication is not aligned with the corporate identity. People have to start asking questions or search the internet to find out where this 'valley' is geographical located. Mushroom Valley can be a step ahead to this interested people by showing their connection with the Netherlands. This can be done by incorporating the colours of the Dutch flag (red-white-blue), or other typical Dutch representative items, into their campaigns. These symbols should be incorporated in the communication set.

The name Mushroom Valley is not really known outside the Dutch mushroom sector, according to insiders. Even within companies of members, Mushroom Valley is not known at all employees. In order to create a widely known platform and promote mushrooms, it can organise events. With this events, the sector can get together and consumers can be informed. Examples of events that can be organised are a 'Mushroom Week' or 'Mushroom Month', after the example of the US Mushroom Council. This initiative can function as basis for many activities. It can be used to draw the attention, after which it is up to Mushroom Valley to use this attention to keep the communication rolling and keep consumers, potential labor and researchers involved with the sector. In order to successfully operate this scenario, Dutch growers have to get involved with the platform.

Mushroom Valley can inform consumers by (1) delivering input for supermarket magazines which might have the topic mushrooms, (2) maintaining a website with facts, storytelling and recipes related to mushrooms to enthusiasm consumers and inform scholars with information for projects and presentations, (3) provide content around individual initiatives like the 'Mushroom Obstacle Run' of an grower in Amerzoden or bigger events like 'Lekker Venlo'. These magazines, websites or events have already a basis for food or more specifically mushrooms and can be used to share knowledge. By incorporating these

information events in the communication, the aspect of behaviour can be addressed in the corporate communication set.

An often heard objective of members was to promote the Dutch mushroom. However, when looking at the packaging of fresh mushrooms in the supermarket, the origin is written down in a small font and is hard to notice in a short view by consumers. Mushroom Valley can think about how packaging material can add to achieving this objective, by combining different partners in the chain, maybe even the supermarkets who sell the product, to come to an effective use of the packaging material related to promoting the Dutch mushroom. This concrete objective can attract growers into the platform. After all, an individual grower will not be capable of achieving this change on its own. Mushroom Valley can combine forces and is likely to be more successful.

Choosing for this scenario of promotion, is relatively low-cost but requires a lot of time and creativity from the management of the platform. However, it also provides an opportunity for Mushroom Valley to divide the marketing plans into small projects that can be outsourced to creative marketing interns.

WHY – When looking at the network of Mushroom Valley, a clear cry for profiling and positioning can be noticed. Almost 90% of all respondents have placed ‘profiling and positioning’ in their top three of objectives that they find important for Mushroom Valley to be committed to. Two-third of the partners has put ‘stimulating market development’ in their top three. However, not only internally the cry for positioning becomes louder, throughout the sector the need for innovation and positioning the Dutch market becomes more visible. Where the Netherlands had a leading position for a long time, competitive foreign companies are now entering this top of the market. The current members of the platform expect of the management team of Mushroom Valley to establish relationships between the network and the outside world. This scenario will fit this profile perfectly.

By doing this, a measurable outcome will be realised which is needed to keep members involved. After all, for 50% of the members continuing their membership will be related to reaching (measurable) objectives over the next year.

The objectives that will be met with this scenario are unfeasible for individual companies. Mushroom Valley is the platform that combines all different aspects of the mushroom chain and has the power to change the image regarding the sector. Small steps can be taken in order to achieve a bigger (common) objective in the long term. Since this scenario is open for free riders, it is important to communicate the importance of doing this and to show the impact of the contribution made by members. Members are not explicitly proud to be member of Mushroom Valley. By showing that Dutch mushrooms and Mushroom Valley are products and initiatives to be proud of, a snowball-effect can be generated. On top of that, this way of working brings new, young and fresh ideas into the sector.

Another important fact is that it will not interfere with the competitive sensitivity that members withhold to share information. Distrust to each other is high and the urgent need for change is not always noticeable. This is a scenario in which all quadrants of the network can be represented, without a big investment of knowledge or money.

Scenario 2 – Facilitate innovation

WHAT – In this scenario, the main objective of the platform is to facilitate innovation in the mushroom sector in the Netherlands. The mushroom sector in the Netherlands is pretty closed and information sharing is found to be business-sensitive. Innovating current processes and products is the responsibility of profit making companies. It is not up to Mushroom Valley to innovate and pass the innovation on to their members. However, there might be a role for Mushroom Valley in facilitating this process.

HOW – At the moment mainly CEO's and communication employees are functioning as company representatives within the Mushroom Valley network. It might be worth the discussion whether these functions are the functions you want in your network. In the end, it are the operational- and innovation managers who will be touched by the actions of the platform. It is likely that matching the right representatives, will also match expectations more which will result in a higher willingness to invest.

Since collaborating with companies that have comparable core-businesses is hard, it might be an option to start looking at vertical collaborations instead of horizontal collaborations. Mushroom Valley can initiate different 'innovation groups' (comparable to the Dutch 'climate tables') that all will focus on different topics. By bigger innovation projects it can be informative to create multiple innovation groups on one topic. By grouping different members throughout the supply chain, competition about the innovation decreases and all partners can benefit. Since it might be hard for individual companies to find the right partners to collaborate with, it is up to Mushroom Valley to match the right members and facilitate the process. Knowing the network structure and roles members have, is essential information in this process. Projects can be submitted by members or suggested by the platform. There should evolve an interaction process between the innovation group initiated and the management of Mushroom Valley. Clear objectives and related expectations have to be stated, which will rise the willingness to invest. The specific innovation group can indicate their needs with the management, who can try to facilitate these needs. Since chain innovation might be interesting for innovative growers as well, this might be an attractive element for growers to become member of Mushroom Valley. By this way, it can work both ways; the objectives and expectations of current members are met by incorporating growers and growers are involved which might generate extra contribution or funding. It is a challenge to form innovation groups in such way that nobody feels left out.

Besides the innovation groups, it is up to the management of Mushroom Valley to make sure the network will stay involved and willing to invest in the future of the platform. An integration standard should be developed in the corporate communication set, which will ease the process for new entries. At the moment, new members are only welcomed and mentioned in the newsletter and at meetings. However, the management in combination with the new member can do more. The management of Mushroom Valley can introduce the company more extensively, but should also focus more on who is representing that company within the network. Who is the person that can be traced back in the mobile application Bundeling and what does he want to contribute or collect through this partnership? This information can be included in the corporate communication set. Aligning objectives of new partners with current partners is an essential element to manage expectations.

This brings us to the next point; is Mushroom Valley going to reach objectives with the current representatives of the network? Mainly CEO's and communication employees are known with the platform. However, the objectives set by Mushroom Valley are related to other functions within the companies. If Mushroom Valley for example wants to function as pivot between students and companies, it are the operational managers who can

address internships or research questions for thesis projects. Mushroom Valley should, based on their objectives, discuss which representatives will be of added value for the platform. This will change the network structure positively. On top of that, there should be a sort of checklist be developed to inform employees of member companies. This has to become part of the corporate communication set. The current companies who are member of Mushroom Valley have delivered two representatives, however other employees of the company are not familiar with the platform. Mushroom Valley should help new companies with storytelling. What is Mushroom Valley, who are in the network and how do you get in contact with the platform? By involving the employees of the member companies, a large group of platform representatives toward the outside world is generated.

This scenario is relatively low-costs but asks a lot from the project manager of Mushroom Valley, since he has to function as mediator in (the start of) the innovation process. The communication agency Drops has to invest time in developing a protocol to welcome new members and inform employees of member companies. Also it requires a focus on informing members about the added value of Mushroom Valley. A fact-sheet can inform and convince members of the network.

WHY – The theme that is evaluated as secondly most important, is facilitating innovations. 50% of all members would like to enable research and innovation together. However, From the 14 partners who became member in order to achieve innovation, five do not believe this will be reached in the coming two years. This means that the believe and expectations are low. However, 13 respondents of the survey (46,4%) expects that Mushroom Valley will become 'the place to be' in the field of knowledge, innovation and technology for the mushroom sector in two years. The current members of the platform expect of the management team of Mushroom Valley to raise money and subsidies for research and innovation.

These results are not surprising. It has turned out to be really hard to collaborate with partners from the same sector in the mushroom supply chain. Companies are afraid the competitor will benefit more and will therefore not share business-sensitive information. Even finding a moment to get together with one sector of the mushroom network is find really hard. However, there is a need for innovation.

This scenario however appeals to a relatively big share of the current network members. However, competitive sensitivity withhold members to share more information with Mushroom Valley or its members. Despite the fact that a lot of members predict that the sector should innovate, the overall trend is that members are not willing to invest in collaboration regarding innovation. Distrust to each other is high and the urgent need for change is not always noticeable. The sector screams for innovation, but is unwilling to cooperate in order to achieve this. Mushroom Valley has the opportunity to provide the sector with insight about the need for innovation and can function as facilitator. There will be a risk of losing a couple members of the network should be taken into account. The management should be aware of the importance of informing members well.

The core of the network of Mushroom Valley is located in and around the municipality Horst aan de Maas. New entries in the network who have less connection with this region historically or are just slightly linked to the mushroom sector, do not feel included in the network. It is up to the management of Mushroom Valley to facilitate a smoother integration process for new members.

Scenario 3 – Education platform

WHAT – In this scenario, the main objective of the platform is to facilitate education in the mushroom sector in the Netherlands. Historically the municipality Horst aan de Maas was the place to be regarding mushroom education. This is no longer the case and a good alternative has not been developed yet. Where education is commonly a public task that is picked up by education institutions, it is are the companies in the mushroom sector who feel the consequences of the lack of education in the sector. Mushroom Valley can take this opportunity to develop itself as an education platform which forms a bridge between educational institutions and the work field.

Since the start of this research, the cry for education became louder and louder. Mushroom Valley felt the urge to do something about this and project manager Kevin van Berlo started exploring the education landscape of the mushroom sector.

HOW – Mushroom Valley should develop a place where scholars and the mushroom sector meet. A place where supply and demand of internships, research projects and work experience come together. As body between both worlds, Mushroom Valley is able to translate demand from the work field into concrete offers for scholars and the other way around. Schools, universities, student- and study associations should be able to come to Mushroom Valley with questions about the sector but also possibilities about symposia, speakers, guest lectures, etc. This place can be as simple as a Facebook page or online platform and is unrelated to a regional geographic location.

Besides delivering to the questions of scholars, the work field should also be able to turn to Mushroom Valley for information. The platform can use the knowledge of educational institutions like Wageningen University in order to organize symposia. By doing this, members will increase their personal knowledge but also connect with other members and get a better insight in the knowledge the network has. By doing this, an economical objective of members will be touched, since providing this kind of knowledge might facilitate innovations. At this intersection of scholars and the work field, knowledge gaps can be identified and in collaboration with third parties a mushroom education track can be developed. These third parties can be educational institutions, but also consultancy companies in the network who are already investing in educational courses. By doing this, Mushroom Valley will fulfill a more public task.

This scenario is the most difficult to execute since it involves a public task. A lot of time should be invested in aligning different partners and collecting government funds. It is assumed to be the most costly scenario to invest in, but might become the most promising scenario for the future looking at return on investment only. With this scenario, Mushroom Valley is most dependent on members to collaborate with and will have less control. The objectives met with this scenario are supported a little less than the first two scenarios, which might result in loosing members of the current network.

WHY – Due to the loss of mushroom education and the 'proefstation', the region is no longer be seen as the (only) mushroom region of the Netherlands. However, 54% of the members would like to see this change and indicated as their main objective to become member of the platform to jointly facilitate education and training aimed at the mushroom sector and to give it a place in the region. The current members of the platform expect of the management team of Mushroom Valley to amongst other things, to set up education and training facilities. However, Mushroom Valley does not have the knowledge and should not have the objective to start educating by themselves. Yet, the current network of Mushroom Valley includes educational institutions as well as business companies. This provides Mushroom Valley with the excellent opportunity to function as bridge and accreditation body between educational institutions and the work field.

5.5. Recommendations

Unrelated to the scenario that will be chosen, there are some general recommendations for Mushroom Valley in order to remain a sustainable business sector platform:

- Keep managing the corporate identity well by continuously monitoring objectives and expectations.
- Broaden the scope of the platform to the Netherlands and leave the regional focus behind. Integrate Dutch elements in the corporate communication set!
- Try to incorporate mushroom growers into the network structure. The focus should be on innovative growers, since Mushroom Valley is not an advocate but objective oriented platform. There should be a small financial threshold to minimize free riders that will slow down processes and motivate new entries to invest time in the platform. However, investments bring along expectations that have to be handles well!
- Make sure there is a low threshold for members to put forward suggestions and feedback. The 100% response rate of the survey of this research shows the willingness to contribute. The management should make use of this willingness. This can be done by feedback forms after member meetings for example. What was it that make this member show up on this specific meeting? Give opening for feedback. This can be done digitally, but also in informal (lunch) meetings. The 21st of January the new office of Mushroom Valley in Brightlands Campus Greenport Venlo is officially opened. By organizing the opportunity to lunch together every first Monday of the month, a low threshold opportunity is created to receive feedback from members.
- Organize events like symposia and discussion evenings to strengthen the network. New entries, mostly from outside the municipality Horst aan de Maas, have to be actively adopted into the network. An integration standard should be developed in the corporate communication set, which will ease the process for new entries. Present not only the new companies to the network, but also their representatives and their objectives towards the platform. Who is the person that can be traced back in the mobile application Bundeling and what does he want to contribute or collect through this partnership? This information can be included in the corporate communication set. Aligning objectives of new partners with current partners is an essential element to manage expectations.
- Re-evaluate the representatives of companies. What are functions that should be included into the network in order to achieve the objectives of the platform? Mainly CEO's and communication employees are known with the platform. However, the objectives set by Mushroom Valley are related to other functions within the companies. Mushroom Valley should, based on their objectives, discuss which representatives will be of added value for the platform. This will change the network structure positively.
- There should be a sort of checklist be developed to inform employees of member companies. This has to become part of the corporate communication set. The current companies who are member of Mushroom Valley have delivered two representatives, however other employees of the company are not familiar with the platform. Mushroom Valley should help new companies with storytelling. What is Mushroom Valley, who are in the network and how do you get in contact with the platform? By involving the employees of the member companies, a large group of platform representatives toward the outside world is generated.
- And to finalize maybe the easiest one; address the responsibility of members. The platform should be guided and supported by its members to achieve objectives. If the platform wants to be recognized, this has to start within the network! Insist members to show recognition of the network with starting to display their proud

partnership on their websites. This relatively small action will have an enormous reach and impact the recognisability of Mushroom Valley within the mushroom sector. This same holds with taking members along in the story and explain the importance of displaying the 'proud partner placard' on their facility and promotion material like the little table flag on trade fairs. Story telling is key in creating involved members!

6. Discussion

This research is descriptive in nature and has provided case sector platform Mushroom Valley with insights about the network characteristics and internal drivers of their members. Based in this information three scenarios are worked out which contribute to a new identity strategy. The basis of this results can be found in scientific literature, a survey amongst all members and seven in-depth interviews. Despite the fact that the research has resulted in some concrete scenarios, there will be some comments made here that must be taken into account when interpreting this research.

The results of this research are based on a combination of scientific research, a quantitative survey and qualitative interviews with a limited dataset. By combining different data sources like scientific articles, books, internal documentation, survey and interviews, a triangulation of data is used. The results collected from the data sources were similar in such a way that the validity of the results can be guaranteed.

Due to time constraints it was not feasible to interview all 30 members of the platform. To still withdraw data that represents the complete network as much as possible, a quantitative survey is done upfront. The interviewees are selected with the highest level of care, based on purposive sampling. However, purposive sampling brings along the danger that the researcher exercises judgment on the informant's reliability and competency. "This is a relevant concern especially regarding key informants on whom much of the data quality rest" (Tongco, 2007). In order to reduce this threat, validation method triangulation is used. By cross-checking data, certain ideas and concepts will be verified (Alexiades, 1996).

Based on desk research and the survey, an interview guide has been developed. However, account must be taken of the fact that, despite careful preparation of the interview questions, the interviewees may have provided socially desirable answers. All interviewees have been informed about the research upfront. Since the research is initiated by Mushroom Valley and interviewees are (mainly) members of the platform, socially desirable answers can be given.

Since collecting and analysing data is done by the same person, it can bring a researcher bias into the results. To minimize this risk, there has been constant consultation with the interviewees and supervisor, to reduce the scope for interpretation and thereby increase reliability. However, it has to be taken into account that the analysis of interviews is based on interpretation of the researcher, this influences the reliability. The survey and interviews are conducted and transcribed in Dutch. Quotes and data used in the research are later translated to English. This brings along a risk of misinterpretation of words.

Questions of the survey - related to objectives and expectations - are based on internal documents of platform Mushroom Valley. This to be able to categorise answers afterwards. However, during processing the answers, slightly ambiguous concepts and statements were identified. The results are left in the results, but interpreted in the most all-encompassing way.

This research has developed three scenarios that may suits the identity strategy for case platform Mushroom Valley, but also as a first shot at developing strategies for emerging business sector platforms in general. Where some findings are directly related to the case platform, other findings are likely to be of importance for other emerging sector platforms as well. However, further research has to be done on generalizability of these results. Researchers will need to examine multiple networks in greater depth, in order to generate generalizable strategies for emerging business sector platforms. Considering the cost and complexity of conducting such research, it may be realistic to cumulate knowledge building

based on multiple network studies researching different sectors in more in-depth ways. Hopefully this research will contribute to this process.

The developed scenarios are based on collected data and observations in the management team. However, they are not tested. Further research can focus on the feasibility of these scenarios.

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8. Appendixes

8.1. Appendix 1; The International Corporate Identity Group's (ICIG) statement on corporate identity

The Strathclyde Statement

"Every organization has an identity. It articulates the corporate ethos, aims and values and presents a sense of individuality that can help to differentiate the organization within its competitive environment.

When well managed, corporate identity can be a powerful means of integrating the many disciplines and activities essential to an organization's success. It can also provide the visual cohesion necessary to ensure that all corporate communications are coherent with each other and result in an image consistent with the organization's defining ethos and character.

By effectively managing its corporate identity an organization can build understanding and commitment among its diverse stakeholders. This can be manifested in an ability to attract and retain customers and employees, achieve strategic alliances, gain the support of financial markets and generate a sense of direction and purpose. Corporate identity is a strategic issue.

Corporate identity differs from traditional brand marketing since it is concerned with all of an organization's stakeholders and the multi-faceted way in which an organization communicates."

Balmer, J.M.T.

Bernstein, D.

Day, A.

Greyser, S.

Ind, N.

Lewis, S.

Ludlow, C.

Markwick, N.

Riel, van C.

Thomas, S.

This copy is a revised version of the original statement, presented through Riel & Balmer (1997).

8.2. Appendix 2; Impression of the ambition statement objectives of Mushroom Valley (2017)

In the ambition statement (2017), Mushroom Valley expresses multiple objectives:

Profiling and positioning

- Clearly displaying the broad supply chain of the mushroom sector in the region Horst aan de Maas and its surroundings to the (world) market.
- Develop itself as discussion member for local, national and international organizations.

Collaboration with education and securing knowledge

- Assuring knowledge for the future and value knowledge internationally.
- Connecting entrepreneurs with MBO, HBO and universities.
- Positive effect on knowledge development and labor market.
- Stronger connection with market needs.
- Enthusiasm young people for the sector.

Practical research

- Search for new connections and business models.
- Develop Brightlands Campus Greenport Venlo, focussed on food, nutrition and health.
- Experimental farm 2.0.
- The power of proteins.

8.3. Appendix 3; Survey guide

In this survey guide the target group will be shortly discussed, even as the content of the survey. In the end the survey questions are stated.

Target group

To collect an holistic view of the identity of the platform Mushroom Valley, a digital survey is sent to all members of the platform. At the moment of the survey, Mushroom Valley consisted of 29 members. Since the spokesperson of Legro was changing and no new spokesperson was appointed yet, Legro was left outside the scope of the survey. This resulted in 28 partners that have received an e-mail with the request to participate in the research through the survey. The survey is conducted through Qualtrics Survey Software. The response rate of the survey is 100%. The language of the survey is Dutch in order to prevent miscommunication and encourage elaborate answers. All results collected through the survey are discussed in Chapter 4.

Content of survey

To be sure all relevant concepts are discussed, all interviews will focus on the next six concepts;

1. Network structure
2. Geographic location
3. Corporate communication set
4. Objectives
5. Expectations
6. Willingness to invest

These concepts are discussed elaborative in Chapter 2 (literature review, including the theoretical framework). The same concepts have been the basis for the interview questions as well, which enables triangulation. The survey will be conducted in Dutch.

Survey - Leden Mushroom Valley

TEKST: Leden van Mushroom Valley vormen de identiteit van het platform en ik dank u dan ook hartelijk voor uw bijdragen aan dit onderzoek. De enquête bestaat uit 15 vragen en het invullen zal ongeveer 10-15 minuten duren.

1. Namens welk bedrijf vult u deze enquête in?

(Één antwoord mogelijk, antwoorden verplicht)

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> AEM BV | <input type="radio"/> GTL Europe | <input type="radio"/> Mushroom Office |
| <input type="radio"/> ARCO Solutions | <input type="radio"/> HAS Hogeschool | <input type="radio"/> Scelta |
| <input type="radio"/> Christiaens Group | <input type="radio"/> Hofmans | <input type="radio"/> Mushrooms |
| <input type="radio"/> Citaverde College | <input type="radio"/> Hollander Spawn BV | <input type="radio"/> Verstappen |
| <input type="radio"/> CNC | <input type="radio"/> Legro | <input type="radio"/> Advanced Packaging |
| <input type="radio"/> Delphy | <input type="radio"/> Limbraco | <input type="radio"/> Vullings |
| <input type="radio"/> Euroveen BV | <input type="radio"/> Limgroup | <input type="radio"/> Systemen |
| <input type="radio"/> Fontys | <input type="radio"/> Mertens Phormium | <input type="radio"/> Wageningen |
| <input type="radio"/> FTNON Horst | <input type="radio"/> Monaghan | <input type="radio"/> University & Research |
| <input type="radio"/> Gemeente Horst aan de Maas | <input type="radio"/> Mushrooms | <input type="radio"/> Anders: ... |
| <input type="radio"/> Gesitrans C2C | <input type="radio"/> Museum de Locht | |
| <input type="radio"/> Gicom | <input type="radio"/> Mush Comb | |
| <input type="radio"/> Greenyard | | |

TEKST: De komende vier vragen gaan over uw interpretatie van de kerntaken van Mushroom Valley en de drijfveren van uw organisatie om lid te zijn van dit platform.

2. Met welk doel bent u lid geworden van het platform Mushroom Valley?

(Meerdere antwoorden mogelijk, antwoorden verplicht)

- ☐ Om samen de paddenstoelensector als geheel in een positief en eigentijds daglicht te plaatsen.
- ☐ Om samen de regio als 'the place to be' voor paddenstoelen, internationaal op de kaart te zetten
- ☐ Om samen onderzoek en innovaties mogelijk te maken.
- ☐ Om makkelijker relaties met andere leden aan te kunnen gaan.
- ☐ Om kennis te vergaren.
- ☐ Om mijn (concurrentie)positie in de markt te versterken.
- ☐ De vrees samenwerking mis te lopen met leden die wél in het netwerk zitten.
- ☐ Om samen educatie en opleiding gericht op de paddenstoelensector te kunnen faciliteren en een plek te geven in de regio
- ☐ Anders:

3. Wat zou volgens u dé kerntaak van Mushroom Valley moeten zijn?
(Één antwoord mogelijk, antwoorden verplicht)

- Mushroom Valley is een marketing platform dat de regio internationaal positioneert.
- Mushroom Valley is een marketing platform gericht op het verhogen van de paddenstoelenconsumptie.
- Mushroom Valley is een platform gericht op educatie en werkvoorbereiding.
- Mushroom Valley is een kennis platform gericht op onderzoek en innovatie.
- Anders: ...

4. Rangschik de thema's waaraan Mushroom Valley zich verbonden heeft naar de mate waarin deze voor u belangrijk zijn:
(Belangrijkste bovenaan – minst belangrijke onderaan, antwoorden verplicht)

- Profilering en positionering
- Educatie en werkverschaffing
- Innovatie en onderzoek
- Creëren van een netwerk van ambassadeurs
- Ontwikkelen van een database van de paddenstoelensector
- Stimuleren van marktontwikkeling

5. Wat verwacht u van de projectleiding van Mushroom Valley bij het nastreven van deze thema's en doelen?
(Max 2, antwoorden verplicht)

- Het leggen van relaties tussen partners van Mushroom Valley.
- Het leggen van relaties tussen het ledennetwerk en de buitenwereld.
- Het vertegenwoordigen van haar leden op netwerkbijeenkomsten in binnen- en buitenland (bijvoorbeeld op beurzen).
- Het binnenhalen van geld en subsidies voor projecten die de paddenstoelensector in de regio positief belichten.
- Het binnenhalen van geld en subsidies voor onderzoek en innovatie in de paddenstoelensector.
- Het opzetten van een educatie en trainingsplatform gericht op de paddenstoelensector.
- Anders:

TEKST: De identiteit van het platform Mushroom Valley wordt gevormd door haar netwerk van leden. De volgende vier vragen gaan over dit netwerk.

6. Met welke leden van Mushroom Valley werkt u geregeld samen?
(Sleep de bedrijven naar de juiste categorie, antwoorden verplicht)

- Werken intensief samen:
- Werken (niet intensief) samen, maar hebben geregeld contact:
- Werken nooit samen:

7. Is de relatie met bedrijven waarmee u intensief samenwerkt, of geregeld contact heeft, veranderd sinds de aanwezigheid van platform Mushroom Valley?

(Meerdere antwoorden mogelijk, antwoorden verplicht)

- Een samenwerking is **ontstaan** met de volgende bedrijven:
...
- De samenwerking is **hetzelfde gebleven** met de volgende bedrijven:
...
- De samenwerking is **intensiever** geworden met de volgende bedrijven:
...
- De samenwerking is **minder intensief** geworden met de volgende bedrijven:
...

8. Het ledennetwerk van Mushroom Valley is momenteel vooral gepositioneerd in en rondom de gemeente Horst aan de Maas. In hoeverre ziet u dit als een voor- of nadeel bij het bereiken van doelen?

(Open vraag, antwoord verplicht)

- Voordeel:
- Nadeel:

9. Heeft Mushroom Valley volgens u, voor het beoefenen van haar taken en behalen van gestelde doelen, een eigen fysieke Mushroom Valley thuisbasis nodig?

(Open vraag, antwoorden verplicht)

- Ja, bijvoorbeeld:
- Nee:

TEKST: Mushroom Valley probeert haar leden betrokken te houden bij het platform. De volgende twee vragen gaan over het contact tussen het platform en haar leden.

10. Van welke van onderstaande communicatiemogelijkheden maakt u momenteel gebruik of heeft u het afgelopen jaar gebruik gemaakt?

(Meerdere antwoorden mogelijk, antwoorden verplicht)

- Kick-off bijeenkomst
- Partnerbijeenkomst
- Inspiratiedag
- Nieuwsbrief
- Mobiele app 'Bundeling'
- Rechtstreeks contact met de projectleider
- Netwerkbijeenkomsten waar Mushroom Valley bij betrokken is (bv. de Dutch Agri Foodweek)
- LinkedIn
- Geen van bovenstaande

11. Welke communicatiemogelijkheid heeft uw voorkeur?

(Max. 3 antwoorden mogelijk, antwoorden verplicht)

- Partnerbijeenkomst
- Inspiratiedag
- Netwerkbijeenkomsten waar Mushroom Valley bij betrokken is (bv. de Dutch Agri Foodweek)
- Nieuwsbrief
- Mobiele app 'Bundeling'
- LinkedIn
- Rechtstreeks contact met de projectleider
- Anders:

TEKST: De volgende vier vragen gaan over het toekomstperspectief van Mushroom Valley.

12. Om bij te dragen aan een sterk platform Mushroom Valley, zijn wij als bedrijf:

(Max. 2 antwoorden, antwoorden verplicht)

- Bereid om extra bij te dragen in financiële vorm.
- Bereid om extra bij te dragen door kennis te investeren (delen).
- Bereid om extra bij te dragen door tijd in projecten te investeren.
- Niet bereid om extra middelen te investeren, anders dan wij nu al doen.

13. Wat zijn uw verwachtingen ten opzichte van het platform; over twee jaar zal Mushroom Valley..

(Max. 2 antwoorden, antwoorden verplicht)

- ..'the place to be' zijn op het gebied van kennis, innovatie en technologie voor de paddenstoelsector wereldwijd.
- ..nieuwe innovaties hebben gefaciliteerd.
- ..de paddenstoelsector weer aantrekkelijk hebben gemaakt voor jonge afgestudeerden.
- ..een internationale (digitale) opleiding hebben opgericht.
- ..een eigen faciliteit (Mushroom Valley House) hebben.
- ..het streven van 40 partners hebben bereikt (momenteel 29).
- ..niet meer bestaan.
- *(eigen invulling)*.

14. Bij het aangaan van een lidmaatschap bij Mushroom Valley is de intentie uitgesproken om na 3 jaar het lidmaatschap te evaluaeren. Wanneer er nu een tussentijdse evaluatie wordt gehouden, denkt u dat de samenwerking tussen u en Mushroom Valley de komende jaren zal continueren?

(Één antwoord mogelijk, antwoorden verplicht)

- Als na 3 jaar (bijna) alle doelen zijn bereikt, houdt mijn lidmaatschap op. Toelichting mogelijk:
- Als na 3 jaar (bijna) alle doelen zijn bereikt, viereen wij dit succes graag mee door ons lidmaatschap te continueren.
- Het behalen van successen heeft geen invloed op het al dan niet continueren. Na deze periode blijven we graag ons steentje bijdragen en verlengen ons lidmaatschap. Toelichting mogelijk:
- Het behalen van successen heeft geen invloed op het al dan niet continueren. Na deze periode dragen wij het stokje graag over en nemen wij afscheid van Mushroom Valley. Toelichting mogelijk:

15. Heeft u naar aanleiding van deze enquête nog aanvullingen, vragen, opmerkingen en/of tips voor Mushroom Valley?

(Antwoorden NIET verplicht)

.....

Graag wil ik u hartelijk danken voor het invullen van deze enquête.

Enkele leden van het netwerk zullen benaderd worden om deel te nemen aan een diepgaand interview. Ik hoop dan opnieuw op uw inzet en betrokkenheid te mogen rekenen.

**Anne Vrolijk
Studente MSc. Management Economics and Consumer Studies
Wageningen Universiteit**

8.4. Appendix 4; Interview guide

Interviewees

To collect an holistic view of the identity of the platform Mushroom Valley, seven semi-structured interviews will be conducted. The basis of the interview questions can be found in literature study and results of the survey. The goal of the interviews is to gain more in-depth information about the platform, sector and possible strategies. This data will contribute to setting up an identity strategy for Mushroom Valley.

Seven interviewees selected for this research are:

Coding #	Company	Quadrant
7	Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel	Field expert
6	Euroveen BV (BVB Substrates)	Compost, substrates, breeding & crop protection
3	Hofmans	Compost, substrates, breeding & crop protection
5	Wageningen UR	Education, Regional and Consultancy
2	Christiaens Group	Installations and machinery
4	Limbraco	Installations and machinery
1	Scelta	Processors and packaging

Content of interviews

All interviews with members will follow a semi-structured format. This is aimed to stimulate the interviewees to talk openly about their experience and ideas, instead of limiting them and possibly miss relevant data. To be sure all relevant concepts are discussed, all interviews will focus on the next six concepts;

7. Network structure
8. Geographic location
9. Corporate communication set
10. Objectives
11. Expectations
12. Willingness to invest

These concepts are discussed elaborative in Chapter 2 (literature review, including the theoretical framework). The same concepts have been the basis for the survey questions as well, which enables triangulation. The interview will be conducted in Dutch.

Considering the different motives to participate in this research, the interview with the field expert followed a different interview guide. This guide is discussed here as well. The main objective of this research was not to discuss the six concepts, but to gain more information about the sector.

Algemene interviewvragen – Leden netwerk

Naam organisatie:
Naam geïnterviewde:
Functie geïnterviewde:
Datum interview:

Bedankt voor uw tijd. Om alle verkregen informatie nauwkeurig te kunnen verwerken, zou ik het interview graag opnemen. Heeft u er bezwaar tegen als ik een geluidsopname maak met mijn telefoon?

Zoals u weet ben ik momenteel bezig met een onderzoek naar de toekomst van Mushroom Valley. Hiervoor heeft u recentelijk ook een enquête ingevuld, waarmee voor mij bepaalde onderwerpen al een stuk duidelijker zijn geworden. In dit interview zou ik graag nog wat dieper ingaan op bepaalde onderwerpen.

Het interview zal in totaal niet langer dan een uur duren.

1. Op welke manier is uw bedrijf / bent u op dit moment actief binnen Mushroom Valley?

(Bijvoorbeeld gezamenlijke projecten | netwerkbijeenkomsten | beurzen?)

a. Wat houdt dit in?

2. Mushroom Valley is breed georiënteerd en actief binnen verschillende onderwerpen. Welk(e) onderwerp(en) is/zijn voor u belangrijk binnen Mushroom Valley?

3. Wat zou u graag nog meer willen zien van Mushroom Valley, naast haar huidige activiteiten?

4. Wat zijn voor u voordelen van het lidmaatschap bij Mushroom Valley?

(Bijvoorbeeld kennis | netwerk | gezamenlijke activiteiten | uitbesteding | kostenbesparing..)

5. Zitten er ook nadelen aan het lidmaatschap van Mushroom Valley?

a. Zo ja, welke nadelen zijn dat?

(Bijvoorbeeld kosten..)

6. Wat is, volgens u, de grootste uitdaging voor het platform?

7. Als u het voor het zeggen had, wat zou u veranderen/anders doen binnen Mushroom Valley?

8. In welke mate voelt u zich betrokken bij het platform Mushroom Valley?

a. Hoe uit die betrokkenheid zich?

- 9. Merkt u in het platform onderscheid in de behandeling van verschillende leden?**
- a. Zo ja, waarin merkt u dit?
(Bijvoorbeeld educatie | machinebouw | compostverwerkers | verwerkers | etc.)
(Bijvoorbeeld groot | klein bedrijf)
- 10. In welke mate is het hebben van een netwerk binnen de regionale paddenstoelensector belangrijk voor uw bedrijf?**
- 11. Welke rol speelt Mushroom Valley in het ontwikkelen van dit netwerk voor uw bedrijf?**
- 12. Wanneer u een nieuw contact wilt leggen binnen het netwerk, hoe zou u dit aanpakken?**
(Bijvoorbeeld rechtstreeks bellen of mailen | Via Mushroom Valley als tussenpersoon | Via Bundeling app | etc.)
- 13. U heeft aangegeven dat (...) de reden van het bedrijf was om lid te worden van Mushroom Valley, kunt u daar iets meer over vertellen?**
(Zorg voor concreet beschrijven motief)
- 14. Zijn er veranderingen in uw visie betreffende het nut van lidmaatschap Mushroom Valley?**
- a. Zo ja, welke?
- 15. Welke stappen kan Mushroom Valley nemen om aan deze bedrijfsdoelstellingen bij te dragen?**
(Let op onderscheid stappen platform en stappen project management team)
- a. Op welke termijn?
b. Wanneer is het doel bereikt?
- 16. Welke stappen zijn er al ondernomen om dit bedrijfsdoel te bereiken?**
(door partner óf door Mushroom Valley)
- 17. INDIEN VAN TOEPASSING (n.a.v. enquête)**
U heeft aangegeven dat u verwacht dat Mushroom Valley over 2 jaar het volgende heeft bereikt: (...).
Waarom denkt u dat Mushroom Valley de door u eerder genoemde doelstelling(en) NIET zal bereiken?

18.Hoe ziet u de rol van uw bedrijf in het (al dan niet) behalen van deze doelstellingen?

(Zorg voor concreet beschrijven rol; alleen of in samenwerking)

19.Legt u wel eens (kennis)vraagstukken neer bij Mushroom Valley, of wenst u wel eens gezamenlijke projecten te initiëren?

a. Kunt u daar iets meer over vertellen?

20.U heeft aangegeven bereid te zijn tot het investeren van (tijd/geld/kennis) in Mushroom Valley. Waarin wilt u dit investeren?

(Bijvoorbeeld type activiteiten)

21.U heeft aangegeven het regionale karakter van Mushroom Valley als een (voor-/nadeel) te zien. Zou u de regionale insteek willen veranderen?

a. Zo ja, hoe zou u dat willen veranderen?

22.Zijn er mogelijke partners die u mist in het netwerk?

a. Waarom mist u deze partner(s) / wat kan deze groep toevoegen aan het netwerk?

23.Op dit moment is de primaire sector (telers) geen onderdeel van het netwerk. Zou deze groep er volgens u bij moeten?

a. Zo ja, wat kan deze groep toevoegen aan het netwerk?

b. Zo ja, hoe zou deze groep zich kunnen vertegenwoordigen binnen het netwerk?

(Bijvoorbeeld individuele telers lid, via ZLTO of andere belangenorganisatie)

24.Heeft u nog op- en/of aanmerkingen die ik mee moet nemen in het opstellen van een strategie voor de toekomst?

Enquête-specifieke interviewvragen

25....

Hiermee zou ik het interview graag willen afsluiten.
Ik dank u hartelijk voor uw tijd en de betrokkenheid bij het onderzoek!

Algemene interviewvragen – Field expert

Naam geïnterviewde:

Functie(s):

Datum interview:

Bedankt voor uw tijd. Om alle verkregen informatie nauwkeurig te kunnen verwerken, zou ik het interview graag opnemen. Heeft u er bezwaar tegen als ik een geluidsopname maak met mijn telefoon?

Met mijn afstudeeronderzoek ben ik betrokken geraakt bij Mushroom Valley. Ik doe onderzoek naar de identiteit van het netwerk en welke richting ze in de toekomst het best op kunnen gaan. Nu bepaal je een strategie natuurlijk altijd aan de hand van de overige initiatieven die er al zijn, zoals het Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel. Ik vind het dus erg fijn dat u bereid bent mee te werken aan dit onderzoek.

1. Zou u iets meer kunnen vertellen over Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel?

- a. Wie zijn leden/doelgroep? (contributie?) (budget?)
- b. Welke structuur heeft de organisatie? (Rabobank, provincie, LTO)

2. Welke doelstellingen heeft Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel? (kennis, marketing, etc)

- a. Meetbaar?
- b. Welke activiteiten onderneemt PP om doelstellingen te bereiken?

3. Wat is uw rol binnen Paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel?

4. In hoeverre bent u bekend met Mushroom Valley?

5. Ik begrijp dat ZLTO vakgroep champignon, paddenstoelenpact Maasdriel en Mushroom Valley de drie (grootste) initiatieven zijn op het gebied van paddenstoelen in Zuid-Nederland. Mis ik dan nog initiatieven?

6. Hoe verhouden deze initiatieven zich tot elkaar?

- a. Verschil of overlap: structuur / soort leden / omvang/ etc.
- b. Werken jullie wel eens samen?

7. Denkt u dat deze drie initiatieven elkaar vooral versterken of verzwakken?

- a. Waarom?

8. Hoe zou u graag zien dat de initiatieven zich tot elkaar verhouden?

- 9. Welke rol denkt u dat Mushroom Valley in de sector moet hebben?**
- 10. Breder gekeken, wat is volgens u de trend binnen de paddenstoelensector?**
- 11. Wat is, volgens u, de grootste uitdaging voor het sector (en initiatieven) in Zuid-Nederland?**
- 12. Zowel Paddenstoelenpact als Mushroom Valley zijn deels regionaal gepositioneerd. In hoeverre denkt u dat dat een voor- of nadeel is?**
a. Zou u dit willen veranderen?
- 13. Zijn er mogelijke partners die u mist in het netwerk?**
a. Waarom mist u deze partner(s) / wat kan deze groep toevoegen aan het netwerk?
- 14. Op dit moment is de primaire sector (telers) geen onderdeel van het netwerk van MV. Zou deze groep er volgens u bij moeten?**
a. Zo ja, wat kan deze groep toevoegen aan het netwerk?
b. Zo ja, hoe zou deze groep zich kunnen vertegenwoordigen binnen het netwerk?
(Bijvoorbeeld individuele telers lid, via ZLTO of andere belangenorganisatie)
- 15. Heeft u nog op- en/of aanmerkingen die ik mee moet nemen in het opstellen van een strategie voor de toekomst?**

Hiermee zou ik het interview graag willen afsluiten.
Ik dank u hartelijk voor uw tijd en de betrokkenheid bij het onderzoek!

8.5. Appendix 5; Overview of members (and supporters) (August 2018)

<u>Overview Members Supporters</u>	
<u>Members</u>	<u>Supporters</u>
AEM BV	AB-Werkt
ARCO Solutions	Lenssen Advies
Christiaens Group	Matrix Consultancy
Citaverde College	Personato
CNC	Rabobank
Delphy	RibbStyle
Euroveen BV	Salarispoint
Fontys	
FTNON Horst	
Gemeente Horst aan de Maas	
Gesitrans C2C	
Gicom	
Greenyard	
GTL Europe	
HAS Hogeschool	
Hofmans	
Hollander Spawn BV	
Legro	
Limbraco	
Limgroup	
Mertens Phormium	
Monaghan Mushrooms	
Mush Comb	
Mushroom Office	
Museum de Locht	
Scelta Mushrooms	
Verstappen Advanced Packaging	
Vullings Systemen	
Wageningen University & Research	

8.6. Appendix 6;
List of members with the number of relations within the network

MEMBER	# of relations
AEM BV	7
ARCO Solutions	10
Christiaens Group	13
Citaverde College	11
CNC	9
Delphy	5
Euroveen BV	16
Fontys	8
FTNON Horst	7
Municipality Horst aan de Maas	5
Gesitrans C2C	5
Gicom	2
Greenyard	2
GTL Europe	11
HAS Hogeschool	10
Hofmans	4
Hollander Spawn BV	8
Legro	8
Limbraco	5
Limgroup	10
Mertens Phormium	16
Monaghan Mushrooms	15
Museum de Locht	11
Mush Comb	7
Mushroom Office	8
Scelta Mushrooms	13
Verstappen Advanced Packaging	8
Vullings Systemen	13
Wageningen University and Research	7

8.7. Appendix 7; Coding interviews (NL)

Is there a need for change (focus) in this widely diverse network platform?	> "Je zit over de volledige breedte van de keten te praten."	1
	> "Ik denk dat je héél snel moet gaan specialiseren."	1
	> "Boek kleine successen in plaats van dat je meteen de breedte ingaat, ik heb het gevoel dat dat nu een beetje alle kanten opgaat."	1
	> "Een focus die zit in een stukje opleiding, focus zit ook een stukje op subsidies en innovaties. Daar zit meer de focus als wat ik zoek."	2
	> "We moeten de focus hebben op ons verkoopstuk".	2
	> "Je moet nu ergens naar een focus toe want heel veel van alles een beetje is niks."	3
	> "Het enige dat we {respectievelijk sector techniek} echt gemeenschappelijk hebben is dat onderwijs wel bovenaan staat en bekendheid uitdragen dat techniek en alles toch nog steeds in Nederland zit."	4
	> "Mushroom Valley doet op dit moment te veel, ik zou willen richten op wat kerndingen."	4
	> "Dan zijn ze nog met een stukje onderwijs bezig, maar daar zie ik dan dat dat weer op drie, vier fronten is."	4
	> "De eerste dingen zouden wel enigszins concreet moeten zijn wil je überhaupt verder gaan denken van kunnen we er meer mee of kunnen we er nog andere dingen mee."	4
	> "We moeten 'projecten' en we moeten 'innoveren' [...] Die start vind ik al verkeerd want innoveren dat is voor iedereen een andere definitie."	6
	> "Innoveren met z'n allen is lastig."	4
	> "De grootste uitdaging wordt dan van kun je mensen bij elkaar zetten die mogelijk een gezamenlijk belang hebben en niet te veel tegengestelde belangen."	5
	> "Het is iets lastiger om te zeggen van; oké, hebben we gemeenschappelijke deel om samen in te brengen in het project in Mushroom Valley, dat kan wel eens voor iedereen heel anders zijn."	6
	> "Er moet focus zijn om het verschil te maken."	6
	> "Je kunt tien paddenstoelenkwekers bij elkaar zetten, dan krijg je twaalf meningen. Samenwerken doen ze niet snel."	7
Does the primary sector needed to be involved, according current members?	> "Bij ons is de relatie met de primaire sector belangrijk, ik weet dat die op dit moment nog wat onderontwikkeld is binnen Mushroom Valley."	1
	> "Dat zou ook het moeilijke zijn, om ook de primaire sector binnen te gaan halen."	1
	> "De primaire sector die mis ik."	1
	> "Aangezien wij klant zijn, zou ik het heel fijn vinden om daar mijn leveranciers ook mee te kunnen betrekken in het proces."	1
	> "Die mogen rustig als een aparte club erbij komen, ja. Maar wel als een aparte club hè!"	2
	> "Ik zou graag de primaire sector erin zien."	4
	> "In mijn optiek is het een must om telers erbij te hebben. Je moet die verbinding slaan tussen de gehele keten om straks ook de goede partijen bij elkaar te krijgen."	6
	"De primaire sector die mis ik, die moeten er gewoon bij."	6

	> "Wat voor ons één van de opvallende punten was, was dat bij de oprichting de primaire producenten niet betrokken waren. Daar stond ik toen wel van te kijken. Dat heeft denk ik, ja goed met name in die groep ben ik actief dus daar krijg ik de signalen van, toen best wel wat vraagtekens opgeroepen. Waarom ga je iets opzetten en vervolgens betrek je ons er niet bij? Het leek een beetje zo'n 'old boys network' van iedereen daar rond omheen."	7
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How do members perceive the external communication of Mushroom Valley?	> "Ik denk dat Mushroom Valley een stapje kan bijdragen op de nationale markt (respectievelijk 'in goed daglicht zetten van champignons')"	1
	> "Ik denk dat vooral het belangrijkste is de naamsbekendheid. Naamsbekendheid in combinatie met uitdragen van toelevering."	2
	> "Wij zijn in Mushroom Valley gestapt om te proberen om Nederland uit te dragen over de hele wereld. Dat vind ik even het belangrijkste stukje van Mushroom Valley."	2
	> "In mijn beleving moet Mushroom Valley op elke beurs aanwezig zijn om het etiket uit te dragen."	2
	> "We kunnen in Nederland proberen te champignon te promoten, maar brengt dat wat? Ik vind van niet. Want als je naar het buitenland kijkt, dan kun je in een keer heel veel grotere stappen nemen om die champignonconsumptie een boost te geven. En wat een spin-off kan brengen voor bijna allemaal de leden."	2
	> "Wat ik in ieder geval niet zou doen is me druk maken over het gebruik van champost of de hele marketing over het gebruik van champignons als zodanig bevorderen."	3
	> "Naamsbekendheid weet ik dat er wel aan gewerkt wordt, maar ik weet ook dat dat een hele lastige is."	4
	> "Hoe denken we dan als branche dat te communiceren naar onze klanten als eerste maar ook naar de markt. Want anders gebeurt het omgekeerd, dan gaan anderen communiceren over de sector en dan heb je het niet meer zelf in de hand."	6
	> "Ik zou gewoon beginnen met dat je op elke beurs aanwezig bent."	2
	> "Ik weet niet Mushroom Valley te vinden als zijnde ik heb een vraag en dan moet ik dáár zijn. Wat eigenlijk wel de bedoeling was. Als ik in het buitenland ben en ik spreek ze erop aan, het merendeel weet niet wat het is."	4
	> "Ik denk dat voor het platform specifiek de naamsbekendheid in het buitenland redelijk dramatisch is. Dat is een redelijk groot aandachtspunt denk ik."	4

What is the added value of having a sector network for members of the platform?	> "Het netwerk is vooral belangrijk voor mij."	1
	> "Uiteraard het kennen van mensen maakt bepaalde dingen gewoon makkelijker."	1
	> "Wat Mushroom Valley goed doet is het verstevigen van netwerken."	1
	> "De champignonsector is een redelijk klein en gesloten wereld."	1
	> "Als lid krijg je genoeg ruimte om dingen eerder te weten dan mensen die geen lid zijn."	1
	> "Het netwerk is altijd belangrijk, alleen het netwerk is voor mij nog niet veranderd."	2
	> "Het was voor ons vooral bij het netwerk horen maar daar gebeurd eigenlijk niet veel."	3
	> "Als je niet in het netwerk zit, dat merk ik wel, zeg maar het Horster netwerk, elkaar toch al wat beter kent en als je daar als vreemde bij zit dan is het al helemaal lastig."	3
	> "Dat netwerk opbouwen vind ik dat onvoldoende gebeurt."	3
	> "Die anderen zijn helemaal niet bezig met netwerk of positie."	3
	> "Het echte belang van het hebben van een regionaal netwerk is matig."	4

	> "Het netwerk was er wel al, maar redelijk beperkt. Het netwerk is groter geworden in die zin."	4
	> "Ons netwerk is absoluut breder geworden. Voor ons zijn de onderwijsinstellingen, een aantal waren al toegankelijk, maar het is toegankelijker geworden door Mushroom Valley, absoluut."	6
	> "Ik denk wel dat door het vormen van een brug de verschillende stakeholders in de branche, ben ik ervan overtuigd dat Mushroom Valley een aantal onderzoeksprojecten toegankelijker heeft gemaakt. Zij hebben de contacten om wat sneller externe financiële middelen te vinden of in ieder geval wel partijen te vinden die misschien wel met een vergelijkbaar product bezig zijn. Wat ik bij onszelf zie, hebben zij absoluut een stukje brug gevonden waarbij wij sneller een aantal andere partijen en visa versa gevonden hebben."	6
	> "... dus daar was het bruggetje {respectievelijk door Mushroom Valley} gelegd. Ik ben alleen heel benieuwd of, en hoe, Mushroom Valley daar een faciliterende rol in kan blijven spelen."	1
	> "Er is toentertijd gezegd tegen leveranciers; het komt goed, ik krijg jullie wel bij elkaar en niet dus."	4

What are (possible) INTERNAL threats to the added value of business sector platform Mushroom Valley?	> "Wij als [BEDRIJFSNAAM] zijn natuurlijk een marktgerichte partij. Mushroom Valley heeft denk ik ambities om dat ook te zijn, zonder dat ze een fysiek product verkopen."	1
	> "Op het gebied van markwerking zijn we niet allemaal elkaars versterkende factoren. En probeer daar dan maar eens een gezamenlijke deler uit te gaan halen om de wereld succesvol te maken."	1
	> "Who is your customer?"	1
	> "Concurrentie gevoeligheid over het algemeen."	4
	> "Als je ideeën oppert, althans vanuit onze sector als je ideeën oppert, dan weet de rest waar je mee bezig bent en dat wil je eigenlijk niet."	4
	> "Het speelt, denk ik, met name bij wat is competitief, hoe wil ik me onderscheiden en ga ik mijn kennis bijdragen. Ga ik dan mijn concurrenten sterker maken, wel of niet."	6
	> "En ja, dan concurreer je weliswaar met elkaar op het gebied van nieuwe arbeidspotentieel maar ja aan de andere kant wil je wel impact van hebben en dan moet je het wel samen oppakken."	6
	> "Men gunt elkaar het licht in de ogen niet altijd".	4
	> "Het delen van informatie vindt men bedrijfsgevoelig."	4
	> "Misschien moeten we proberen hier in de regio de meest innovatieve kwekerij op te zetten. Dat is een heel nobel streven alleen als je dat gaat doen krijg je denk ik meteen van één of twee of drie leden te horen dat zij het meest innovatieve systeem hebben, en dat wordt dan een ding."	4
	> "In staat zijn om de meerwaarde die ze bieden als marktorganisatie aan de leden te laten zien. Trouwens... de meerwaarde te bieden én te laten zien."	1
	> "Hoe gaat Mushroom Valley ooit aantonen dat door het gene wat zij gedaan hebben, de wervingstijd verkort is." {betreft project werving studenten/arbeidskrachten}	1
	> "Maar om je als Mushroom Valley zijnde ooit te bewijzen, dat wordt natuurlijk een heel ander verhaal."	1
	> "De grote uitdaging komt als straks nieuwe investeringsrondes komen, dat er bewijslast moet komen."	1
	> "Ik vraag me af wat echt de toegevoegde waarde is."	3

	> "Als je een goed idee hebt of een goed plan, dan weten ondernemers zich wel te vinden. Daar hebben ze Mushroom Valley niet voor nodig."	6
	> "De kennis om vraagstukken bij Mushroom Valley neer te leggen is er niet."	3
	> "Het heeft geen nut om gezamenlijk projecten via Mushroom Valley te initiëren voor ons, want drie van de vier bedrijven zit er niet eens bij."	3
	> "Er zijn veel negatieve geluiden."	2
	> "Ik ben actief als afgevaardigde van de sector techniek, wat denk ik de moeilijkste sector is in het hele stuk om dáár de neuzen één kant op te krijgen."	4
	> "Ik heb wel eens gehoord; 'kun je niet samen naar beurzen? Als je dat oppert en vervolgens is het initiatief er, dan moet je ook meedoen. Dat is eigenlijk triest, want er zijn meerdere die dat eigenlijk bedacht hadden en dan zie je dat er vier, af en toe vijf meedoen. Dan denk ik van ja jongens, je moet ergens beginnen, maar kom op. Dan sta je op een beurs en dan heb je vijf namen op je doek staan, terwijl daar gewoon 25 of 30 namen moeten staan. Dat is wat je uit wilt dragen."	4
	> "Dat die vier toevallig kiezen om daar te staan, maar dan mis ik dus die link naar de rest."	4
	> "Het is geen kwade wil dat ik denk; 'ik leg niks bij Mushroom Valley neer op basis van vertrouwen of capaciteit of wat dan ook', maar meer zoiets van; er is geen directe behoefte om of exacte expertisegebieden waarvan ik zeg; 'hey daarvoor zou ik nou typisch naar Mushroom Valley toe moeten gaan'."	1
	> "Maar de rol van Mushroom Valley is dan ineens weer een beetje zoek".	1
	> "Mushroom Valley wil de discussie faciliteren. Dat is een belangrijke taak. Alleen... als je een discussie wilt faciliteren, dan moet je een onderwerp hebben. En dat moet niet een te groot onderwerp zijn, want daar kom je niet uit. Het moeten deelonderwerpjes zijn."	5
What are (possible) <u>EXTERNAL threats to</u> business sector platform Mushroom Valley?	> "Wij gaan het niet redden ten opzichten van de Poolse industrie. Want dat zijn allemaal jonge mannen, met diepe zakken blijkbaar, die makkelijker aan geld kunnen komen dan de gemiddeld wat oudere industrie hier."	5
	> "Wat maakt Nederlandse champignons nou zo bijzonder? Waarom is een Nederlandse champignon nou beter dan een Poolse champignon bijvoorbeeld? Je hebt geen boodschap! Je kunt wel naar een beurs gaan, maar je hebt geen boodschap! Je hebt geen enkel punt waarop je kunt zeggen 'een Nederlandse champignon is beter dan een Poolse champignon.'"	5
	> "Natuurlijk, productinnovatie of een nieuw concept in de markt zetten dat geloof ik wel maar echt die keten veranderen van voor tot achter, waarbij ik me dan even concentreer op de champignonteelt, ja dan zullen echt een aantal partijen moeten gaan samenwerken om een nieuwe ontwikkeling op gang te brengen. En dan begint al met de vraag: hebben we het wel nodig?"	5
	> "We zijn allemaal op zoek naar nieuwe methodieken maar als we nu kijken naar de huidige situatie waarbij we toch met circulaire grondstoffen werken, dan moet er ook maar eerst eens iets anders komen wat beter is dan wat we nu hebben."	5
	> "Met name compost is natuurlijk best wel een sector waar best veel vermogen in geïnvesteerd moet worden voordat ze het product kunnen maken. Wat dan ook niet bijdraagt naar het snel switchen naar nieuwe ontwikkelingen op dat gebied. Omdat de bestaande partijen daar niet direct belang bij hebben."	5
What is the function of the <u>geographic location</u> of the	> "Heel veel mensen hebben niks met Horst aan de Maas."	1
	> "Ik zou het direct nationaal willen trekken."	1
	> "Vanuit het verleden is deze regio belangrijk, alleen op de huidige wereldmarkt bestaat Horst aan de Maas niet meer."	1

network for the network for the platform and its members?	> "Internationaal bestaat Nederland nog wel, we hebben een 4e plek als het gaat om de export van champignons."	1
	> "De huidige markt is op dit moment een wereldmarkt."	1
	> "Je kunt in de regio promoten, alleen het zal ons niet gaan helpen... Als ik morgen in het buitenland niks meer te doen heb, is het afgelopen hier."	2
	> "Ik denk dat je niet kunt zeggen regionaal of dat het Nederland is of een stukje België."	4
	> "Heel simpel, als je Nederland zou bekijken en iemand denkt van Nederland weet alles over champignons en ze gaan Googelen, dan komen ze toch in deze regio terecht."	4
	> "Horst aan de Maas; Das war einmal... Das ist Vergangenheit. Je hebt de regio Horst, regio Boekel is ook geen kleine regio meer, allang niet meer. En de regio Kerkdriel is ook geen kleine regio. Dus ja om te zeggen dat het een Noord-Limburgs feestje moet zijn, ik denk dat je jezelf dan beperkt."	5
	> "Horst daar had je het proefstation zitten, dat is weg."	5
	> "Dat proefstation is om een reden weggegaan daar. Daar zat een school. Die school is ook weg. En dat waren de twee pijlers waar de roem van Horst wereldwijd op rustte."	5
	> "Ik denk dat er voorbeelden genoeg zijn waarbij Nederland de regie verloren heeft en naar het buitenland vertrekt en dan verlies je langzaam. Dus ik denk dat het belangrijk is om gezamenlijk als netwerk daar ook aan te blijven werken. Een soort regiobranding zou je het ook kunnen noemen."	6
	> "Alleen binnen Limburg denken, is heel bekrompen denken."	6
	> "Als ze eenmaal geïnfecteerd worden door deze sector, dan komt Horst in beeld."	6
	> "Maar ik denk dat als ik in het buitenland kom en je hebt het over paddenstoelenteelt en over moderne tuinbouw dan noemen ze Nederland als de Sillicon Valley van de foodproductie."	6
	> "Laten we eerlijk zijn; kennis en innovatie en alles zit hier {respectievelijk NL} alleen."	4
How do members perceive the internal communication of Mushroom Valley?	> "Als ik nu de nieuwsbrief van Mushroom Valley zie, is het een opsomming van wat alle leden afzonderlijk aan het doen zijn."	1
	> "Ik heb hem geïnstalleerd {respectievelijk Bundeling applicatie}, maar het staat voor mij te zeer als een gesloten wereldje op zichzelf."	1
	> "Bundeling is weer iets dat naar binnen gekeerd is, terwijl Mushroom Valley juist een platform is - of de gedachte toen het ontstond - naar buiten toe."	1
	> "Ik heb gepoogd via Bundeling contact te leggen, dat is niet gelukt, dus nu bel ik wel rechtstreeks of mail rechtstreeks."	3
	> "Ik heb 2 of 3 mensen uitgenodigd maar nog steeds geen bevestiging gekregen. Ja, wat moet je daarmee?"	3
	> "Uiteindelijk heb ik die ene wel gesproken nadat ik gebeld had of gemaild. Daar heb ik die Bundeling niet voor nodig."	3
	> "Volgens mij als je werkelijk een nieuwsbrief wilt zijn dan moet die er anders uitzien voor de sector, dan moet er meer in."	3
	> "Ik vind het kennisverhaal... de voorlichting is het niet echt. Dus de bijeenkomsten voegt wat toe mede doordat je dan wat vaker met anderen praat uit andere sectoren die wel met champignons te maken hebben."	4
	> "Contact leg ik rechtstreeks, niet via Bundeling."	2
	> "Bundeling gebruik ik voornamelijk om te lezen."	4
	> "Bundeling gebruik ik gewoon niet."	1

	> "Bundeling is precies hetzelfde als LinkedIn, ik bedoel het is aardig en ik heb volgens mij ergens in de achthonderd contacten in LinkedIn, maar ja laat ik zeggen als men iemand zoekt dan kan het zoeken versnellen maar dat is dan het enige content die we daarin hebben."	6
	> "Het feit is dat wij al even zoekende zijn, oké bij wie moeten we dat dan neergooien? Dat geeft wel aan dat het dan nog niet helemaal bekend is."	6
	> "Als ik niet in het bestuur had gezeten, had ik niet geweten bij wie ik moest zijn. Aan de nadere kant denk ik dat het een uitgelezen kans is om dat via Mushroom Valley op te pakken."	6

What are the objectives of members to join the platform?	> "Het gaat ons om (informatie over) ontwikkelingen van techniek, technologie."	3
	> "Vooral op de hoogte blijven van ontwikkelingen in die sector omdat die natuurlijk niet zo groot is."	3
	> "In eerste instantie is het onderwerp 'onderwijs' voor belang voor ons, het tweede is denk ik innovatie alleen loop je daar tegen de moeilijkheden aan."	4
	> "Voor ons zou het {respectievelijk de meerwaarde van lidmaatschap} een informatiebron zijn, de kennisbank."	3

What are the expectations of members towards the success of the platform?	> "Of we de verwachting 'paddenstoelensector in een positief daglicht' halen, weet ik eigenlijk niet zo goed".	2
	> "Ik heb wel eens gezegd; 'de strijd is verloren, accepteer'. Dat klinkt misschien een beetje negatief, maar dat is het wel."	2
	> "Ik verwacht niet dat ik het komende jaar veel nieuwe dingen zal ontdekken daar of zal horen en er is ook relatief weinig uitgekomen moet ik zeggen. Ook omdat er toch nog steeds maar een beperkt aantal mensen op die bijeenkomsten zijn."	3
	> "Ik denk dat Mushroom Valley... kijk op het moment dat de sector elkaar makkelijker kan vinden en in gesprek is met elkaar dan is natuurlijk de vraag: wat mag dat dan kosten en kun je elkaar dan zonder goed netwerk niet vinden?"	6
	> "Ik denk dat Mushroom Valley over twee jaar niet meer bestaat, doordat er té veel belangen zijn en een gebrek aan focus."	1
	> "Bij ons is niet per definitie Mushroom Valley geslaagd als we maar voldoende nieuwe projecten op gang trekken of genoeg innovatie tot stand brengen."	6
	> "De complexiteit van Mushroom Valley is dat - en dat wordt misschien uiteindelijk ook het Waterloo van dit proces - is dat het alles wil."	1

What are the expectations of members towards the management of the platform?	> "In het onderwijs zijn wel al wat stappen gezet naar mijn mening en ze zijn nu aan het proberen die bij elkaar te voegen."	4
	> "Misschien ligt daar de taak om van Mushroom Valley uit eens een keer per sector iets te organiseren en niet altijd compleet met iedereen, maar breng nou die techniek eens een keer bij elkaar op een aparte middag."	4
	> "Het innovatieverhaal... probeer het eens een keer los te organiseren van de rest, misschien dat dat wat wordt. Zei ik met enige scepsis.."	4
	> "Wat Mushroom Valley zou kunnen doen is faciliteren."	5
	> "Dat Mushroom Valley die {respectievelijk partijen voor samenwerking} actief benaderd, want dan ga je ook zien dat de deelnemers de content gaan zien bij Mushroom Valley. Dan word je deels toch weer ontzorgd."	6

What are the expectations of members towards the platform?	> "Dat {respectievelijk samen naar beurzen gaan} zie ik wel voor mij moet ik zeggen".	4
	> "Er moet een stukje bewustwording gecreëerd worden, van 'wacht effe... dat was ook zo ja, daar ligt de kennis!'."	4
	> "Eigenlijk is dat {respectievelijk nieuwe Arbowetgeving} er een uitgelezen ding voor om als er zoiets is om alle gezichten in één keer bij elkaar te hebben en 'joh, we gaan met z'n allen ageren en niet vanuit één stukje'."	4
	> "Het was vooral een netwerk op naamsbekendheid en scholing, maar onderzoek... ja dat had niet echt een mooi profiel. Wij dachten dat wij daar misschien wel een rol in zouden kunnen spelen. Want wij hebben wel wat ideetjes."	5
	> "Jongens, we moeten eens gaan kijken of we aan productvernieuwing kunnen gaan doen."	5
	> "Je merkt het elke keer; als er iets op het nieuws is met paddenstoelen, het wordt weer najaar, er zal vast wel weer iets van een themanummer bij de allerhande of bij de plus komen te liggen over paddenstoelen. En dan zal de consumptie weer omhoog gaan. Maar las je dat informatiemodel niet aan de gang houdt, dan zakt daarna de consumptie weer in."	5
	> "Dus ik vind het heel goed dat de sector wel wordt wakker geschud. En dat een platform als Mushroom Valley er dan aan begint te rammelen, vind ik gewoon heel goed."	1
	> "Ik denk niet dat Mushroom Valley zich in die taken kan begeven {respectievelijk ontwikkelen data base}. Gewoon puur vanuit de expertise die je daarvoor (respectievelijk 'big data') nodig hebt, wordt het voor Mushroom Valley héél lastig om dat soort dingen te faciliteren. En nee, die verwachtingen hebben wij ook niet."	1
What are examples of opportunities for research?	> "Voor teeltonderzoek kun je hier {respectievelijk WUR} prima terecht."	5
	> "Kun je iets met champignons met een verhoogd mineralen gehalte als een bepaald seniorenvoeding, omdat senioren een hoger gehalte aan vitamine D in hun voeding nodig hebben en een hoger gehalte aan mineralen?"	5
	> "Kun je champignons als een soort ingrediënten-product zien; zitten daar bepaalde polysacharide in die een andere industrie nodig heeft."	5
	> "Er is nooit een mooie koppeling geweest naar wat heeft een grote producent als Unilever nodig en wat zou champignon kunnen bieden."	5
	> "Als je nieuwe producten kunt maken, op andere eetmomenten - want we eten nou champignons bij de avondmaaltijd - wat als je champignons kunt in de vorm van een zoutje."	5
What are opportunities for Mushroom Valley, pointed out by members of the network?	> "Ik denk dat het duidelijker moet worden in het buitenland waar Mushroom Valley voor staat, dat mis ik nu."	4
	> "Ik denk dat er op innovatiegebied op ons stukje techniek heel veel samen te werken zou zijn; als iedereen open was je er allemaal wat aan kon hebben."	4
	> "Wij {respectievelijk HAS, WUR en Maastricht University} moeten niet op de industrie gaan wachten, maar vanuit onderzoek een soort plannetjes opstarten."	5
	> "Ik denk wel dat een aantal issues en ook een aantal gemene delen die in verschillende sectoren in de markt actief zijn, die kun je beter collectief benaderen."	6
	> "Ik denk dat heel veel ondernemers heel druk zijn met hun eigen onderneming of hun eigen organisatie waarin ze actief zijn. Die willen deels wel inbreng, maar ze willen ook graag gefaciliteerd worden."	6
	> "Ik denk dat de paddenstoelenbranche op zich, een goed verhaal te vertellen heeft maar hoe vertaald de branche dat naar de markt? Is daar krachtig genoeg een stem?"	6

	> "Mushroom Valley zal de sector wel goed kennen en zal een goede inschatting moeten maken van wie kan ik wel bij elkaar zetten met gelijkgestemde belangen en wie niet."	5
	> "Ik denk dat we de gemene deler die wij als Nederlandse bedrijven hebben is dat we, en zeker uit dit gebied, een Nederlands bedrijf zijn. Als je wereldwijd kijkt in de moderne champignonteelt, daar zitten wij dan in, dan zie je feitelijk dat overal in de wereld waar op dit moment een nieuwe kwekerij gebouwd wordt, is gestoeld op Nederlandse methodiek."	6
	> "Iemand zal de discussie moeten aanzwengelen {respectievelijk rondom innovatie en onderzoek} en ik zou zeggen richting nieuwe producten of nieuwe teelten, en dan vanuit een marktperspectief benaderen. Kijk wat heeft economisch gezien een kans, en kan ik een keten ontwikkelen?"	5

Do members take responsibility for the network platform Mushroom Valley?	> "Ik denk niet dat wij als [BEDRIJFSNAAM] wat kunnen betekenen om 'Nederland weer beter op de kaart te zetten'. Natuurlijk moet een deel door de sector zelf opgelost worden. Kwekers moeten dat zelf op willen lossen. Mushroom Valley kan daaraan een bijdragen leveren."	2
	> "Dus als de sector een idee heeft, dan willen wij {respectievelijk onderzoekers WUR} heel graag ons stinkende best doen om daar een succes van te maken. Wij willen best adviseren en onze visie op de zaak geven, maar wij gaan de zaak niet trekken. Want als een bedrijf de zaak trekt, dan wordt de draagvlak voor iets beter. Als een bedrijf iets wilt, dan weet ik ook zeker dat ze er mankracht voor inzetten."	5
	> "Wie is dan de sterke lobby zeg maar binnen de sector of naar overheden die belangrijk zijn voor de sector."	6
	> "Alleen om echt verandering te creëren heb je toch ergens gemene delen nodig."	6

What is the competitive position in the sector of Mushroom Valley according to members of the platform?	> "Ik denk dat de constructie zoals ZLTO werkt, een redelijk gedateerd karakter begint te krijgen."	1
	> "Gezien een ZLTO meer het belang heeft van praten als één groep primaire sector, wordt je ook automatisch geschaard als zijnde hetzelfde."	1
	> "Ik snap ze wel omdat ze lid zijn van ZLTO dat ze {respectievelijk telers} daar een vergadering mee beleggen om daarna te kijken. Ik denk van je mist, in dit geval, enkele toeleverende industrieën terwijl wij als techniek en compostleverancier die daar ook belang bij hebben willen helpen. Als je wilt ageren bij een ministerie kun je beter zo groot mogelijk reageren met zoveel invalshoeken als mogelijk."	4
	> "ZLTO is eigenlijk een beetje brandweerman aan het spelen voor de problemen die er op dit moment zijn. En dat is niet echt lange termijn."	5
	> "ZLTO kan, omdat het een vereniging van champignon telers is, eigenlijk maar met moeite werken aan andere teelten. Champignontelers zullen zeggen; ja besteedt je tijd maar aan mijn huidige probleem want daar betaal ik je voor."	5
	> "ZLTO is niet de juiste partner om alternatieve routes in de benen te helpen. Die hebben een heel andere taak."	5
	> "Dan kun je wel zeggen daar hebben we LLTB voor en ZLTO, maar eigenlijk zie je dat de primaire sector, want dat is eigenlijk voorop gesteld het platform waar primaire producenten lid van zijn, die zijn al bijna geen lid meer."	6
	> "Laat staan de periferie erom heen, die zijn al helemaal geen lid van LLTB of ZLTO."	6

	> "Een aantal ketenpartijen die zweven nu ook nog een beetje tussen, we hebben ZLTO, we hebben LLTB en ik zeg niet dat die geen nuttig werk doen maar ik denk dat de markt hun toch niet als dat is van de primaire producenten. Die vertegenwoordigen slechts de primaire producenten. Terwijl de periferie en alles wat daarin zit natuurlijk ook een bepaalde belangenbehartiging vraagt. En als je dan kijkt naar de glastuinbouw daar zitten plantenkwekers die zitten in Plantum, de zaadveredelaars die zitten in een platform en dan heb je de primair producenten en dat is in de paddenstoelensector lang niet zo strak georganiseerd."	6
	> "Zelfs bij de Nederlandse kwekers is het nog steeds niet helemaal duidelijk en wordt het gezien als concurrent van andere initiatieven zoals LTO en zo."	4
	> "Want je ziet, één van de uitvoeringsmogelijkheden die we binnen de Greenport mogelijkheden hebben is het Greenport Gelderland innovatiefonds."	7
	> "De vakgroep is eigenlijk de landelijke belangenbehartiging."	7
	> "Mushroom Valley is een initiatief wat in het Zuidoosten is ontstaan, met name eigenlijk op initiatief van de periferie. En wat dat betreft zijn wij ook een totaal onvergelykbare situatie omdat wij door de provincie zijn geïnitieerd en zijn wij wel in het belang van kwekers maar niet door middel van lidmaatschappen en niet afhankelijk van de kwekers."	7
	> "ZLTO heeft meerdere petten op hè. Belangenbehartiging, advisering, die doen projecten en eigenlijk is ZLTO als geheel is aangewezen om landelijk de belangenbehartiging van de paddenstoelen te doen."	7

What is the willingness to invest of members in the platform?	> "Het is een forse investering voor wat je ervoor terugkrijgt."	2
	> "Op dit moment wegen de kosten nóg niet tegen de voordelen af."	2
	> "Wil je echt je stem laten horen in de sector, daarom hebben wij ook gepleit voor, jongens de bijdrage moet omhoog. Professionele directeur drie of vier dagen in de week op pad hebben die projecten mee aanjaagt. Ik denk dat Mushroom Valley daar een heel geschikt platform voor kan zijn."	6

What are (recent) developments in the mushroom sector?	> "Als je nu naar de paddenstoelenindustrie kijkt in Nederland, dus naar de telers... maar ook naar de toeleverende bedrijven, dat is een heel mooi uitontwikkeld systeem wat hele hoge opbrengsten geeft. Qua champignons wordt er nergens zoveel champignons van een ton compost geplukt als in Nederland."	5
	> "Het is een volwassen markt geworden."	5
	> "De markt groeit niet meer, het is sterk afhankelijk van de consumptie van de mensen."	5
	> "De marges voor de telers zijn heel laag en je ziet gewoon aankomen dat de kosten gaan stijgen."	5
	> "Er komt waarschijnlijk een concessie voor het afgraven van dekaarde in Noord-Duitsland. Wil dus zeggen dat de dekaarde van verder moet komen, dus duurder wordt. Ook als je met alternatieven gaat werken, mag je erop rekenen dat het niet goedkoper gaat worden."	5
	> "Het telersbestand in Nederland, ik denk dat die mensen een beetje mijn leeftijd hebben {respectievelijk 50+}."	5
	> "Ik denk dat er een hele hoop zijn die kinderen hebben die niet het bedrijf zullen overnemen."	5
	> "En de manier waarop ze nu met die moeilijke markt omgaan is door schaalvergroting."	5
	> "De onderzoeks-infrastructuur in Europa, die is al jaren aan het eroderen."	5

>	"Als je nog 10 jaar wacht ... dan is in Europa in ieder geval een hele generatie {respectievelijk onderzoekers} weg."	5
>	"Telers brengen gezamenlijk geen geld meer in om aan nieuwe initiatieven te werken."	5
>	"Veelal gaat het om langjarige trajecten {respectievelijk onderzoeken} en als teler weet jij niet of jij er over 5 jaar nog wel bent. Dus je gaat geen geld stoppen in onderzoek dat 4 jaar duurt."	5
>	"Als ik om mij heen kijk wie ik in de industrie tegenkom, zijn allemaal jongens van mijn leeftijd; 50 en ouder. Er is maar heel weinig jong volk."	5
>	"Als we de komende vijf jaar kijken... dan gaan er een hele hoop telers afvallen."	5
>	"We hebben nu een goede 15 - 16 snijbedrijven. En die produceren 60% van de... wat zijn het... 340 duizend ton die wij op jaarbasis maken. Dat zijn grote jongens, met een flinke stem in het kapittel. Met veel macht, ook bij de composteerders. Als er zo eentje bij je weg gaat, voel je dat wel als composteerder."	5
>	"De Chinezen zijn in een duizelingwekkend tempo de champignonenteelt aan het omarmen."	5
>	"Nederlandse bedrijven bouwen op dit moment in Rusland heel erg veel. Want er zit een boycot op Westerse groenten en fruit, dus dat geeft een enorme schwing aan de Russische tuinbouw."	5
>	"Je hebt nu tijdelijke marktgroei in Rusland en China, ik denk dat die ook wel voorbij is over een aantal jaar."	5
>	"Ik denk dat arbeid in zijn algemeenheid is best wel een hot item. Op de korte termijn is zeg maar de leerlingen of de mensen die vrij op de arbeidsmarkt zijn te motiveren voor de paddenstoelenteelt."	6
>	"De vergrijzing die zet door, iedere sector heeft handen te kort."	6
>	"Daar ontstaat eigenlijk ook meteen de behoefte tot innoveren. Als je dat goed organiseert, de korte termijn is mensen werven. We hebben een grote vraag, de vergrijzing daar zitten we tegenaan, dat gaan straks ook nog gebeuren, dan weet je gewoon dat mensen schaarser worden."	6
>	"De koningsoesterzwam dat is een behoorlijke markt aan het worden."	5
>	"Biologische teelt, daar zit veel meer marge op, veel prettiger."	5
>	"Amandelchampignon kun je ook op compost groeien, is dat een optie?"	5
>	"Er is te weinig {respectievelijk arbeidspotentieel} dus je moet naar modernisering, naar een ander teeltsysteem."	6
>	"Wat me opvalt is het aantal kwekers wat met neventakken aan de slag gaat: verpakken, recreatie, zelf compost produceren."	7

2019

Report Survey

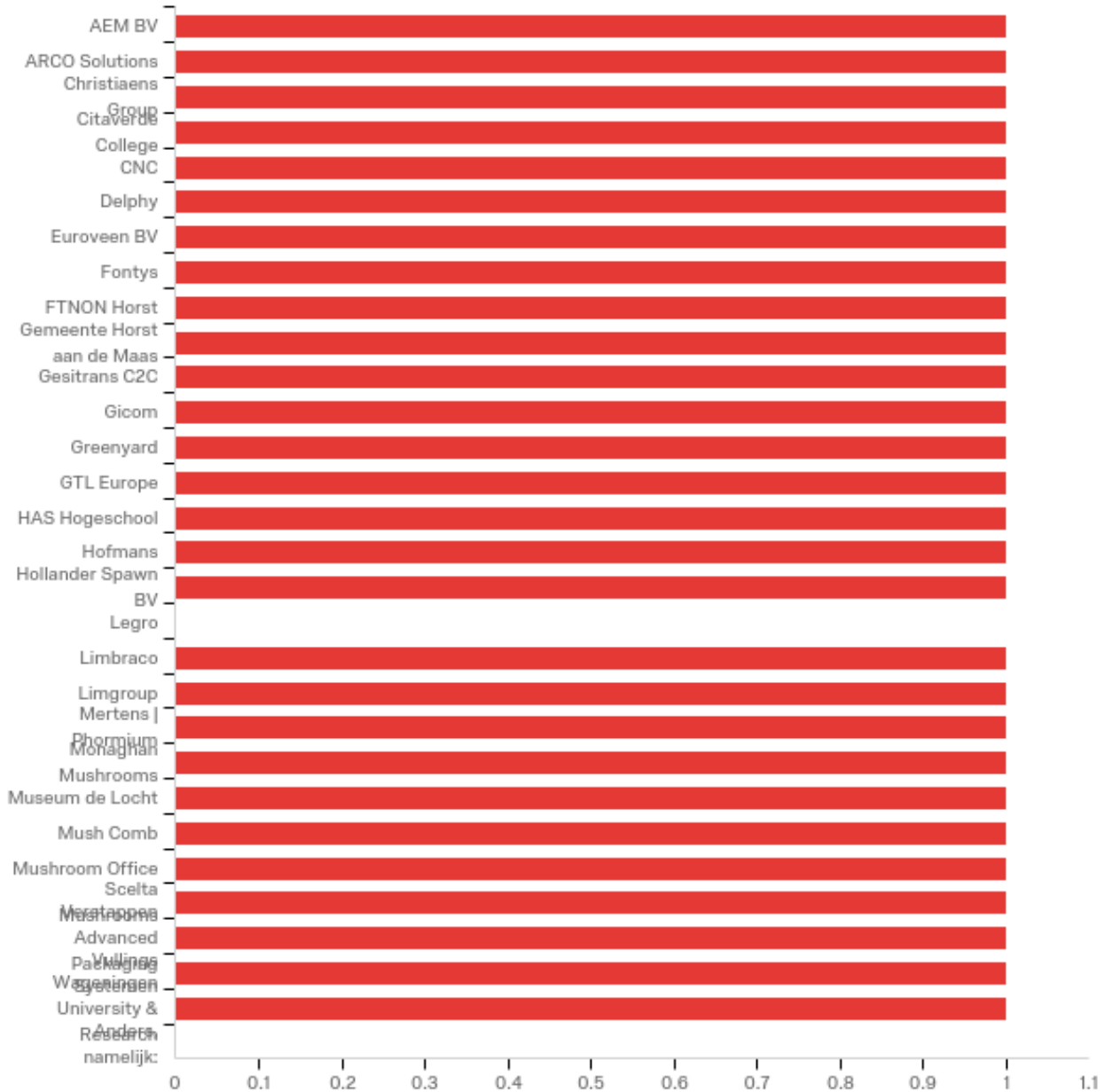
- Bijlage MSc. Thesis -



Report Survey

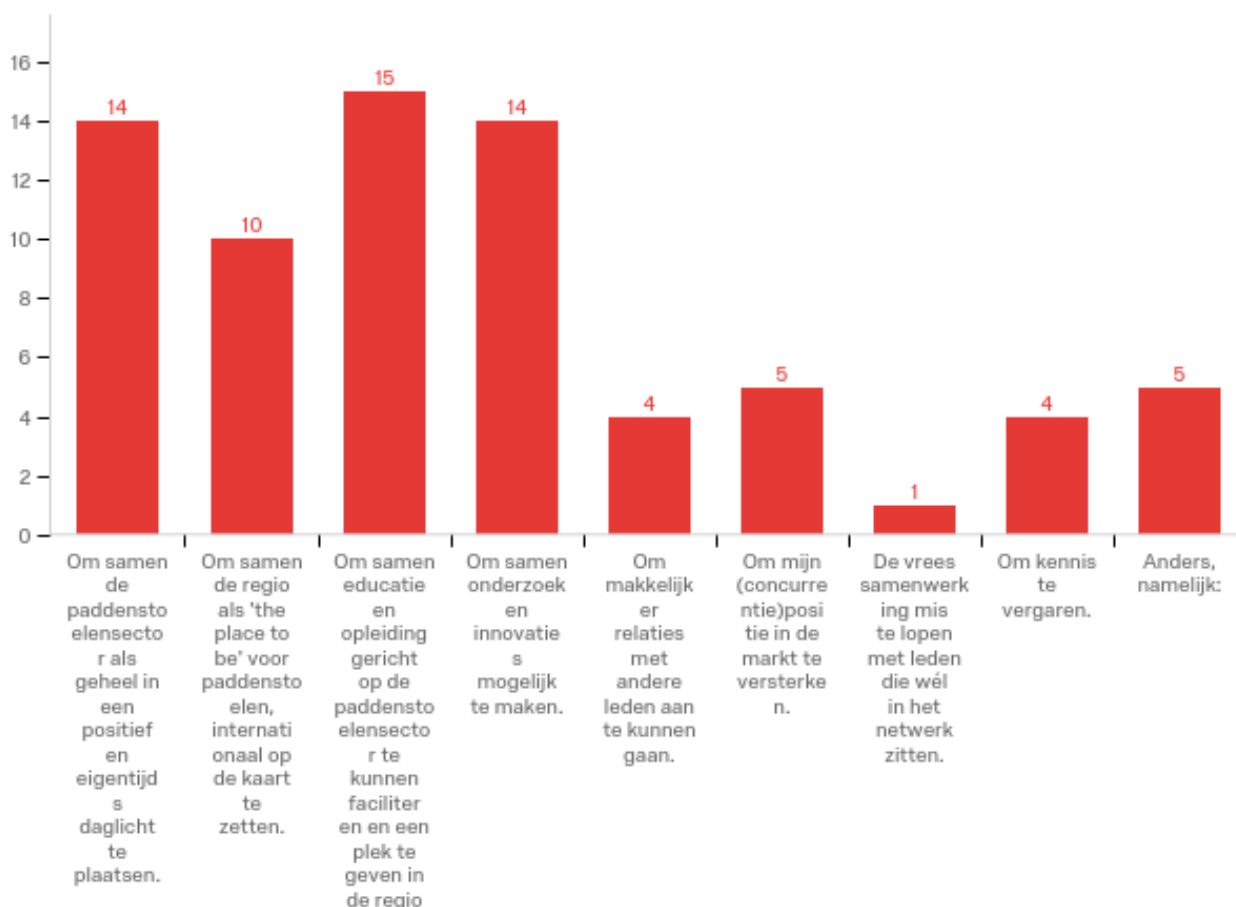
Mushroom Valley

Q1 - Namens welke organisatie vult u deze enquête in?



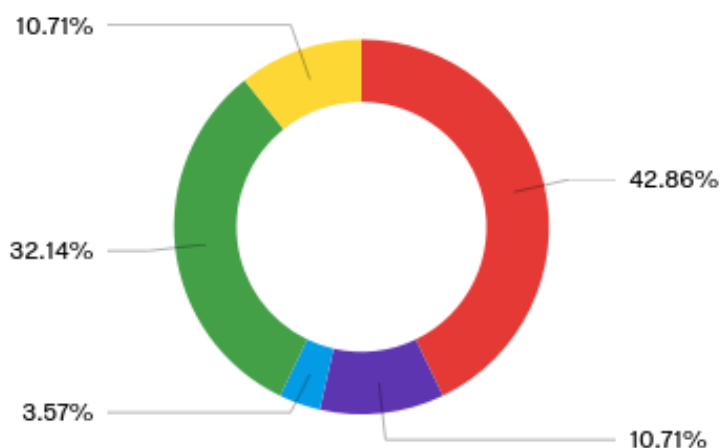
Answer	%
Total	100%

Q2 - Met welk doel bent u lid geworden van het platform Mushroom Valley?
(Meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)



#	Answer	%	Count
4	Om samen onderzoek en innovaties mogelijk te maken.	19.44%	14
3	Om samen educatie en opleiding gericht op de paddenstoelensector te kunnen faciliteren en een plek te geven in de regio	20.83%	15
2	Om samen de regio als 'the place to be' voor paddenstoelen, internationaal op de kaart te zetten.	13.89%	10
1	Om samen de paddenstoelensector als geheel in een positief en eigentijds daglicht te plaatsen.	19.44%	14
6	Om mijn (concurrentie)positie in de markt te versterken.	6.94%	5
5	Om makkelijker relaties met andere leden aan te kunnen gaan.	5.56%	4
8	Om kennis te vergaren.	5.56%	4
7	De vrees samenwerking mis te lopen met leden die wél in het netwerk zitten.	1.39%	1
9	Anders, namelijk:	6.94%	5
	Total	100%	72

Q3 - Wat zou volgens u dé kerntaak van Mushroom Valley moeten zijn?
(Eén antwoord mogelijk)



■ Mushroom Valley is een marketing platform dat de regio internationaal positioneert.

■ Mushroom Valley is een marketing platform gericht op het verhogen van de paddenstoelenconsumptie.

■ Mushroom Valley is een platform gericht op educatie en werkvoorbereiding.

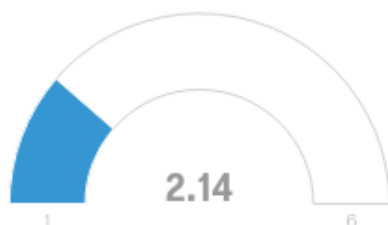
■ Mushroom Valley is een kennis platform gericht op onderzoek en innovatie. ■ Anders, namelijk:

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Mushroom Valley is een marketing platform dat de regio internationaal positioneert.	42.86%	12
2	Mushroom Valley is een marketing platform gericht op het verhogen van de paddenstoelenconsumptie.	10.71%	3
3	Mushroom Valley is een platform gericht op educatie en werkvoorbereiding.	3.57%	1
4	Mushroom Valley is een kennis platform gericht op onderzoek en innovatie.	32.14%	9
5	Anders, namelijk:	10.71%	3
	Total	100%	28

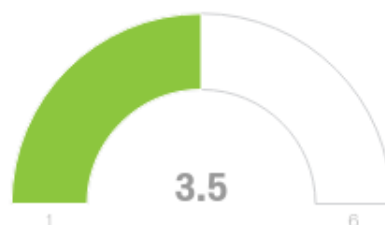
Q4 - Rangschik de thema's waaraan Mushroom Valley zich verbonden heeft naar de mate waarin deze voor u belangrijk zijn:

(Schuif de thema's in de juiste volgorde, begin met de belangrijkste)

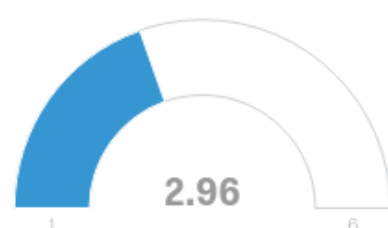
Profilering en positionering



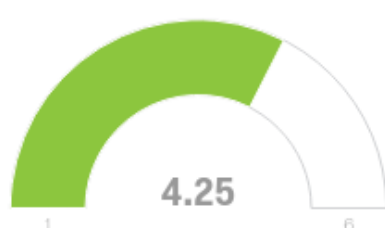
Educatie en werkvoorbereiding



Innovatie en onderzoek



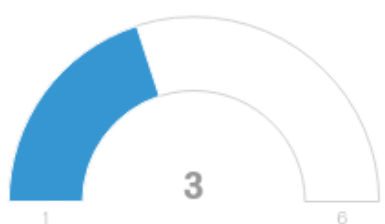
Creëren van een netwerk van ambassadeurs



Ontwikkelen van een database van de paddenstoelensector



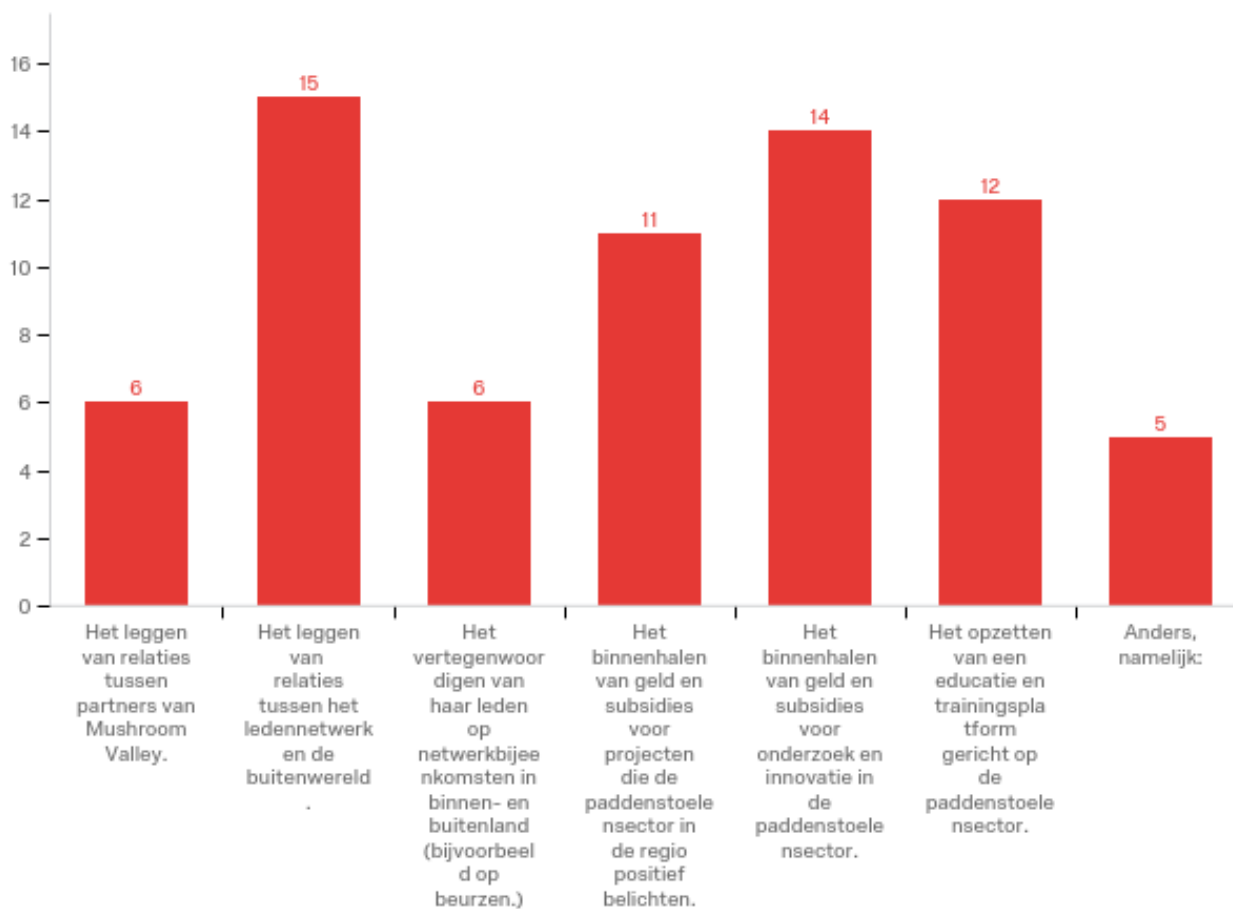
Stimuleren van marktontwikkeling



#	Question	1		2		3		4		5		6	
1	Profilering en positionering	39.29%	11	25.00%	7	25.00%	7	7.14%	2	0.00%	0	3.57%	1
2	Educatie en werkvoorbereiding	7.14%	2	21.43%	6	25.00%	7	17.86%	5	17.86%	5	10.71%	3
3	Innovatie en onderzoek	21.43%	6	21.43%	6	14.29%	4	28.57%	8	10.71%	3	3.57%	1
4	Creëren van een netwerk van ambassadeurs	3.57%	1	14.29%	4	7.14%	2	17.86%	5	42.86%	12	14.29%	4
5	Ontwikkelen van een database van de paddenstoelensector	0.00%	0	3.57%	1	7.14%	2	17.86%	5	14.29%	4	57.14%	16
6	Stimuleren van marktontwikkeling	28.57%	8	14.29%	4	21.43%	6	10.71%	3	14.29%	4	10.71%	3

Q5 - Wat verwacht u van de projectleiding van Mushroom Valley bij het nastreven van deze thema's en doelen?

(Maximaal 3 antwoorden mogelijk)



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Het leggen van relaties tussen partners van Mushroom Valley.	8.70%	6
2	Het leggen van relaties tussen het ledennetwerk en de buitenwereld.	21.74%	15
3	Het vertegenwoordigen van haar leden op netwerkbijeenkomsten in binnen- en buitenland (bijvoorbeeld op beurzen.)	8.70%	6
4	Het binnenhalen van geld en subsidies voor projecten die de paddenstoelensector in de regio positief belichten.	15.94%	11
5	Het binnenhalen van geld en subsidies voor onderzoek en innovatie in de paddenstoelensector.	20.29%	14
6	Het opzetten van een educatie en trainingsplatform gericht op de paddenstoelensector.	17.39%	12
7	Anders, namelijk:	7.25%	5
	Total	100%	69

Q6 - Met welke leden van Mushroom Valley werkt u geregeld samen?

	Werken intensief samen		Werken (niet intensief) samen, maar hebben geregeld contact		Werken nooit samen		Totaal
AEM BV	3.70%	1	40.74%	11	55.56%	15	27
ARCO Solutions	11.11%	3	14.81%	4	74.07%	20	27
Christiaens Group	11.11%	3	51.85%	14	37.04%	10	27
Citaverde College	11.11%	3	40.74%	11	48.15%	13	27
CNC	22.22%	6	37.04%	10	40.74%	11	27
Delphy	7.41%	2	55.56%	15	37.04%	10	27
Euroveen BV	29.63%	8	37.04%	10	33.33%	9	27
Fontys	18.52%	5	37.04%	10	44.44%	12	27
FTNON Horst	3.70%	1	18.52%	5	77.78%	21	27
Gemeente Horst aan de Maas	11.11%	3	33.33%	9	55.56%	15	27
Gesitrans C2C	3.70%	1	25.93%	7	70.37%	19	27
Gicom	0.00%	0	14.81%	4	85.19%	23	27
Greenyard	3.70%	1	29.63%	8	66.67%	18	27
GTL Europe	14.81%	4	25.93%	7	59.26%	16	27
HAS Hogeschool	29.63%	8	37.04%	10	33.33%	9	27
Hofmans	3.70%	1	18.52%	5	77.78%	21	27
Hollander Spawn BV	11.11%	3	22.22%	6	66.67%	18	27
Legro	21.43%	6	35.71%	10	42.86%	12	28
Limbraco	7.41%	2	37.04%	10	55.56%	15	27
Limgroup	25.93%	7	33.33%	9	40.74%	11	27
Mertens Phormium	44.44%	12	25.93%	7	29.63%	8	27
Monaghan Mushrooms	29.63%	8	48.15%	13	22.22%	6	27
Museum de Locht	14.81%	4	44.44%	12	40.74%	11	27
Mush Comb	11.11%	3	40.74%	11	48.15%	13	27
Mushroom Office	0.00%	0	33.33%	9	66.67%	18	27
Scelta Mushrooms	11.11%	3	51.85%	14	37.04%	10	27

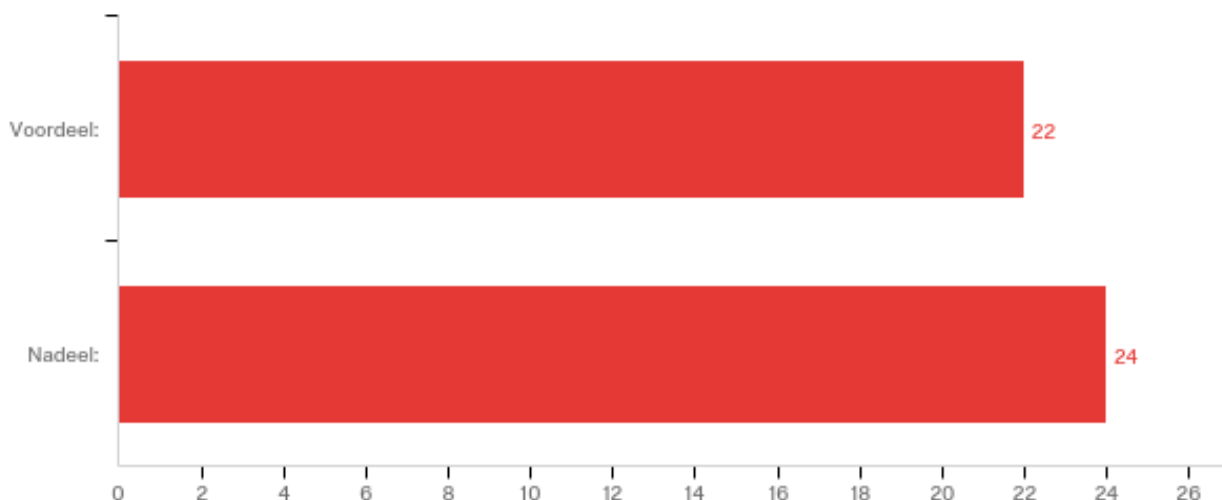
Verstappen Advanced Packaging	11.11 %	3	33.33%	9	55.56 %	15	27
Vullings Systemen	18.52 %	5	37.04%	10	44.44 %	12	27
Wageningen UR	18.52 %	5	40.74%	11	40.74 %	11	27

Q7 - Is de relatie met bedrijven waarmee u intensief samenwerkt, of geregeld contact heeft, veranderd sinds de aanwezigheid van platform Mushroom Valley?

Question	Een samenwerking is ontstaan.		De samenwerking is hetzelfde gebleven (of uitgebleven).		De samenwerking is intensiever geworden.		De samenwerking is minder intensief geworden.		Total
AEM BV	0.00%	0	96.30%	26	0.00%	0	3.70%	1	27
ARCO Solutions	0.00%	0	100.00%	27	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	27
Christiaens Group	0.00%	0	96.30%	26	3.70%	1	0.00%	0	27
Citaverde College	0.00%	0	88.89%	24	11.11%	3	0.00%	0	27
CNC	0.00%	0	96.30%	26	3.70%	1	0.00%	0	27
Delphy	3.70%	1	85.19%	23	11.11%	3	0.00%	0	27
Euroveen BV	0.00%	0	92.59%	25	7.41%	2	0.00%	0	27
Fontys	0.00%	0	92.59%	25	7.41%	2	0.00%	0	27
FTNON Horst	0.00%	0	100.00%	27	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	27
Gemeente Horst aan de Maas	0.00%	0	88.89%	24	11.11%	3	0.00%	0	27
Gesitrans C2C	0.00%	0	96.30%	26	3.70%	1	0.00%	0	27
Gicom	0.00%	0	96.30%	26	3.70%	1	0.00%	0	27
Greenyard	0.00%	0	100.00%	27	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	27
GTL Europe	0.00%	0	96.30%	26	3.70%	1	0.00%	0	27
HAS Hogeschool	3.70%	1	77.78%	21	18.52%	5	0.00%	0	27
Hofmans	0.00%	0	92.59%	25	7.41%	2	0.00%	0	27
Hollander Spawn BV	0.00%	0	100.00%	27	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	27
Legro	0.00%	0	100.00%	28	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	28

Limbraco	0.00%	0	96.30%	26	3.70%	1	0.00%	0	27
Limgroup	0.00%	0	92.59%	25	7.41%	2	0.00%	0	27
Mertens Phormium	0.00%	0	96.30%	26	3.70%	1	0.00%	0	27
Monaghan Mushrooms	0.00%	0	96.30%	26	3.70%	1	0.00%	0	27
Museum de Locht	0.00%	0	92.59%	25	7.41%	2	0.00%	0	27
Mush Comb	0.00%	0	92.59%	25	7.41%	2	0.00%	0	27
Mushroom Office	0.00%	0	96.30%	26	3.70%	1	0.00%	0	27
Scelta Mushrooms	3.70%	1	92.59%	25	3.70%	1	0.00%	0	27
Verstappen Advanced Packaging	0.00%	0	96.30%	26	3.70%	1	0.00%	0	27
Vullings Systemen	0.00%	0	96.30%	26	3.70%	1	0.00%	0	27
Wageningen University & Research	0.00%	0	96.30%	26	3.70%	1	0.00%	0	27

Q8 - Het netwerk van Mushroom Valley is momenteel vooral gepositioneerd in en rondom de gemeente Horst aan de Maas. In hoeverre ziet u dit als een voor- en/of nadeel bij het bereiken van doelen?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Voordeel:	47.83%	22
2	Nadeel:	52.17%	24
	Total	100%	46

Voordeel:

Door focus binnen de regionale samenwerking kan beter contact ontstaan en doelen worden behaald.

Als basis prima

Er is een focus.

De toeleveranciers aan de paddenstoelensector zijn veelal gevestigd in Horst aan de Maas. Een platform moet je ergens laten landen. Horst aan de Maas heeft van oudsher ook een rijke historie met betrekking tot de champignonenteelt.

Duidelijk

Lokaal netwerk met korte lijnen.

Overzichtelijk

Afgebakende regio/doelgroep/netwerk

Regionaal sterke aanwezigheid van key players. focus

Korte lijnen als er wat is, men spreekt dezelfde taal

Geen voordeel

Kern voor activiteiten van oudsher

De meeste toeleveranciers zitten in deze regio

Netwerk en groep bedrijven die elkaar kent en aanvoelt. Echter werkgebied is veel groter.

Horst is in de internationale wereld altijd al het Mekka van de champignonteelt

Belangrijk om hier je basis te hebben, Horst is wereldwijd al bekend als de regio. Dat wil niet zeggen dat andere Nederlandse bedrijven buiten de regio zich niet aan kunnen sluiten, dat moet wel kunnen. Want je wilt NL op de kaart zetten.

Belangrijkste regio snel schakelen

Nabijheid van veel bedrijven die het netwerk vormen

Kerngebied

Met klanten kun je reeltief snel meerdere bedrijven bezoeken

Maakt niets uit

Gewoon laten zoals het is

Nadeel:

Ook positionering richting Den Haag, Brussel en internationaal is belangrijk, ook daar moet men de krachten en kennis van de sector kennen.

Door andere regio's als niet interessant gezien

Sluit niet aan bij marktbewerking en positionering.

In Horst aan de Maas zijn weinig tot geen champignontelers actief. Daarom moet je je niet alleen beperken tot Horst aan de Maas, maar Mushroom Valley = Nederland.

Champignons is een wereldmarkt, netwerk zou de Nederlandse industrie moeten vertegenwoordigen of zelfs euregio.

Wat beperkt

Focus moet op (inter)nationale consumptie liggen. Dit is de basis voor het werk van alle leden van Mushroom Valley.

Erg beperkt

Landelijk trekken

Te beperkt, het gaat om een internationale markt en die ziet NL . je moet niet intern tussen regio's gaan concurreren of beperken

Wij moeten als mushroom valley de kennis en kunde van Nederland presenteren zodat wij een zeer belangrijke speler blijven in de wereld

Voor sommige sectoren is hierdoor de deelname beperkt

Te ver weg

Champignonindustrie in andere regio's kan het mogelijk vooral als een Noord-Limburgs feestje zien

Er zijn meerder platforms op gebied van paddenstoelenteelt. Voor een kleine sector werkt dit verwarrend.

Nationaal zijn er drie centra, Horst, Boekel en Kerkdriel. Dus botst als je alleen Horst promoot..

Potentiele partners van verder weg sluiten zich minder snel aan. Maar voordeel weegt zwaarder dan potentieel nadeel.

Klein nadeel

Daardoor wordt het netwerk onvoldoende serieus genomen. Het is dan te veel een lokaal gebeuren zonder de gewenste uitstraling en autoriteit.

Geen

Lastiger om bedrijven van verder weg te betrekken door de fysieke afstand

Klein

Horst is niet echt bekend in de wereld

Breder biedt wellicht meer kansen

Q9 - Heeft Mushroom Valley volgens u, voor het uitoefenen van haar taken en behalen van de gestelde doelen, een eigen fysieke Mushroom Valley thuisbasis nodig?



■ Ja, bijvoorbeeld: ■ Nee,

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Ja, bijvoorbeeld:	42.86%	12
2	Nee,	57.14%	16
	Total	100%	28

Toelichting, ja:

een klein kantoor
Een platform moet ergens een plek hebben, maar dit mag zeer zeker ook een flexibele plek zijn.
Eigen clubhouse zoals Villa Flora
geeft een gezicht aan het platform.
Iets met een loketfunctie.
in de innovatoren
in Villa Flora tussen andere partijen die samenwerking zoeken
Ja, als dit ook voor de buitenwereld iets toevoegd dmv bijv democentrum
Maar dat kan ook bijvoorbeeld museum de Lucht zijn
maar meer dan alleen een kantoor en vergaderplek. Met name onderzoeksfaciliteiten kunnen voor uitstraling zorgen
Villa flora is prima.

Toelichting, nee:

Dit hangt af van de ambitie die je als groep hebt en de reeds bestaande faciliteiten, een fysieke plek is niet de garantie dat een netwerk gaat functioneren. Het kan in sommige gevallen wel werken. Een goede positionering op de Campus kan wel effect hebben.

ergens in nederland is goed

Geen waarde

is geen voorwaarde

Kan ook van thuis

Kan volgens mij als een virtuele netwerk functioneren

Nee

niet als zijnde bezoekadres. Het blijft eerder een platform/medium dan een fysieke te bezoeken organisatie. Anderzijds als je mensen hebt werken is het wel prettig als die een vaste werkplek hebben. Maar op zich zelf dus niet nodig.

niet direct noodzakkelijk wel wenselijk afhankelijk van de kosten

Onnodige kosten maken. Bijeenkomsten kunnen bij de leden worden georganiseerd.. De jaarlijkse bijdrage is al vrij hoog.

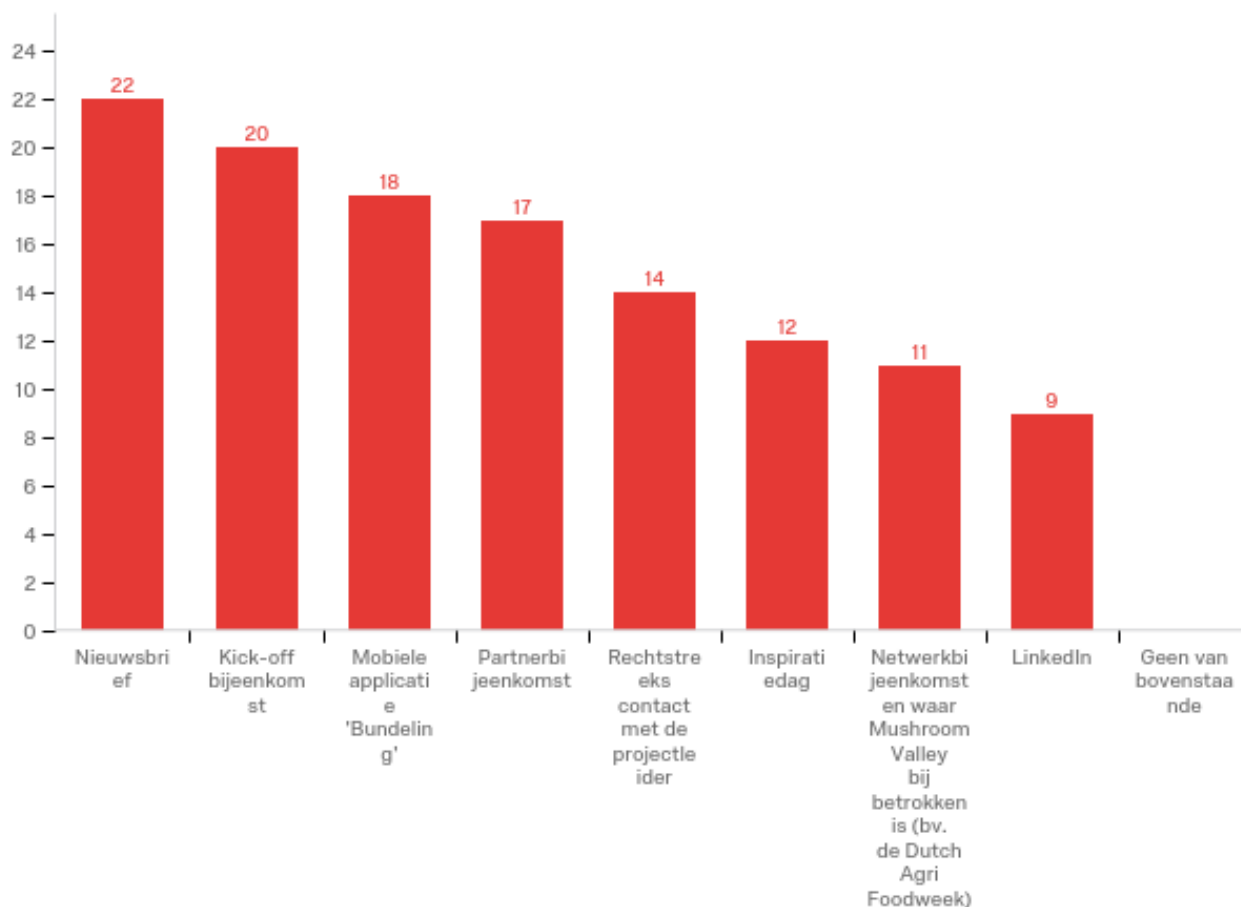
zie hier geen toegevoegde waarde in

zie niet direct de meerwaarde

zoals nu laten

Q10 - Van welke van onderstaande communicatiemogelijkheden maakt u momenteel gebruik of heeft u het afgelopen jaar gebruik gemaakt?

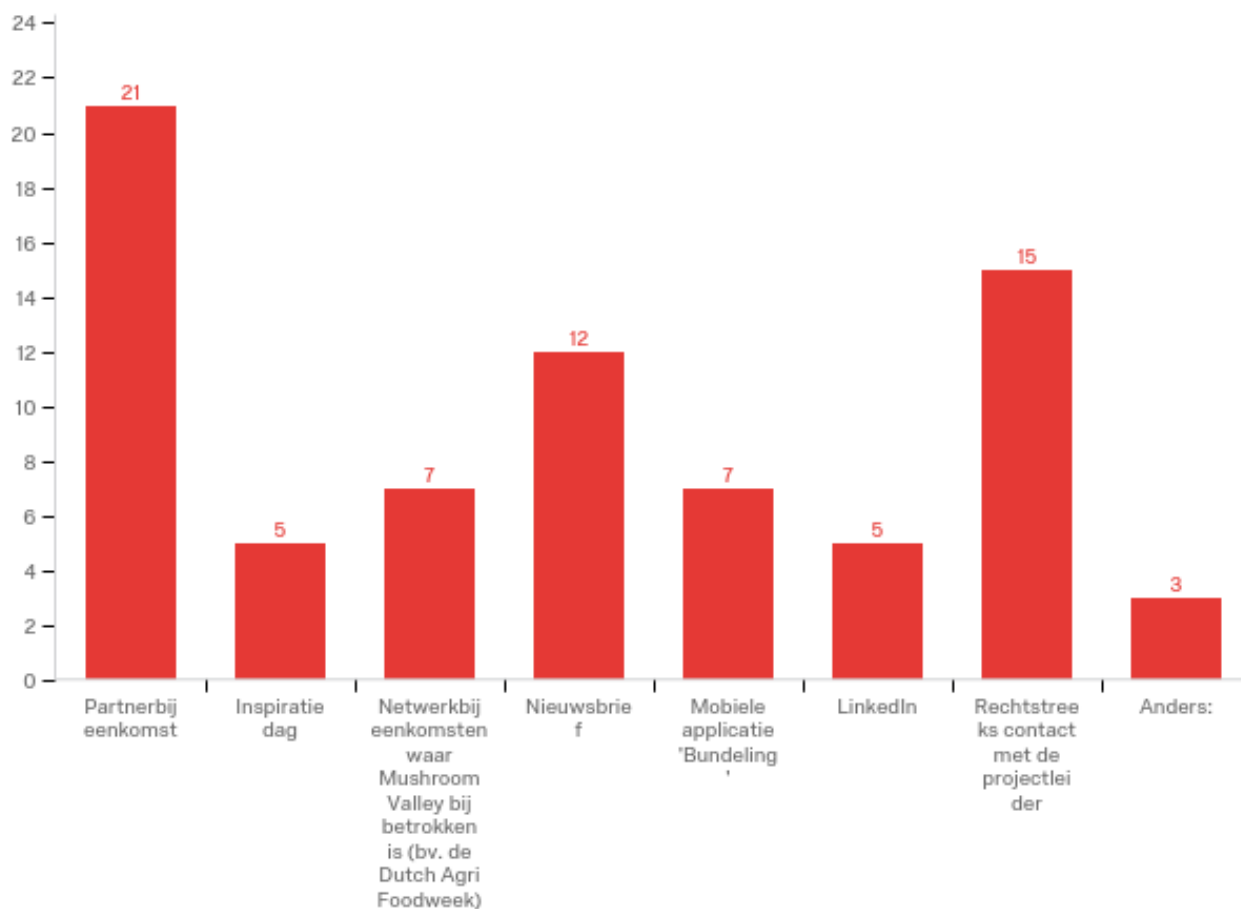
(Meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Kick-off bijeenkomst	16.26%	20
2	Partnerbijeenkomst	13.82%	17
3	Inspiratiedag	9.76%	12
4	Netwerkbijeenkomsten waar Mushroom Valley bij betrokken is (bv. de Dutch Agri Foodweek)	8.94%	11
5	Nieuwsbrief	17.89%	22
6	Mobiele applicatie 'Bundeling'	14.63%	18
7	LinkedIn	7.32%	9
8	Rechtstreeks contact met de projectleider	11.38%	14
9	Geen van bovenstaande	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	123

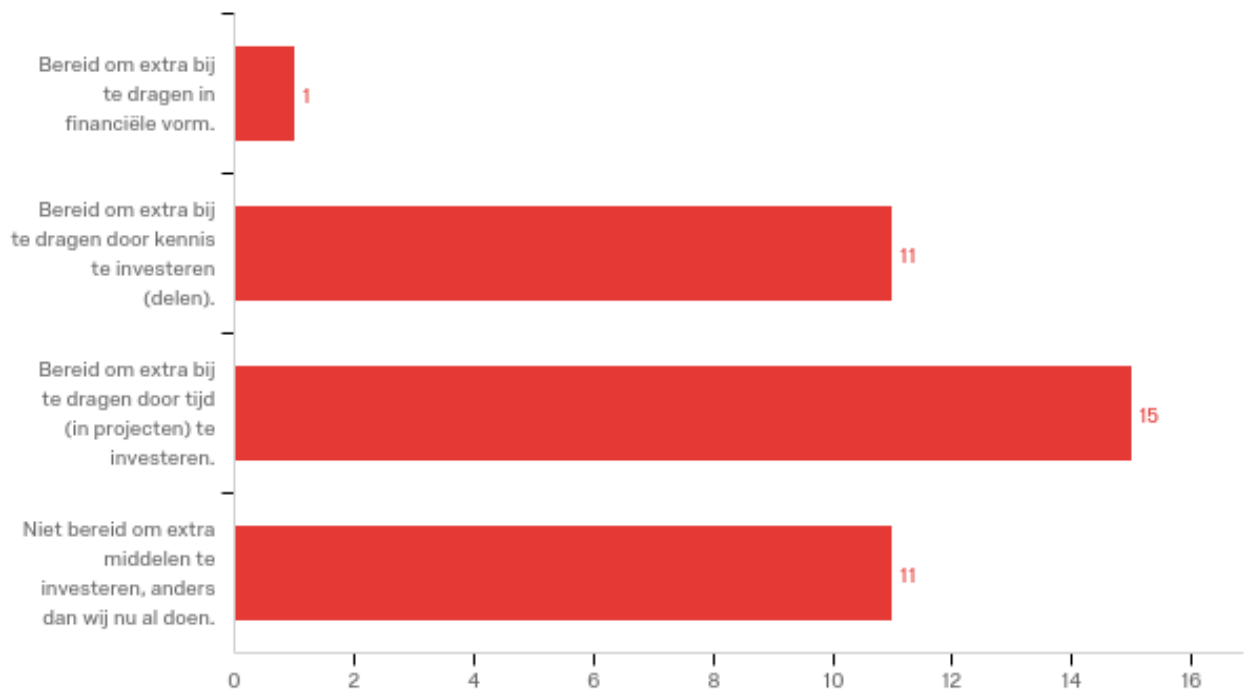
Q11 - Welke communicatiemogelijkheid heeft uw voorkeur?

(Maximaal 3 antwoorden mogelijk)



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Partnerbijeenkomst	28.00%	21
2	Inspiratiedag	6.67%	5
3	Netwerkbijeenkomsten waar Mushroom Valley bij betrokken is (bv. de Dutch Agri Foodweek)	9.33%	7
4	Nieuwsbrief	16.00%	12
5	Mobiele applicatie 'Bundeling'	9.33%	7
6	LinkedIn	6.67%	5
7	Rechtstreeks contact met de projectleider	20.00%	15
8	Anders:	4.00%	3
	Total	100%	75

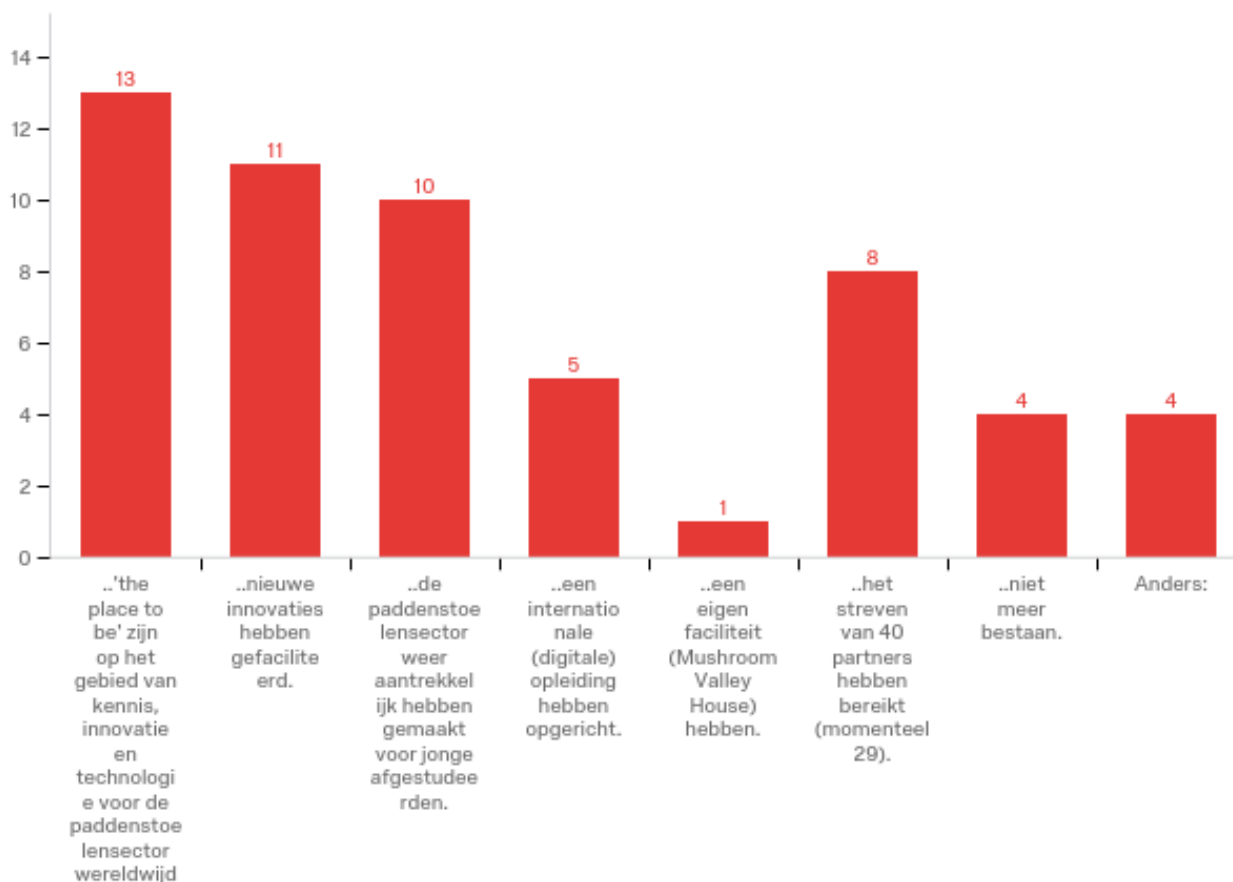
Q12 - Om bij te dragen aan een sterk platform Mushroom Valley, zijn wij als bedrijf: (Maximaal 2 antwoorden mogelijk)



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Bereid om extra bij te dragen in financiële vorm.	2.63%	1
2	Bereid om extra bij te dragen door kennis te investeren (delen).	28.95%	11
3	Bereid om extra bij te dragen door tijd (in projecten) te investeren.	39.47%	15
4	Niet bereid om extra middelen te investeren, anders dan wij nu al doen.	28.95%	11
	Total	100%	38

Q13 - Wat zijn uw verwachtingen ten opzichte van het platform; over twee jaar zal Mushroom Valley..

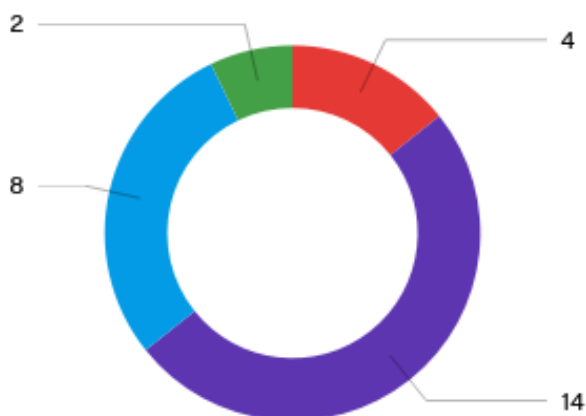
(Meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)



#	Answer	%	Count
1	..'the place to be' zijn op het gebied van kennis, innovatie en technologie voor de paddenstoelensector wereldwijd.	23.21%	13
2	..nieuwe innovaties hebben gefaciliteerd.	19.64%	11
3	..de paddenstoelensector weer aantrekkelijk hebben gemaakt voor jonge afgestudeerden.	17.86%	10
4	..een internationale (digitale) opleiding hebben opgericht.	8.93%	5
5	..een eigen faciliteit (Mushroom Valley House) hebben.	1.79%	1
6	..het streven van 40 partners hebben bereikt (momenteel 29).	14.29%	8
7	..niet meer bestaan.	7.14%	4
8	Anders:	7.14%	4
	Total	100%	56

Q14 - Bij het aangaan van een lidmaatschap bij Mushroom Valley is de intentie uitgesproken om na 3 jaar het lidmaatschap te evalueren. Wanneer er nu een tussentijdse evaluatie wordt gehouden, denkt u dat de samenwerking tussen u en Mushroom Valley de komende jaren zal continueren?

(Eén antwoord mogelijk)



■ Als na 3 jaar (bijna) alle doelen zijn bereikt, houdt mijn lidmaatschap op. Toelichting mogelijk:

■ Als na 3 jaar (bijna) alle doelen zijn bereikt, vieren wij dit succes graag mee door ons lidmaatschap te continueren.

■ Het behalen van successen heeft geen invloed op het al dan niet continueren. Na deze periode blijven wij graag ons steentje bijdragen en verlengen ons lidmaatschap. Toelichting mogelijk:

■ Het behalen van successen heeft geen invloed op het al dan niet continueren. Na deze periode dragen wij het stokje graag over en nemen wij afscheid van Mushroom Valley. Toelichting mogelijk:

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Als na 3 jaar (bijna) alle doelen zijn bereikt, houdt mijn lidmaatschap op. Toelichting mogelijk:	14.29%	4
2	Als na 3 jaar (bijna) alle doelen zijn bereikt, vieren wij dit succes graag mee door ons lidmaatschap te continueren.	50.00%	14
3	Het behalen van successen heeft geen invloed op het al dan niet continueren. Na deze periode blijven wij graag ons steentje bijdragen en verlengen ons lidmaatschap. Toelichting mogelijk:	28.57%	8
4	Het behalen van successen heeft geen invloed op het al dan niet continueren. Na deze periode dragen wij het stokje graag over en nemen wij afscheid van Mushroom Valley. Toelichting mogelijk:	7.14%	2

Toelichting, #1

doelstelling leveranciers is anders als van kennisinstelling

Op dit moment is de toegevoegde waarde van Mushroom Valley voor ons bedrijf te beperkt. Los van het behalen van doelen dienen we goed te bekijken hoe een toekomst er uit zou moeten zien. Het besluit is nog niet genomen maar de overweging gaat op termijn zeker komen. Het geheel is nu te industrieel gericht, naar de machine bouw en te weinig teelt en vermarkten.

te weinig output

Toelichting, #2

Dan heeft deze beweging zich bewezen

Dit is het oorspronkelijke gedachtengoed; echter beoordelen we jaarlijks hoe Mushroom Valley binnen onze eigen strategie past.

ja

Toelichting, #3

Toelichting lijkt me overbodig

antwoord is duidelijk, toch?

Bij andere vraag staat '(bijna) alle doelen'. Wat zijn die doelen? Als Mushroom Valley bijdraagt aan Nederland als place to be op de kaart zetten, en we opleidingen terug krijgen, en er stappen met big data worden gezet. Dus die 3 peilers. Dan is dat een continue proces en blijven we altijd lid.

De sector zal altijd behoefte houden aan onderzoek en innovatie

Ja

na drie jaar zullen we niet klaar zijn.

Nvt

s jaar is kort om alle doelen te bereiken. Het kan meer tijd kosten

Q15 - Heeft u naar aanleiding van deze enquête nog aanvullingen, vragen, opmerkingen en/of tips voor Mushroom Valley?

plan activiteiten ruim van te voren en bij voorkeur overdag. dus geen ontbijten en avondsessies. daarbij wordt aangenomen dat deelnemers in de buurt wonen en dat is niet altijd hetgeval.

Op dit moment doen wij zeer weinig in de champignon sector. onze activiteiten zijn verschoven richting de afvalverwerkingssector. uiteraard blijven wij nog altijd onze bestaande klanten ondersteunen. met vriendelijke groeten, W Feiken

Focus op het behalen van 1 of 2 doelen

Die eerste vraag over samenwerkingen met leden, daar zit soms wat meer nuance achter. Maar ok ik weet het doel van die vraag niet maar wil bij deze wel melden dat de 3 keuze's over de andere leden wellicht de weinig genuanceerd waren.

Wij hebben inmiddels al besloten om terug te treden uit het netwerk

Zorg dat er ook een zakelijk belang is bij de leden

