# Interview guide - Digital service outsourcing, case study of HAL

Notes to the interviewer:

- The interviews are semi-structured, and require room for improvisation. Only use the material that is suitable to the conversation, and follow up according to relevance
- When the interviewee brings up new concepts, ask them to explain their understanding of it.
- It is intentional not to bring up concepts for the interviewee to use. They should bring ut these concepts themselves and explain them. (E.g. "data driven")
- "To do"-items are marked with * *
- Items dependant on specific given information are marked with [ ]
- *Ask about audio recording specifically before starting*

**Summary:**

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# 1. Information and agreement

<u>1.1 Case description:</u>

This interview will be a part of a case study of HAL and specifically strategic outsourcing, SO. The study itself is part of my master's thesis, where I explore how SO is delivered, in order to potentially identify some areas that could be improved, according to previous research on development of infrastructures and information systems.

The main motivation for the study we are looking at a hypothesis given by the ker representative, stating that "there is potential to do strategic outsourcing in a better way". However, as this is a broad assumption, we have narrowed down the scope to be realistic for the thesis, and chosen to look at the transformation, phase specifically. The intention is to maximize our efforts by looking at a shorter phase thoroughly, rather than just the surface of a larger process. Additionally by looking at the early stages and how the conditions are set up for the longer steady state, we can potentially initiate ways for creating better conditions, which in its turn will yield more value to the stakeholders involved.

*Check if the interviewee is following so far*

Even though we want to be focusing on the early stages, it does not mean that all activities happening outside this phase is irrelevant. On the contrary, it's in our interest to investigate how any activity effects or is affected by the the early stages. To clarify, activities are considered to be anything that goes on within the project. Examples could be routines, the use of a tool, communication in any way, meetings and so on.

For this interview I/we want to get insight into the [engagement/ transformation/ steady state/ processes] in SO. First of all we want to learn more about your part in a SO project, and then move on to issues you have observed during SO projects. By getting different views and details from key positions we will in the end be able to an in depth analysis of the way SO, and the early stages, is delivered and be able to provide valuable insight from an academic point of view. With this insight we hope to be able to suggest some potential areas for further research on alterations of strategic outsourcing to increase business value for HAL.

*Check* Do you have any questions to the study at this point?

1.2 Research perspective *Only use when suitable*

From a research perspective we will be using a sociotechnical approach to explain SO. Within this literature it is essential to understand that technology and human interaction is intertwined, so when one change the technology people are using it is also necessary to "change", or teach, the people in order for them to use the technology to its full extent and intention.

This theory is partly derived from research looking at the effects of standardization, and how standardization makes the use of systems more efficient. At the same time, unique variations in systems are necessary due to the uniqueness of each customer (and/or department) or their needs. In these cases, the lack of tailoring solutions only lead to the people working around the systems to fit their needs instead of the systems actually helping them in their work.

Assuming that IBM provides high quality technical solutions for their customers. It is very interesting to investigate how the SO, and specifically the early stages, process affect the usefulness or value of the solutions delivered.

1.3 Agreement of consent

The study has been reported to the Norwegian Centre for Research Data, and is under the regulations of the Norwegian laws and regulations of privacy. We do not have the right or intention to disclose any information given to us concerning

In order to maintain the privacy of all actors involved, HAL and any business specifics will be generalized in the master thesis. Your name will be anonymized, however your position might be necessary to include to describe our findings.

After the interview you will receive a transcript where you will be able to can revise all the editions made to maintain privacy, in addition to proofread citations.

*Check* You have received a consent form by email, this is concerning us handling your contact information, and your participation in the study. Do you still give consent to participate?

## 2. Introduction and position specifics

We will start with a few basics before we get into the more complicated matters:

### 2.1 Title, history, training/education

*First of all, could you give a brief introduction of yourself and your time at HAL?*

### 2.2 What is strategic service outsourcing?

*How would you explain strategic service outsourcing to me/us that is not familiar with it?*
*Is there an example you could use to describe it?*

### 2.3 Responsibilities, chain of commands

From the material given I understand that you [work with/ are involved in/ handle xxx]...

*Can you elaborate on your position, what are your responsibilities and duties?*
*What kind of information is essential to you in order to perform well in your position?*
*To whom do you report to?*

### 2.4 Relevance to SO

*Could you give an example of how you are involved with SO in your position?*
*Is this the only way you have been involved, or do you have examples of other ways you have worked with SO?*

*Follow up for details as needed*
*What was your role specifically in the example mentioned?*
*How often are you involved with SO this way?*


## 3. RQ1: Understanding of service outsourcing

Now I/we would like to talk more about the strategic outsourcing itself. I would like to understand who is involved, what a typical timeline look like, and which routines, processes and tools are used. Let us start off with the involved parties.

### 3.1 Stakeholders

*You have talked about [x and y] in the example given, are these the only involved parties or stakeholders? What were the other stakeholders?*
*How were you and your work dependant on other parties in (the relevant part) of the SO?*
        Potentially: *How were you dependant on the early stages?*
*In what way were others dependant on you and your delivery?*
        Potentially: *How was the early stages dependant on you?*
*Is the given example a typical description of involved stakeholders, or have you been involved in other variations?*

### 3.2 Timeline

Moving on to the timeline; in your example you have described [relevant timed processes],
*Could you elaborate on the timeline in [the relevant process]?*

*How are the involved parties dependant on the timeliness of others?*
*Is the given example a typical description of the timeline in [relevant phase], or are there more variations?*

*Follow up for details as needed**
*What happens when, and in what order? Who are involved in which process?*


<u>3.3 Tools</u>

*Try to create flow depending on the conversation**
You have brought up that [x] is used... For [processes mentioned], what types of tools are used in this process? You have talked about [x] in your examples, can you explain how this is used?

*Which types of tools and routines do <u>you</u> use during a [SO-project/relevant phase]? What are they used for?*

*Follow up for details as needed**
*How are the tools used? Do you depend on them? Do they depend on someone/something? Can you give examples of projects where other tools were used?*


<u>3.4 Processes/ routines/activities</u>

(Potential key elements: Communication, coordination, cooperation, stakeholders interests throughout a project, human resource management, flow of information)

*In the given example you speak about [x element], what is the importance of this in SO?*
*Can you elaborate on other activities you participated in during the example given?*
*Do you have examples where routines were followed differently?*
*What is done to ensure the quality of [relevant process]?*

*Follow up for details as needed**
*It would seem like [x] plays a great part in SO due to [complexity, coordination difficulties etc.], how is this handled? What is process on ensuring high quality of this?*
*In what phase of the project is this relevant/the most relevant?*
*How does one handle [x] throughout a SO-project?*
*Do you have examples of other [activities/ routines/ processes] that are important in [relevant phase and/or the early stages]?*

## 4. RQ2: Understanding challenges in service outsourcing

Thank you for sharing so far, is there anything you would like to add before we more on to issues and improvements? *Check* Great, then I would like you to talk more about frustrating situations or issues that you have encountered.
*Pay close attention to this part, follow up what is said**


<u>4.1 Challenges with SO</u>

(Potential key elements: Issues, frustrations, perceived problems, challenges)

*You mentioned [x], could you elaborate more on this issue?*
*Do you have any frustrations with or during strategic service outsourcing in general?*
*Is there anything that creates challenges during a SO-project in your experience?*

*Is this typical for SO-projects? How often do you encounter this issue?*
*In what phase of the project is this challenging/the most challenging?*

4.2 Understanding of challenges

*Why do you think [the challenging situations] happens?*
*What kind of needs have to be addressed to improve the situation?*
*Who needs this in a SO project? When do they need it?*
*What are the consequences of [relevant challenge]? Are there specific consequences for the early stages?*

4.3 Envisioned solution

*What would make the situation easier/better?*
*Is there other things that could be done in a better way during a SO project?*
*What kind of information would make your position easier to manage?*
*Is there any information you would benefit from accessing at an earlier stage?*

## 5. Concluding remarks

*Provide a summary, example as follows:*

Throughout this interview we have talked about strategic outsourcing, your role as [position/role in SO], and the challenges you have encountered in this process. Specifically you have described how [relevant phase/process] is conducted/delivered.

Additionally you have pointed at [relevant challenges], and indicated that [something] might be the reason for this challenge. Further you have described how [envisioned solution] could help to solve this issue.

*Check* Is there anything more you would like to add?

I will be transcribing the interview and edit it to ensure your privacy, and maintain business confidentials. When this is done, I would like for you to proofread the material before I continue the analysis. This is both to ensure correct quotations, as well as provide a quality check for you.

*Check* Are you open to receiving and reading through the transcript?
Potentially: Do you give [anyone else] permission to check the material on your behalf?

Depending on the upcoming analysis and its findings it might be in our interest to conduct a second round of interviews. *Check* Are you open to participating in another interview?

If you are interested in the findings of the study, the master thesis is due in december this year. A digital version will be shared with Derek, and if you would like we could share it with you as well.

*Check* Do you have any further questions or comments before we end this session?

Thank you so much for your time and cooperation.