MANAGING MARKETING IN THE DIGITAL ERA: EVALUATION OF AGILE METHODOLOGIES IN MARKETING

**Jyväskylä University School
of Business and Economics**

Master's thesis

2022

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Subject: Digital Marketing and Corporate Communication
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ABSTRACT

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Tittle of thesis	
Managing marketing in the digital era: Evaluation of agile methodologies in marketing	
Subject	Type of work
Digital Marketing and Corporate Communication	Master's thesis
Date	Number of pages
May 2022	60

Abstract

The world is changing at a radical speed, and everything around us is becoming more digital every day. This affects businesses and even the daily lives of people. There is a crucial need for organizations to be able to adapt quickly to the changing conditions. Digital dynamics are also disrupting marketing. As in a fast-changing environment, actions need to occur quickly to respond to the continuously evolving customer needs. There has been extensive amount of research on agile methodologies from the software development perspective, but research from the marketing perspective is still lacking.

The key concepts of the theoretical framework include marketing in the digital era, agile methodologies and agile marketing. These concepts were selected to further understand the research context.

The primary context of this study was to evaluate to which extent agile methodologies are suitable for marketing purposes. The empirical part of the study focuses on the motives, prerequisites, benefits, and challenges of agile methodologies in marketing. The study followed a qualitative research approach, and the empirical data was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews. Seven marketing experts were interviewed remotely during December 2020 to February 2021 to acknowledge insights about the use of agile methodologies for marketing purposes. A thematic analysis was made to analyse the data and further interpret and generalize the findings.

The basis of the study depends on the experiences of the marketing experts who use agile methodologies in their daily work. The study reveals that there is a connection between the results and previous research on agile methodologies mainly focusing on software development. Additionally, the study indicates that agile methodologies may be suitable for marketing organizations and teams when considering certain prerequisites and challenges. Based on the results, the methodologies can be used to gain business advantages.

Keywords:
Agile methodologies, agile marketing, digital marketing, agile, scrum, kanban

Place of storage: Jyväskylä University Library

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tekijä	
Elisa Pesonen	
Työn nimi	
Markkinoinnin johtaminen digitaalisella aikakaudella: Ketterien menetelmien arviointi markkinoinnissa	
Oppiaine	Työn laji
Digital Marketing and Corporate Communication	Pro gradu -tutkielma
Päivämäärä	Sivumäärä
Toukokuu 2022	60

Tiivistelmä

Maailma muuttuu radikaalia vauhtia, ja kaikki ympärillämme on digitaalisempaa joka päivä. Tämä vaikuttaa laajasti organisaatioiden toimintaan ja jopa ihmisten jokapäiväiseen elämään. Organisaatioilla on keskeinen tarve sopeutua nopeasti muuttuviin olosuhteisiin. Muuttuva toimintaympäristö vaikuttaa kriittisesti myös markkinointia. Kuten nopeasti muuttuvassa ympäristössä, toimenpiteiden on tapahduttava nopeasti vastatakseen jatkuvasti muuttuviin asiakkaiden tarpeisiin. Ketteristä menetelmistä on tehty laajaa tutkimusta ohjelmistokehityksen näkökulmasta, mutta markkinoinnin näkökulmasta tutkimus on edelleen vajavainen.

Teoreettisen viitekehyksen keskeisiä käsitteitä ovat markkinointi digitaalisella aikakaudella, ketterät menetelmät ja ketterä markkinointi. Nämä käsitteet valittiin tutkimuksen kontekstin ymmärtämiseksi paremmin.

Tämän tutkimuksen ensisijaisena päämääränä oli arvioida, missä määrin ketterät menetelmät soveltuvat markkinointitarkoituksiin. Tutkimuksen empiirinen osa keskittyy ketterien menetelmien motiiveihin, edellytyksiin, hyötyihin ja haasteisiin markkinoinnissa. Tutkimuksessa noudatettiin kvalitatiivista tutkimuslähestymistapaa ja empiirinen aineisto kerättiin tekemällä puolistrukturoituja haastatteluja. Seitsemää markkinoinnin asiantuntijaa haastateltiin etänä joulukuun 2020 ja helmikuun 2021 välisenä aikana, jotta saatiin tietoa ketterän menetelmän käytöstä markkinointitarkoituksiin. Temaattinen analyysi tehtiin aineiston analysoimiseksi sekä tulosten edelleen tulkitsemiseksi ja yleistämiseksi.

Tutkimuksen perusta riippuu ketteriä menetelmiä päivittäisessä työssään käyttävien markkinoinnin asiantuntijoiden kokemuksista. Tutkimus paljastaa, että tulosten ja aiemman, pääasiassa ohjelmistokehitykseen keskittyneen ketterien menetelmien tutkimuksen välillä on yhteys. Lisäksi tutkimus osoittaa, että ketterät menetelmät voivat sopia markkinointiorganisaatioille ja -tiimeille ottaen huomioon tietyt edellytykset ja haasteet. Tulosten perusteella menetelmillä voidaan saavuttaa liiketoimintaetuja.

Asiasanat:
Ketterät menetelmät, agile, ketterä markkinointi, digitaalinen markkinointi, scrum, kanban

Säilytyspaikka: Jyväskylän yliopiston kirjasto

CONTENTS

1   INTRODUCTION

The world is changing at a radical speed and everything around us is becoming more digital every day, reshaping businesses, and the daily lives of people regardless of geography, company size, or industry. There is a crucial need for organizations to adapt, move and assess quicker due to global events such as the Covid-19 pandemic that changed conditions and forced people and companies to transform (Lewnes, 2021). Besides, digital dynamics are disrupting sales, marketing, product development, customers' expectations, and the competitive landscape with more information, opportunities, and obstacles. Already more than a quarter of a century ago Takeuchi and Nonaka (1986) indicated that it takes more than low cost, differentiation, and high quality to strive in the competitive market, it takes speed and flexibility. Therefore, there is pressure for managers to adopt a more customer-centric and flexible way to stay ahead of the competition with growing speed (Bohnsack & Liesner, 2019).

Future marketing demands growth that thrives on innovativeness, adaption to disruption, customer engagement, and strategic collaboration with the entirety of the business. Lewnes (2021) reveals that now more than ever the abilities to identify and monitor change in the market environment and customers, rapidly react and shift direction, and frequently estimate impact in real-time are requirements for all marketers. As in a fast-changing environment, actions need to occur quickly to respond to the continuously evolving customer needs. Due to the digital transformation, new channels emerge constantly, and customer data is amending marketing, and marketing agility is becoming a mandate.

Brinker (2016, p. 15) describes that in the ever-changing digital environment, the traditional approaches to marketing management such as top-down structure and classic marketing plans do not work efficiently under the pressure of digital turbulence. Hence, digital environments facilitate opportunities within agility, innovation, and scalability. Instead of the out-dated planning route, initial ideas and their results can be used to refine a marketing campaign with "test, learn and commit" loops to enable up-to-date plans (Conway & Hemphill, 2019). Agile methodologies are not universally defined in the literature, indicating complexity and multidimensionality. In the context of this study, agile can be shortly defined as the desire and readiness to accept change and further create and learn from it.

Agile methodologies have increased success rates in quality, speed to market, motivation, productivity in the field of software development over the past 30 years (Rigby et al., 2016). Dingsøyr et al. (2012) describe agility to be a quick adaption to the internal and external environments that can further improve operating performance, customer satisfaction, and quality. Abrahamsson et al. (2002) on the other hand argue that a project is agile when it is incremental, cooperative, straightforward, and adaptive. Moreover, agile methodologies aim to promote organizational alignment, resource efficiency, and market leadership to

address new challenges (Paquette & Frankl, 2015, pp. 3-4). As marketing is moving more towards aspects of software development, similar management practices and mindset should be utilized for marketing to enable speed and adaptability (Brinker, 2016 p. 53).

This thesis reviews agile methodologies from a marketing perspective. The thesis uses the term "agile marketing", which is defined as an ability to sense marketing opportunities, respond quickly, satisfy customer needs, act flexibly, seek opportunities, and anticipate proactively (Zhou et al., 2019). Agile methodologies are used to attain agile marketing. The thesis considers the core characteristics of agility to be responsiveness, speed, culture of change, flexibility, integration, and low complexity (Sherehiy et al., 2007).

The thesis consists of research about the use of agile methodologies in marketing functions. The thesis reviews complementary mindsets including iterative processes, testing and experimenting, cross-functional teams, and transparent and open communication. Moreover, the research aims to reveal what kind of motives, prerequisites, benefits, and challenges of agile methodologies are there in marketing setting. The view on agile marketing is complemented with in-depth interviews of 7 marketing experts with experience in the use of agile methodologies in marketing. The semi-structured interviews lasted between 22 minutes to 55 minutes.

1.1 Research gap

Boudet et al. (2020) argue that the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the challenges of marketing managers and indicated the need of fundamental rethinking of marketing models. In response, scholarly research has noted that marketing must be "agile" and there is a need for new organizational models (Moorman, 2020). Although, still in the context of marketing, agile methodologies are not much researched and agile capabilities are lacking empirical and theoretical research specifically in marketing (Moi & Cabiddu, 2021). Also, Brinker (2016, p. 2.) reasons that there are books and research articles about new strategies and tactics for marketing, but the management of those different strategies and tactics has received less attention. Thus, Moi and Cabiddu (2021) found that there is a lack of understanding especially on what the components are to be able to develop agile marketing capabilities.

Scholars have discussed agile practices to have a positive impact on marketing performance, and that it may be a success factor in the changing environment (Alford & Page, 2015; Zhou et al., 2019; Vaillant & Lafuente, 2019). Besides, Homburg et al. (2020) suggest that marketing agility is a key priority to succeed marketing excellence. Thus, they question what agile marketing stands for, is it application of agile methodologies to marketing, or does it rely on simplified structures and test-and-learn approach. It is also highlighted that there are growing concerns of the agile methodologies' efficacy since the benefits may be recognized only when the approach is applied in a correct way, in a right place and for

right reasons. Besides, Abramovich (2018) concerns that agile methodologies are not suitable for certain situations including long sales cycles.

The use of agile methodologies has been studied in software development increasingly since the year 2000 (Dybå & Dingsøyr, 2008). Positive results of using agile methodologies have been accomplished in the software development, which has increased the amount of interest and awareness of agile methodologies (Cooper & Sommer, 2016). Although, Abrahamsson et al. (2009) claim that there is no comprehensive research with enough data to support the claims of positive results of agile methodologies. Nevertheless, as software developers have gained successes, the new management concepts could be useful in marketing, as it shares similar creative and intellectual disciplines, and increasing amount of change and innovation.

Cooper and Sommer (2016) suggest that in general the suitability of agile methodologies in a different context is questioned, even when agile software development has been progressively researched within the last decades. Therefore, there is a need for more empirical studies (Dybå & Dingsøyr, 2008). Also, Dingsøyr et al. (2012) propose that agile practices should be extended and researched beyond the software teams. Thus, Abrahamsson et al. (2009) state that the practices and their application should be understood better in different contexts.

In this research, the aim is to enable insights to the use of agile marketing methodologies in modern marketing organizations and teams. As mentioned, agile methodologies have been researched broadly in terms of software development, whereas there is a lack of research from the marketing perspective. Therefore, this research sheds light to the current scene of marketing, the impact of digitalization, and how agile methodologies are used and how they fit in the current turbulent marketing environment. The changing nature of business environments provide compelling viewpoint to the challenge of managing marketing that remains following traditional frameworks while digitalization increases.

The thesis proposes a problem, cause, and solution, which are as follows. The problem is that the environment is getting more and more dynamic, and although some organizations are improving productivity, speed to market, and customer and employee satisfaction, various organizations and functions are struggling. The cause is that even when agile methodologies are spreading beyond information technology to other functions, agile is not understood by the leaders, and conventional management practices are used. The solution is to understand the basics of agile, and the conditions it, in addition to the motivation, requirements, challenges, and benefits. (Rigby et al., 2016.)

1.2   Research questions and contribution

The thesis explores how agile methodologies are currently used in marketing practices, what kind factors motivate marketing executives in adopting and implementing agile methodologies, and what are the requirements, challenges, and

benefits of using such methodologies. The study makes assumptions on whether agile methodologies may be the right approach to follow in today's turbulent market environment. The thesis introduces agile methodologies and the most used frameworks, and further analyses, what kind of principles and practices are currently used in marketing functions. Besides, the thesis discusses why agility is necessary for marketing context and how it should be adapted.

RQ1: What factors motivate the organizations to adopt and implement agile methodologies for marketing purposes?

SQ1: What kind of prerequisites are required to use agile methodologies for marketing purposes?
SQ2: How do agile methodologies benefit the marketing practices?
SQ3: What kind of challenges an organization faces in using agile methodologies for marketing purposes?

The research questions were defined based on the theoretical research on agile methodologies. In order to explore the factors that motivate organizations to adopt and implement agile methodologies in marketing, it was determined to be necessary to look into the requirements, challenges, and benefits of such methodologies for marketing purposes to further define the different perspectives behind the motivation. The first sub-question determines the prerequisites the organization has to consider when adopting agile methodologies, as the methodologies are estimated to not be suitable in certain environments. Moreover, the second sub-question seeks to advance the understanding of the benefits of using agile methodologies in marketing practices to further assess how these benefits may impact the motivational factors. Lastly, the third sub-question evaluates the challenges that may appear while using them for marketing purposes to count if the challenges cause factors that influence the motivation.

1.3 Thesis structure

The thesis consists of theoretical section, which gives the base for the research that focuses on exploring the motives, prerequisites, challenges, and benefits for implementing agile marketing methodologies. The study begins by introducing the problem and motivation for the research following with the definition of objectives. Moreover, the theoretical framework of the study creates a background of the empirical section. Lastly, the study suggests to address the challenges of marketing in the digital era through agile methodologies.

The theoretical framework of the study is outlined based on existing literature and journals of agile methodologies and agile marketing. Furthermore, the existing literature and journals were thoroughly inspected to find theories, key concepts and relevant information related to the study subject. In addition, relevant journals were examined to seek current information on digital marketing to

further reason the motivation of using agile methodologies in marketing. Lastly, journals on agile methodologies in information technology context were assessed to understand the background of the methodologies.

The research methodology chapter of the thesis explains the complete research methodology and the procedures of data gathering of the study. Further, the chapter presents the background information of the study including interview protocol and the sample group of the research.

The discussion chapter of the thesis examines the key empirical findings o the research. Moreover, the chapter describes the study findings in paragraphs, quotes and a table that includes the main results separated based on the defined themes. The summary table demonstrates the similarities and overlaps of each study participant and theme.

The conclusions chapter of the thesis addresses the research results in the light of literature. The research results are reflected towards the theoretical framework and further analysis is done to achieve an interpretive synthesis. Besides, this chapter overviews the research questions and aims to provide through answers to them. Lastly, the conclusions chapter discusses the managerial implications and limitations of the study, in addition to, directions for future research.

Introduction → Theretical framework → Research methodology → Discussion → Conclusions

Figure 2. Structure of the research.

2   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework focuses on three concepts: digital marketing in the digital era, and agile methodologies including the concept of agile marketing. The concept of marketing in the digital era explains the current state of marketing, and challenges as well as solutions of marketing in the digital era. Furthermore, the concept of agile methodologies fills in the definition of agile, the background of agile, challenges, requirements and opportunities faced in using agile methodologies, in addition to the exploration of selected agile frameworks and their practices. Besides, the agile methodologies section explores agile methodologies from a marketing perspective through the concept of agile marketing
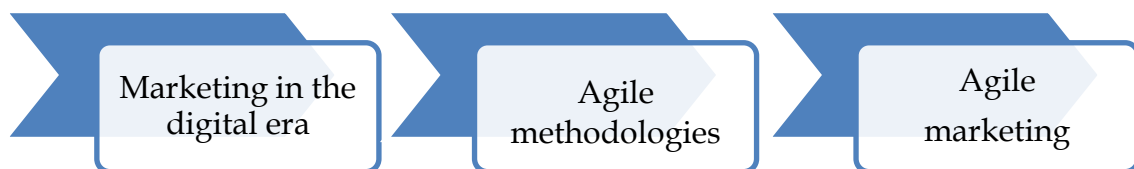
Figure 3. Modeling the whole of the theory.

2.1   Marketing in the digital era

A near quarter of a century ago the Internet and the World Wide Web were introduced to the people, ever since the business landscape has changed and the key players have emerged to the modern economy (Kannan, 2017). The rapid development of technology has led to a world that is in a permanent stage of change. Besides, the development of technology and globalization are advancing innovation, competitiveness, and economic growth all around the world. This chapter examines the state of marketing in the digital era and the challenges that may occur.

The world is changing from a "world with digital" to a digital-only world, which makes successful customer experiences a competitive requirement (Lewnes, 2021). Abramovich (2017) argues that organizations must be renewed to face the fundamentally changed economy where impact, speed and scope are operating at a completely different velocity than a decade ago. The rewire of or-

ganizations demand technological abilities including strong analytical capabilities to enable on-time decision making, a culture of testing to reveal customers' expectations, and strong digital platforms that enable optimization and personalization (Lewnes, 2021).

2.1.1 Current state of digital marketing

Marketing has long been a crucial corporate function and is used to gain new consumers and nurture existing ones. Kotler's (2011) definition notes that marketing is about developing, engaging, and supplying consumers with satisfaction and sustaining established relationships. While there have been many improvements in marketing in academic science and practice, there is a continuing question about its importance (Strandvik et al., 2014). Although most small businesses tend to fail within 10 years of being established, marketing is argued to be a key factor for those who survive (Morris et al., 2002). During recent years, marketing has increased in magnitude at the same time and has become an operation without which organizations would not exist.

Kotler et al. (2016, p. 19) outline that today's marketing is about coping with an ever-changing environment, needing an appreciation of the evolution of markets and cutting-edge marketing. Poolton et al. (2006) explain that to fulfil the customers' needs today and, in the future, it is only through communication with customers and active marketing, that organizations can use their innovative potential to the fullest and develop new products before the competition. Nowadays marketing is undeniably digital and moving towards sharing similar elements with software development as many elements are controlled by software (Brinker, 2016, pp. 21-32). The scale of change in marketing has been unprecedented, continuously faster without any signs of slowing down, and that is the new normal of marketing.

Hagen et al. (2019) claim that the role of marketing is increasing since it establishes the connection between organizations' external and internal context, and operates as a crucial role in assessing, identifying, and satisfying customer and market expectations in current environments with fast technological change, increased competition, reduced ability to forecast, and rapidly changing demand patterns. Developments such as virtualization, e-commerce, mobile, advanced analytics, big data, cloud, artificial intelligence, and other disruptive technologies are encompassing the business environments (Paquette & Frankl, 2015, pp. 5-10). Consequently, a disruptive business environment has progressed with highly competitive, agile, and innovative organizations, which can endanger long-standing organizations by recognizing and countering business opportunities quickly (D'Aveni et al., 2010).

The transformation of marketing and its endless adaption of digital technologies has led to a new generation of marketing methodologies, tools, practices, and approaches (Jara et al., 2012). Hence, organizations are demanded to rebuild their processes, business models, and offerings in the knowledge of digital transformation to confront the intricate and rapidly changing markets (Rogers, 2016).

Besides, Dholakia et al. (2010) consider that increase in creating, handling, classifying, and utilizing information has led to organizations changing their traditional marketing activities, organizational structures, and business models. The practices of test, learn and optimizing enable agility and further makes it possible to deliver new messaging quickly even when a crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic hits (Adobe, 2020).

In many cases, the existing processes are following the same organizational structures as before the digital era, which makes it challenging to secure all the possibilities of speed and adaptability. Many organizations start to ask, "When the environment is so unpredictable, how can we apply the traditional forecasting and analysis that are at the heart of strategic planning?" and "When change is so rapid, how can a one-year—or, worse, five-year—planning cycle stay relevant?" (Reeves & Deimler, 2011, p. 137). Hagen et al. (2019) claim that marketing agility is a flexible and responsive approach that makes it possible to accomplish the right outcome by empowering the ability to recompose internal business abilities and sense market needs. Lewnes (2021) suggests that to acquire customer expectations, an organization must attain creative agility, which stands for the ability to bring forth the right content quickly for each step of the customers' journey. Moreover, creative agility allows organizations to continuously test and optimize in real-time to encourage innovation, and launch, test and amend campaigns apace.

2.1.2 Challenges and solutions of marketing in the digital era

As mentioned, the digital revolution has created crucial challenges in marketing. Leeflang et al. (2014) have identified main challenges including the capacity to leverage customer insights, managing brand prominence in the fast-marketing environments, and determining the power of digital marketing.

Table 1. Retrieved from Leeflang et al. (2014, p. 4).

Challenge	Description
Digital revolution	Increasing the number of digital tools and technologies and its threat to existing business models
Customer insights	Leverage and generation of customer insights
Talent gap	Talent gaps in analytical capabilities in marketing functions
Organization	Organizational challenges such as role ambiguity, unclear incentives and accountability

Consumer expectations	Demand to meet customer expectations real-time across personalized channels

The growing phase of new technology adoption and innovation has influenced the span of life cycles of organizations and products, which has further led to the need to make decisions much more swiftly. Moreover, it is stated that the degree to which the world is connected through movements in people, assets, and information flow has expanded enormously. Besides, to encompass digitalization, organizations must recognize the challenges, prioritize each difficulty, and state response to each challenge. (Leeflang et al., 2014.)

To be able to accelerate revenue growth, and become more agile and productive, certain organizational, strategic, and operational changes must be made in organizations. Thus, organizations that understand the shift in customers' adoption of digital technologies put digital interactivity as the centre of their marketing strategy, constantly reshaping their priorities, budgets, processes and abilities. To ensure the right content for customers, digital marketers must enhance intelligence tools and processes to gather information of customers to further analyse their actions and behaviour. Moreover, assessing and utilizing deep insights should be real-time to optimize, adapt and further drive performance. Often organizations ought to amplify their technology infrastructure, increase analytical abilities, modify organizational structures, and attain processes that appoint the new operational discipline. (Edelman, 2010.)

The traditional marketing management methodologies do not always deliver because the process is too cumbersome, narrow, and sequential for the ever-changing surroundings. Cross-functional cooperation is essential for successful marketing, although Cui et al. (2021) report that separate departments in an organization often collect, analyse and report information differently. Therefore, friction is created through different practices, customer views, and requirements. Lewnes (2021) suggests that the solution is to develop a model to create a common language throughout the organization to break down silos and ensure everyone is following the same goals. Also, organizations may create new processes and roles to facilitate common understanding for instance with cross-functional meetings or specific roles that communicate insights quickly to all. Thus, organizations often have high failure rates when taking on a large project or making large changes, because people, processes and organizational inertia tends to continue similarly (Petersen et al., 2014 p. 55).

Weber and Tarba (2014) recommend that organizations should establish agility by including new ways for managing business renewal and transformation, sustaining flexibility, expanding dynamic capabilities and variation skills, and adjusting corporate culture. Thus, enhanced information flow, feedback loops, and a holistic organizational view are bound to complement the environment of distress, disturbance, and change (Paquette & Frankl, 2015). On the other hand, Leeflang et al. (2014) argue that to overcome the challenges of the

digital era, organizations must redesign to have clearer decision-making processes and purposes, accomplish actionable digital metrics, and balance the supply and demand of people with analytical skills.

The constant change in the digital environment may be managed by adopting agile methodologies and practices to minimize cycle time, reinforce flexibility, improve competitiveness, and quickly integrate into globalization (Day, 2011). Due to the use of practices, the marketing teams' speed, coordination, flexibility and customer engagement increases (Ewel, 2013). Moreover, Reeves and Deimler (2011, p. 137) consider that today's organization should maintain rapid adaption, act and read on signals of change, experiment frequently and rapidly, manage interconnected and complex systems of various stakeholders, and motivate partners and employees. Lastly, Lewnes (2021) reasons that in the current environment, the ability to innovate in marketing relies on the organizations' competence to move quickly to keep up with the always in motion, technically empowered consumers whose expectations continuously shift. Therefore, the most successful digitally enforced organizations are transparent, authentic and hold the intention to serve customers and communities. Furthermore, these organizations maintain a focus on innovation, employees, processes, mission, purpose, and technology.

2.2 Agile methodologies

Agile methodologies originally attempt to pursue a faster and nimbler process for software development. However, throughout the years, agile methodologies have extended from the software development and information technology fields to various business fields compassing the traditional plan-driven methodologies. Fields such as innovation development (Paluch et al., 2020), risk management (Moran, 2014), service development (Sjödin et al., 2020), and business analytics (Collier, 2011) have benefitted from the adaption of agile methodologies.

Agile methodologies, which stand for continuous improvement processes, coordination, customer engagement, faster production cycles, have expanded to marketing (Conboy, 2009; Poolton et al., 2006). As a result, the agile management ideas have been embraced by several organizations with a fundamental improvement in the way the business and marketing operate since the methodologies have been successful in software development (Poolton et al., 2006; Gera et al., 2019). This chapter introduces the definition of agile, its background, the concept of agile methodologies in marketing, practices, benefits, requirements, and challenges.

2.2.1 Background and definitions of Agile and agile marketing

Rigby et al. (2018) describe agile shortly as a profitable model for applying creativity to improve processes, products, services, or business models with small multidisciplinary teams. Moreover, they suggest that the value of being agile is created from adapting to change rather than sticking to a plan. Besides, outcomes

such as growth, profitability, and customer loyalty are accounted more than outputs such as lines of code or the number of new products. Cervone (2011) highlights that agile drives on eliminating undesirable processes, bureaucracy, and practices. Broadly, agility refers to a set of organizational elements that foster growth- and change-oriented culture and iterative processes (Braunscheidel & Suresh, 2009; Ghezzi & Cavallo, 2020; Swafford et al., 2006).

Agile can be defined in various ways, there is not only one definition for agile (Conboy & Fitzgerald, 2004). Table 2 presents some definitions made of agile and agility.

Table 2. Definitions of agile and agility.

Definition	Source
"Agility means to strip away as much of the heaviness as possible to promote quick response to changing environments, changes in user requirements, accelerated project deadlines and the like."	Erickson et al., 2005, p. 89
Agile approach aims to develop value in a way that the focus is on meeting the business needs and simplifying the process instead of following a traditional waterfall process to meet the project dates.	Accardi-Petersen, 2011
Agility is about being flexible and nimble, open to change direction to access new possibilities and reassess past decisions in view of new developments.	Doz & Kosonen, 2008
Agile methodologies are built to generate the first release in weeks, gain early victories and quick reviews, invent easy solutions to simplify the process, continuously increase design efficiency, make the next stage less costly, and frequently test for faster and more effective fault identification.	Highsmith & Cockburn, 2001
Agile directs to react quickly to changes and adapt to new requirements, maintain a low hierarchy, enable visible communication, and self-direction of work.	Overhage & Schlauderer, 2012

Words such as change, adaption, flexible and nimble are mentioned in the definitions. It can be concluded based on the definitions that agile methodologies' focal aspect is adaptability, simplicity, speed, and experimentation. Concepts such as alertness, liveliness, nimbleness, and quickness are often related to being agile.

Agility in management deviates from traditional management practices and approaches. Barlow et al. (2011) claim that agile methodologies aim to manage customer demands and necessities with constant adaption served by short development cycles called iterations. Besides, working collaboratively with teams and stakeholders is a key philosophy of agile to ensure learning and re-learning, forming operative and high-quality projects, and sustaining commitment and motivation in the team (Saddington, 2012 p. 10). Since digitalization, customers' engagement with the organization has become highly visible, leading to marketing becoming attained to customer experience throughout the buyer's journey (Brinker, 2016, p. 47).

From a marketing perspective, instead of following a pre-defined marketing strategy, a greater emphasis is put on customer and sales targets with rapid iterative projects with smaller experiments, and development based on testing and data (Moth, 2014). Besides, the agile marketing approach allows evolving more effective and strategic outcomes in the dynamic environment (Poolton et al., 2006). In more detail, agile marketing creates the ability to respond to the market and needs for the business and customer (Accardi-Petersen, 2011). Besides, Edelman (2010) demonstrate that in the marketing context, agile stands for continuously using data and analytics to detect promising opportunities or solutions in real-time, evaluating results, and deploying tests quickly. Therefore, a well-functioning agile marketing organization can run various campaigns simultaneously, while coming up with new ideas constantly. Arnold (2012) describes agile marketing to be transparent, interactive, sustainable, measured, iterative, and relevant.

Table 3. Definitions of agile marketing

Definitions	Source
"Agile marketing is the ability to outpace your competition in the marketplace by being nimble enough to realign resources, as necessary."	Accardi-Petersen, 2011, pp. 41-42
Agility in marketing stands for the capability to sense and respond. It enables organizations to produce innovations and influence organizations' performance.	Zhou et al., 2019
Marketing agility means to be flexible and responsive when there are changes in the business environment.	Hagen et al., 2019

It includes the ability to sense needs of the market and reconstruct internal business capabilities to serve suitable market offerings.	
Agile marketing encourages businesses to evolve their marketing to reconfigure in a short time, which enables the customers to be aware of changing offerings when opportunities arise.	Poolton et al., 2006
Agile marketing stands for organizations' strategic manners to execute growth activities through quick decision making, simplified processes, and trial and error learning.	Homburg et al., 2020, p. 10

It can be concluded that agile marketing is a customer-centric and data-driven approach. The goal is to read and act on signals of change, experiment rapidly and frequently, manage relationships with various stakeholders and motivate employees and partners. Words such as speed, flexibility, responsiveness, and market sensing appear in various definitions. Moreover, agile marketing combines four key concepts including sensemaking, speed, iteration, and marketing decisions.

One of the main factors of agile is the self-organizing teams, which include individuals who can manage their work, shift tasks among the team when it is necessary and beneficial and take part in team decision making. Furthermore, the self-organizing teams must obtain common trust and respect, joint focus, and the capacity to adjust constantly to be able to meet new difficulties. (Highsmith & Cockburn, 2001.) Hence, the leadership in an agile team remains light-touch and adaptive, focusing mainly on giving direction, resources, motivation, and feedback (Takeuchi & Nonaka, 1986).

Rigby et al. (2016) argue that agile methodologies work efficiently in strategic planning and marketing since complex problems can be split into modules and solved by creative multidisciplinary teams. On the other hand, they suggest that the methodologies do not work that well in all functions of the organization including sales where the tasks can change on the spot. The methodologies suit especially start-ups with fewer resources to invest in bigger ideas (Conway & Hemphill, 2019). To conclude, the approach is agile when it is incremental including small releases and rapid cycles, and cooperative including close communication with customers and developers. Moreover, the process should be straightforward including a method that is easy to learn, document and modify,

and adaptive including the possibility to make last moment changes in a self-organizing team (Abrahamsson et al., 2002).

Agile methodologies have been reforming information technology over the past 30 years expanding the success rates, improving quality, speed to market, and motivation in software development (Rigby et al., 2016).

The methodologies were introduced in the 1930s when Walter Shewhart of Bell Labs began using the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles to enhance processes and products. Furthermore, in the 1940s the popular Toyota production system "Toyota Way" was created by Taiichi Ohno, Shigeo Shingo, and Wihi Toyoda. The approach is the primary foundation of today's lean thinking. (Sugimori et al., 1977.) Besides, Haricombe and Lusher (1998, pp. 4-5) claim that the concept of agile enterprise began in 1991 when there were concerns about the manufacturing organizations' ability to adapt to the velocity of the growing business world. Cubric (2013) describes that the agile methodologies were created because traditional software was failing, and a new way of more adaptive and efficient working needed to be acquired instead of following step-by-step processes. To conclude, agile methodologies were created to make development and delivery to customers faster and more precise.

The Agile Manifesto was founded in 2001 by a group of agile practitioners as a concept of agile development expressing a collective name and terms of reference for all the frameworks determined (Dybå & Dingsøyr, 2008; Beck et al., 2001). The manifesto holds four key values and twelve principles. The key values of the manifesto can be seen in Figure 4, which presents the importance of customer-centricity and results, instead of performing pre-defined processes and plans. Furthermore, the manifesto underlines close collaboration with stakeholders and the team, independence to the developers to produce value through their expertise, and frequent intervals and constant testing. Beck et al. (2001) emphasize that the values on the right are valued but the values on the left are valued even more.
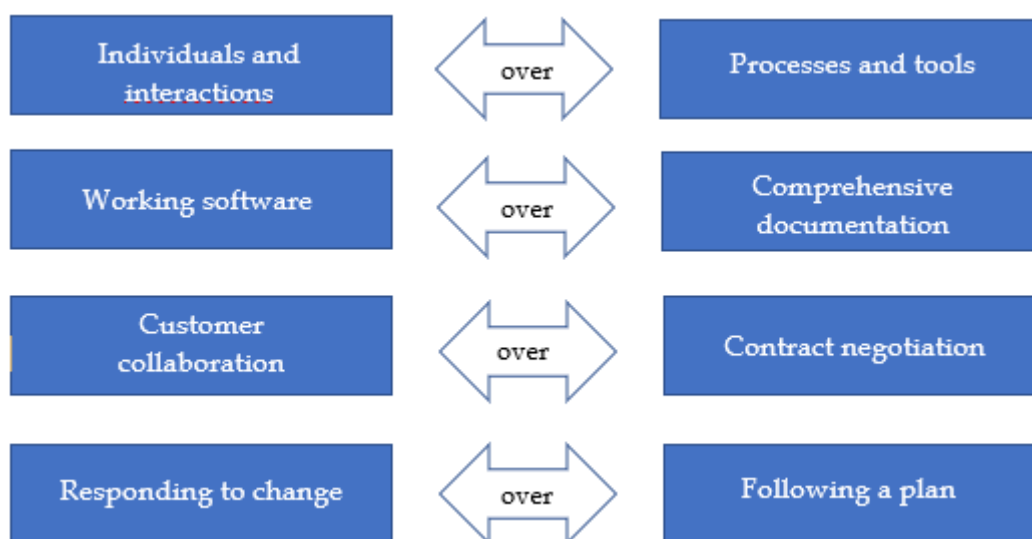

Figure 4. Agile values from the Agile Manifesto (Beck et al., 2001, n.p).

Abrahamsson et al. (2002) describe the creation of the Agile Manifesto to be the beginning of the paradigm shift in the software engineering field. Various iterative and incremental software development methodologies have been created inspired by agile values. The most popular methodologies include Scrum (Schwaber, 1995), Crystal (Cockburn, 2004), Lean Software, and Extreme Programming (Beck, 1999). Besides, all the methodologies aim to focus on responding to change and delivering rapid value. The members who created the Agile Manifesto created a set of principles in addition to the values. The principles can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. The principles of the Agile Manifesto are taken from the website of Agile Manifesto: (Beck et al., 2001, n.p).

"We follow these principles:"
1. "Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of valuable software."
2. "Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer's competitive advantage."
3. "Deliver working software frequently, from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference to the shorter timescale."
4. "Businesspeople and developers must work together daily throughout the project."
5. "Build projects around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and support they need and trust them to get the job done."
6. "The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is face-to-face conversation."
7. "Working software is the primary measure of progress."
8. "Agile processes promote sustainable development. The sponsors, developers, and users should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely."
9. "Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility."
10. "Simplicity--the art of maximizing the amount of work not done--is essential."
11. "The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from self-organizing teams."
12. "At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behaviour accordingly."

The Agile Manifesto for software development was found to be too software specific for it to be used for marketing means, which started the development of the

Agile Marketing Manifesto. In 2012 several marketers combined the Agile Marketing Manifesto, which follows the same ideas of the original Agile Manifesto but is edited to suit marketing better. The complete Agile Marketing Manifesto was concluded of several existing Manifestos for agile marketing that were previously created based on the original Agile Manifesto concluding different perspectives of marketing (Arnold, 2012). The Agile Marketing Manifesto aims to resolve better ways of creating value through new marketing approaches (Beck et al., 2001).

Table 5. The Agile Marketing Manifesto values (Beck et al., 2001, n.p)

1. "Validated learning over opinions and conventions"
2. "Customer focused collaboration over silos and hierarchy"
3. "Adaptative and iterative campaigns over Big-Bang campaigns"
4. "The process of customer discovery over static prediction"
5. "Flexibility vs. rigid planning"
6. "Responding to change over following a plan"
7. "Many small experiments over a few large bets"

Accardi-Petersen (2011) explains the main values of Agile Marketing Manifesto to stand for people working together to achieve a common goal, preference of delivering campaign over the same old marketing plans, collaborating with customers through crowdsourcing over through guesswork, and acting over talking.

Many large organizations have made the transition towards agile including Nokia (Laanti et al., 2011), Amazon (Atlas, 2009), Adobe (Lewnes, 2021), and British Telecom (Hanly et al., 2006). Moreover, the State of Agile Survey found based on their largest reoccurring survey that out of 43 % of respondents who worked in development organizations, 50 % of teams use agile methodologies (VersionOne, 2016). Although the survey is not scientific research, it can lay out an indication that many large organizations use agile. Besides, as mentioned, Adobe is one of the large organizations using agile methodologies and they have expressed that in 2020 when the global pandemic started, agile methodologies in marketing made it possible for them to do a quick shift with turning everything around to be online. They succeeded to make Adobe Summit online in only a few weeks accomplishing 500 000 people viewing the content. (Lewnes, 2021.)

2.2.2 Challenges of agile methodologies

Agile methodologies have both been praised and criticized, research implies that accommodating change can lead to both, success and failure (Boehm, 2002). Although it is proved that agile methodologies may increase the satisfaction of employees and customers, various challenges may occur when practising and adopting agile methodologies.

The challenges of adopting agile methodologies include a lack of motivation and knowledge among the employees and management (Boehm & Turner, 2005). Also, Rigby et al. (2016) argue that organizations' executives may claim that they are getting nimbler, although the management is undermining the effectiveness of agile principles and practices and assessing the methodologies wrongly without getting any training. Moreover, Matook and Vidgen (2014) describe that the management does not always have enough knowledge of agile methodologies, and guides decisions based on the traditional management theories. Hence, Schwaber and Sutherland (2017) claim that agile methodologies might be simple to understand but hard to master. On the other hand, Dikert et al. (2016) explain that general resistance to change and scepticism causes a lack of motivation in the adaption of the methodologies. Misconceptions such as agile methodologies' fit to complex projects, need to achieve by-the-book form and believes that agile intends no governance and plan have been noticed.

Commitment is seen as a major challenge in following agile methodologies. Cervone (2011) highlights that to successfully adapt to being agile, everyone must be allocated to the process including top management. Also, Matook and Vidgen (2014) propose that being agile demands devotion and adaption from the whole team for it to be thriving. Laanti et al. (2011) observed in their research challenges such as the deployment of agile methodologies, interaction within teams, control and planning in an iterative and adjustable way, and transparency and visibility. Research has also shown that when the size of organization increases, the adoption of agile methodologies gets more demanding since it requires a change in the entire organizational culture and way of thinking (Dybå & Dingsøyr, 2008).

Hoda et al. (2011) found out in their research that lack of customer involvement was one of the greatest challenges faced by teams following agile methodologies. In their research, the outcome was that causes for the lack of customer involvement include time frames, large customers, scepticism, hype, fixed-bid contracts, and ineffective customer representatives. Thus, those causes can lead to problems in defining, prioritizing, and gathering requirements, and ensuring feedback. Also causes such as the pressure to over-commit and decrease in productivity and profit may be occurring. Besides, Conboy (2009) has listed some profound problems of agile methodologies including lack of accuracy and theoretical glue, in addition to, lack of tradition and parsimony.

Based on the mentioned challenges, a table introducing the main challenges was created.

Table 6. Challenges of agile methodologies

Challenge	Description	Source
Lack of customer collaboration	One of the vital features in being agile is customer collaboration. Inadequate customer involvement can lead to major consequences.	Hoda et al., 2011; Laanti et al., 2011.
Lack of knowledge and training	Methodologies might be assessed in a wrong way without proper training. Also, some misunderstandings in agile concepts might occur without proper training and lacking guidelines from the literature.	Boehm & Turner, 2005; Rigby et al., 2016; Gandomani & Nafchi, 2016
Lack of motivation and commitment	There may be lack of motivation among the management and employees to adopt the methodologies, which can cause difficulties while transforming.	Boehm & Turner, 2005; Cervone, 2011
Lack of transparency and visibility	Transparency and visibility are necessary for self-organizing team to maintain its agility, if they are lacking the team the implementation of agile does not work.	Laanti et al., 2011
Lack of communication among teams	Lack of communication can cause challenges in co-operation, work distribution, and successful outcomes. Also, all units in organizations may not follow agile methodologies or they might implement them differently.	Laanti et al., 2011; Boehm & Turner, 2005
Change resistance and scepticism	People do not want to change unless there are good enough reasons that can be understood, and the process is clear enough. This may cause loss in productivity and time.	Dikert et al., 2016; Boehm & Turner, 2005
Too high workload and keeping old commitments	Teams' workload might not be adjusted to the change process. Also, old commitments may be kept regardless of the transformation.	Dikert et al., 2016

Working remotely causes modification to the practises	Agile requires arrangement of physical places for the meetings. May affect the teams' desires to modify their working spaces.	Dikert et al., 2016; Gandomani & Nafchi, 2016
Using the old and new methodologies side by side	During the transformation process, the methodologies may be used in parallel, which is seen problematic since it can cause tension in all organizational levels.	Dikert et al., 2016; Gregory et al., 2016
Reverting to the old ways	Challenges in the transformation and adaption may cause people to revert to the old ways of working.	Dikert et al., 2016
Excessive enthusiasm	Excessive enthusiasm may lead to people taking sides for or against agile methodologies. Also, the "buzzword" may lead to the methodologies being used incorrectly and blindly.	Dikert et al., 2016; Gandomani & Nafchi, 2016; Gregory et al., 2016
New roles are unclear	As agile processes emphasize self-organizations, role of managers might occur unclear. There may be tendency among managers to control and command.	Dikert et al., 2016

2.2.3 Requirements of practicing agile methodologies

Being agile is not only about doing everything faster, it requires an extensive adaption of the methodologies all over the organization, and changes in processes, behaviour, and tools (Accardi-Petersen, 2011). Erickson et al. (2005) propose that to reach the goal of being agile, an organization must follow speed and simplicity, the teams must concentrate only on functions that are required immediately, deliver those functions quickly, collect feedback efficiently, and react to changes in business and technology (Erickson et al., 2005). Also, one of the most important key factors for an organization to become agile is that people want to become agile (Accardi-Petersen, 2011). Siakas and Siakas (2007) identified that agile culture requires active involvement from all participants, including the application of horizontal hierarchy encouraging flexibility and impulsivity.

Day (2011, p. 183) suggests that for organizations to "adjust quickly to fast-changing markets", they must enhance deep market insights with vigilant market learning, implement continuously learning adaptive market experimentation, and lastly open marketing to forge relationships with those who attain new media and social networking technologies and mobilizes skills of current partners. Also, Kotler et al. (2016, p. 19) describe that the importance of collaboration within different organizations and customers themselves to innovate new solutions and adopt external innovation ecosystems has increased significantly in a market that supplies the ideas. Hence, organizations that leverage experimentation are tolerant to failure, taking past mistakes as an opportunity to learn (Reeves and Deimler, 2011, p. 139).

McAfee et al. (2012) demonstrate that understanding customer behavior and needs by implementing data and analysis and translating it to decision making leads to superior competitive advantage and performance. Especially now, as the availability of data in the digital age has increased excessively, there are various opportunities for marketers (Wedel & Kannan, 2016; Day, 2011). To be able to get a better understanding of how customers decide, there needs to be an understanding of intents, motivations, emotions, and decision journeys of different customer groups throughout all stages of the customer journey (Petersen et al., 2014 p. 3). An organization can remain informed with automated big data analysis that enables data-driven decisions and quick reactions (McAfee et al., 2012). Moreover, getting real-world feedback from the customers enables the resonation of how the ideas work, and further allows the adjustment of items to suit customer needs (Brinker, 2016, p. 77).

To achieve agility, the key set of the business processes must be built around customer- and market-centric thinking (Hagen et al., 2019). As agility may be achieved by forecasting and monitoring market needs to be able to respond reactively and increase customer satisfaction. Moi and Cabiddu (2021) describe that agile capabilities demand adopting up-to-date technologies and tools. When using data to base decisions, data quality must be considered. With the increasing amount of data, the quality often decreases, which can cause misleading perceptions and errors (Lee, 2017). Adapting, taking advantage of, and staying in the lead of emerging technologies can be an enormous competitive advantage for organizations. Marketers not using technology when aiming to achieve business objectives can be left behind with other companies taking control of the business field (Petersen et al., 2014, pp. 1-2).

Agility demands being open to advise and feedback both internally and externally, using communication tools to align business goals across teams, and maintaining collaborative, trust-based and empowering working environments (Moi & Cabiddu, 2021). Even failures must be accepted to advance processes through them. If all ideas are not implemented, the process should be seen as a learning experience to gain data to utilize in future projects (Moth, 2014). Also, Nemkova (2017) considers that to enable agility, an organization must be creative, in terms of being able to progress even without knowing the result and evolving ideas on the way, when making decisions to evolve unique solutions to assure

customer needs. The adoption of an incremental approach does not mean decreasing quality, strategic judgement and quality control must be maintained (Brinker, 2016, p. 78).

Rigby et al. (2016) have compounded six crucial practices that managers should adopt to take advantage of agile. The first task is to learn how agile works, secondly the leaders need to understand where agile does and does not work, thirdly the company should start small with agile and let the word spread to other functions later, fourthly the experienced practitioners should be able to customize agile practices to fit their needs, fifthly agile should be practiced at the top, and finally, barriers between different agile teams should be destroyed. On the contrary, Dybå and Dingsøyr (2008) present in their research that agile management must follow four core principles: low detail definition, independent teams, elimination of unnecessary activities, feedback, and collaboration. Another key principle is the fact that the project does not always succeed, failure can be a lesson.

Collaborative leadership through collaborative teams with aligned goals is seen as one of the necessities for successful agility. The people working in the same team must possess a mix of knowledge in various parts of the business such as technology and design. Also, customers' involvement in the campaigns or projects is seen as a major benefactor. As, the agile methodologies involve customers in tasks such as writing user stories, discussing the features, and providing feedback, therefore, they are a vital feature in the project (Dybå & Dingsoyr, 2008). Similarly, Hagen et al. (2019) argue that organizations must access the ability to coordinate activities and resources with stakeholders to be able to possess agility.

Lewnes (2021) describes that agility requires a cultural shift, which starts with attaining new skills including data analytics, creation of new ad formats and programmatic, and the ability to produce content constantly to keep up with the digital's demands. Above all, it is statet that becoming agile in marketing requires a new mindset with the amalgamation of data and creativity. Lewnes (2021) also argues that organizations must have a range of people from different ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, education, and experience to attain versatile ideas and identify blind spots. Also, Bourke and Dillon (2018) found in their research that organizations with inclusive cultures were six times more probable to be agile and innovative. Lewnes (2021) suggests that teams should be encouraged and trusted by creating platforms for feedback, giving opportunities to express their ideas and vision, and offering space and assistance to execute them to elaborate agility as a marketing reality.

To adopt agility in marketing, there must be increased autonomy to reduce bureaucratic restraints enhancing the teams to identify and react to occurring situations better (Kalaignanam et al., 2021, p. 49). Moreover, Lewnes (2021) states that agile marketing teams must stand risk and make decisions quickly.

2.2.4 Opportunities of agile methodologies

Agile methodologies have been reviewed and studied to offer major benefits in comparison to the traditional management approaches. These benefits include increased team productivity, employee satisfaction, visibility, adaption to customers' changing priorities, customer engagement, customer satisfaction, transparency, predictability, and a number of valuable products. Besides, agile methodologies lessen waste in unnecessary documentation, quality defects, low-value product features, repetitive planning, and meetings. Therefore, agile methodologies reduce risk, time, and brings the most relevant features, plans, and products to the market more abruptly. (Rigby et al., 2016; Moth, 2014.) Moreover, rather than encouraging planned incremental system and process improvement, agile methodologies aim to extend technologies as a paradigm shift and a spur for change (Paquette & Frankl, 2015, pp. 10-20).

Zhou et al. (2019) investigated in their research that agility influences financial performance both indirectly and directly, the direct effects between marketing agility and financial performance grew stronger in environments with high market turbulence. Although, Drnevich and Kriauciunas (2011) argue based on their research that those agile capabilities are more important, especially in dynamic environments. On the other hand, Zahra et al. (2006) highlight the need for agile capabilities for all kinds of environments.

In the same period of the traditional management model, various sprints can be completed in an agile model, which increases the frequency, and advances to stay ahead of the competition. Moreover, the process of deciding tasks to do, and to which degree, develops the understanding of relative priority and effectiveness. (Brinker, 2016, p. 68.) The sprints enable the review of how to act on insights, reprioritize, and refine the most efficient way of working. Moreover, they allow teams to respond to new information, feedback, and events attained in the last sprint. (Brinker, 2016, pp. 71-72.)

Through collaboration the responsibilities, whether success or failure, become shared. That enables a broader team to learn from the success and failure, and therefore the failures will be less likely repeated. Another benefit is that people tend to move on quicker from shared failures, as the teams are not blaming one another for not delivering well enough. (Accardi-Petersen, 2011.) Also, Laanti et al. (2011) discovered in their research that agile benefits include higher transparency and quality, increased satisfaction, autonomy and happiness, earlier detection of defects, and feeling of effectiveness. Besides, the research revealed that 60 % of the respondents would not return to the old way of working whereas 9 % reported they would.

Järvi et al. (2018) express agile methodologies to clarify the roles and tasks of the whole business operations including the stakeholders. Moreover, they conclude that agile methodologies allow each participant of a project to have a clear view of who is responsible and who is not. Besides, the list of requirements and goals at the beginning of a project maintains a continuous fluency including interaction throughout the process. In addition to clarifying roles and tasks, the collaborative way of working increases knowledge sharing and integration in

terms of shared experiences, expertise, and processes (Cegarro-Navarro et al., 2016).

2.2.5 Agile frameworks and practices

As mentioned, there are various methodologies developed for scaling agile. Although, all agile models aim to support the accommodation of change at the project level with short iteration cycles, changing requirements, anticipation, and adaption (Kettunen, 2009). Besides, the methodologies aim to drift from linear process models and use flexible and circular processes for designing, testing, and developing to enable the discovery of uncertainties and the adaption of new and unexpected events (Bianchi et al., 2020).

Based on research by VersionOne (2016) regarding the use of agile methodologies in software development, 58 % of the respondents who use agile methodologies claim Scrum to be the most followed agile framework. Also, Scrum was the most used framework for project management practices. Besides, Laanti et al. (2011) suggests that Scrum is the most followed agile framework among software developers. Moreover, it is stated that as an agile framework, Scrum fits especially agility in project management and marketing (Rigby et al., 2016).

Agile marketing is based on conducting small iterative projects cheaply and quickly instead of big bets, and further deciding based on data and testing instead of opinions and experiences (Moth, 2014). Experimentation stands for an ability to select signals and develop strategic alternatives from market and customer knowledge which enables the creation of timely and well-grounded decisions (Hagen et al., 2019). To keep up with the demands, a process of planning, iterating, failing, and succeeding is followed to secure a successful project. An iterative approach to marketing enables the division of marketing strategy into smaller sub tactics, which can be delivered and improved over time. (Accardi-Petersen, 2011.) The tactics include, from a marketing perspective, for example, a new marketing software, campaign, or influencer strategy (Brinker, 2016, p. 72). In practice, the marketing campaigns should be set live quickly, and further iterated based on analytics and customer reviews to decrease the risk of significant mistakes and destructive decisions. Thus, a few small tests should be run, refined, and evaluated before scaling up. The process requires predefined key performance indicators to be determined ahead of time and matched with business goals so that all decisions are strategically guided. (Moth, 2014.)

The practices of agile frameworks enable the use of rapid iterations, visualized workflow, adaptive processes, agile teams' structures, transparent prioritization, and balance of strategic vision and flexibility in addition to emergent opportunities for marketing. Furthermore, the steps of an agile framework, Scrum, include a sprint review and the next sprint planning enables the team to analyse the performance of past iterations and reflect the variations further. That lets marketers test the best working options resulting in data of customer preferences. (Brinker, 2016, pp. 63-65.) Although, as mentioned, many organizations and teams collect practices from different frameworks to suit their needs. Thus,

for example, Sutherland et al. (2007) argue that Scrum is effective only when it is practised thoroughly. Nevertheless, Brinker (2016, p. 64) suspects that the Scrum framework is often simplified for marketing means.

2.2.6 Scrum

Scrum framework was developed by Jeff Sutherland and Ken Schwaber in 1993 who were inspired by the article "The New New Product Development Game" published in 1986 by Hirotaka Takeuchi and Ikujiro Nonaka, who described a new rugby model for product development (Rigby et al., 2016; Takeuchi & Nonaka, 1986). The association to rugby is described to come from a demand 'scrum-down' in rugby, which means that a tight formation of forwards aims to bind together in certain positions (Sutherland, et al., 2007). Takeuchi and Nonaka (1986) did not use the name Scrum in the product development theory they composited, but it showed a similar process to later developed Scrum including a six-step strategy: 1. built-in instability, 2. self-organizing project teams, 3. overlapping development process, 4. "multi learning", 5. subtle control, and 6. organizational transfer of learning.

Scrum was established as a framework for software development, especially for projects with high complexity. Moreover, the framework aims to make product management and work techniques clearer to improve teams, products, and working environments. The framework describes roles, processes, and artifacts of Scrum project management to make Scrum simple to understand. (Schwaber & Sutherland, 2017; Sutherland et al., 2007.) Scrum is used more as a project management tool rather than for example a software development technique, which is why the method is commonly used with other agile methodologies such as XP in software development (Abrahamsson et al., 2002). The tool is especially useful in turbulent market environments where it is almost impossible to plan (Dybå & Dingsøyr, 2008).

Since the publish of Schwaber's and Beedle's book "Agile software development with Scrum", in 2002, the model has gained a lot of popularity with the claim of being the most used agile method (Schwaber, 2007). After that, the framework has been used to develop software, networks of interacting function, autonomous vehicles, marketing, managing the operation of an organization, schools, government, and almost anything in our daily lives (Schwaber & Sutherland, 2017).

Table 7. Definitions of Scrum.

Definition	Source

"Scrum is an Agile software development process designed to add energy, focus, clarity, and transparency to project teams developing software systems."	Sutherland et al., 2007, p. 274a
"In terms of agile project management, a Scrum is simply an agile, light weight process for managing and controlling software and product development in rapidly changing environments. "	Cervone, 2011, p. 19
"A framework within which people can address complex adaptive problems, while productively and creatively delivering products of the highest possible value."	Schwaber & Sutherland, 2017, p. 3

The three key pillars of Scrum as an empirical process are transparency, inspection, and adaption. Firstly, the whole process must be visible to those who are responsible for the result, which can be seen in regular feedback sessions, and transparency in the progress of all project members (Measey et al., 2015). Secondly, the Scrum artifacts and the progress should be inspected to reveal unpleasant variances. Thirdly, the process must be adjusted as soon as possible if elements rise in the process that drifts from the appropriate scope, possibly failing the outcome. (Schwaber & Sutherland, 2017.) The process of Scrum includes five main activities, kick-off, sprint planning, sprint retrospective, daily stand-up meetings, and sprint review meeting (Cervone, 2011).

Scrum artifacts include the Product Backlog, Sprint backlog, and Burndown Charts (Cervone, 2011). The Product Backlog is often a spreadsheet that consists of the listed requirements, features, and fixes to establish the produce. It is often considered one of the most important matters of Scrum. The contents, prioritization, and availability of the Product Backlog are determined by the Product Owner. The Sprint Backlog is an initial list of tasks that the Development Team has defined based on the Product Backlog for the Sprint. Furthermore, the Sprint Backlog is a transparent, visible real-time illustration of the work the Development Team aims to accomplish during the Sprint. The Burndown Chart visualizes the association between the amount of work at any point in time and the progress of the Team. (Schwaber, 2004; Cubric, 2013.)

Many of the definitions of Scrum highlight the importance of the people and the self-organizing small team as a core of Scrum. The framework underlines

adaptive and creative teamwork in solving complex issues (Rigby et al., 2016). Furthermore, the fundamentals of the method include forming a cross-functional and small team, usually three to nine people, which manages itself and is accountable for all aspects of the project. Besides, the focus is on how the team members should work together to establish the final product in a continuously changing environment by gathering feedback while progressing. (Abrahamsson et al., 2002.) Also, the ownership of the project lies within the whole team, which decreases the effect of team members blaming each other and creates motivation (Conboy, 2009). Table 8 presents the Scrum roles and responsibilities:

Table 8. Scrum roles and responsibilities (Schwaber & Sutherland, 2017, pp. 5-7).

Product Owner	Scrum Master	Development Team
• Work prioritization • Management of the Product Backlog • Responsible for stakeholder commuication • "Customers' voice" • Maximizes the value of the product	• Servant-leader of the team • Responsible of correct Scrum implementation • Coaches and helps the team to follow Scrum and remove impediments • Maximizes the benefits of Scrum	• In charge of developing a superior produce • Cross-functional, self-organizing, creative and adaptive • Decides on how to work

The founders of Scrum, Schwaber and Sutherland (2017) define Scrum as a framework that can be used by people to deliver products of the highest value by addressing complex adaptive problems and paying attention to inspection, adaption, and transparency. Besides, some authors focus on speed and flexibility and others on roles and practices when defining Scrum. To conclude based on the definitions, Scrum is a way of working iteratively to focus on embracing the change by continuously improving by adapting the process to be able to attain value to the end-users as quickly as possible.

2.2.7 Kanban

The modern Kanban is developed for software development by David Anderson. The idea behind the framework originates from Lean Manufacturing, more specifically from the Toyota manufacturing system (Sugimori et al., 1977). The emphasis of the framework is in visualizing workflow, limiting work in progress, pulling work along a process, and frequent and incremental improvement. More-

over, the teams follow the existing structure and operating flow of the organization, without separate roles such as in Scrum. The aim is to improve the efficiency and outcomes of the processes. (Mahnic, 2014.)

In more detail, there are five core principles of Kanban including visualizing the workflow, limiting work-in-progress (WIP), measuring and managing flow, making process policies explicit, and using models to acknowledge improvement opportunities. (Mahnic, 2014.)

The visualization of workflow allows the split of work into smaller and effortlessly manageable parts. Kanban board is used to visualize workflow and progress, and it is the most used concept of Kanban. Table 9 presents a usual Kanban board, which consists of three columns including 'To Do', 'In Progress', and 'Done'. Therefore, it promotes transparency as everyone can see the process of the project, which is confirmed to be highly beneficial (Brinker, 2016, p. 55).

Table 9. Kanban Board example (Brinker, 2016, p. 55).

To Do	In Progress	Done
Write a social media post Promote a blog post …	Design visual theme for new landing page …	Complete a blog post Sign up for a blog service …

There are also more detailed Kanban boards, that can be used for example in marketing. A five-stage Kanban board including columns such as To do, Create, Review, Test, and Done, suits a wide variety of marketing tasks. (Brinker, 2016, pp. 55-58.)

Limit work-in-progress aims to limit the number of tasks to queue upcoming tasks until the ongoing ones are completed. The team should define the 'capacity of the system', tasks the team can handle at the time. Furthermore, the team can define multiple stages of the process and name a limit for each stage, or possibly give each participant a personal limit. The limitation of tasks enables focus on quality and performance, an advancement of predictability, and a decrease in lead times. Limiting work-in-progress can visualize fundamental problems and reveal bottlenecks. (Mahnic, 2014; Sugimori et al., 1977.)

Measure and manage flow focuses to decrease the average time one item is finished. The extension of the teams' flow time can be done by practising the Pull Principle, which points to pulling tasks from the previous stages of the process when they are achieved, rather than shifting tasks to the next stage. There are two advantages of using such a principle including the readiness of the stage to receive the task when it is pulled, and the possibility of team members accepting their tasks rather than them being distributed. (Sugimori et al., 1977.)

3   METHODOLOGY

Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) describe that the appropriate research methodology should be chosen based on the research questions to achieve the objectives of the research. Therefore, the methodology of this thesis was chosen to support the research questions presented. A variety of methodological decisions were conducted and a research strategy was formulated to support the aim of this study, to evaluate how marketing functions are using agile methodologies. This chapter introduces the methodology of the research including the research strategy, approach, description of data collection, and analysis.

3.1   Research strategy

The research is based on the research question *What factors motivate the organizations to adopt and implement agile methodologies for marketing purposes*? which is expected to get answered. Therefore, as the objective of the study is to evaluate and understand why marketing functions are using agile methodologies in Finnish companies, a qualitative research method with semi-structured interviews was chosen.

As the research objective of this study is to evaluate how marketing functions are using and perceiving agile methodologies, the study aims to develop an understanding of practices, principles, challenges, requirements, and benefits of agile methodologies in marketing. The study is exploratory, which indicates that the research question is explored, and answers are provided to the defined problems. Furthermore, the study indicates challenges and proposes an interpretation of clarifications that can be considered without offering conclusive solutions to the existing challenges. (Yin, 2014.) Besides, the research aims to indicate exploratory pieces of evidence by providing insights into the relatively unknown field of agile marketing.

The findings are based on the experiences of marketing experts who have been using agile methodologies and defined agile practices in their marketing.

3.2   Qualitative research

Qualitative research approaches aim to provide acknowledgement of socially formulated reality (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Metsämuuronen (2011, pp. 34-35) describes that qualitative research is suitable when the research focuses on the intentions, motives, objectives, experiences, attitudes, and goals of humans.

The research philosophy stands for the classification of assumptions and presumptions in terms of the development of awareness. A set of assumptions including ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives is defined to

recognize credible research philosophy and support methodological choice, data collection, analysis, and research strategy. (Johnston & Clark, 2001.)

The qualitative research approach follows an existential-phenomenological-hermeneutic philosophy of science (Metsämuuronen, 2011, p. 220). Moreover, ontology aims to consider the relation and presence between community, humanity, and individuals, whereas ontological assumptions assist all methodological stances and ideas. The study relies exceedingly on interviewees as employees' perspectives. Lastly, the study views the participants as truthful, regardless of social identities, attitudes, or personalities. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, pp. 12-14.) Besides, the epistemological position occurs as interpretive, meaning that the goal is to comprehend the social world by interpreting the discussion of the research participants (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 386). The study aims to understand the experiences, opinions, processes, and practices of the individuals while acknowledging the current challenges of digitalization.

The deductive and inductive approaches are two existing models to present the understanding of the entity of the study. The deductive approach clarifies an existing theory by creating a hypothesis and formulating theories. Whereas the inductive approach first creates empirical research and then matures a theory based on the findings. In addition, there is an abduction logic, which is applied by several scholars since the ideal type of research logic among the two rarely exists. Abductive reasoning is a combination of the two types as it utilizes the existing theory as a basis and further expands it. This study can be described as abductive research as it employs former theory but further seeks new inspections from the empirical data. (Saunders et al. 2007, p. 128; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, pp. 20-23.)

The qualitative research method was selected for this thesis because of the fundamental objective to understand the experiences and situations individuals comprehend. Also, qualitative methodologies were utilized to present a better recognition of factors, which is demanded to answer the research question. To answer the research question, a total of 7 experts with agile marketing experience were interviewed. As the aim of qualitative research is to pursue specific issues in detail and depth, the method does not create statistics or generalizations.

3.3   Data collection and analysis

3.3.1 Data collection

Out of the qualitative methodologies including focus groups, interviews, ethnography, observation, and content analysis, interviews were selected as the main data collection method for this study. Furthermore, personal interviews were selected because of various reasons including the complication to perceiving thoughts, feelings, or intentions without asking questions, their ability to answer the research questions accurately, and the need for an in-depth understanding of the research phenomenon (Patton, 2002).

Semi-structured interviews aim to discover knowledge on experiences outside the planned topics and questions. Besides, the semi-structured interviews offer a more flexible structure to understand concerns, experiences, and feelings regarding agile methodologies in marketing. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 82.) Also, interviews are one of the most exploited data collection methodologies in marketing journals (Petrescu & Lauer, 2017). Therefore, semi-structured interviews were held to guarantee the evaluation of agile methodologies in marketing.

The interviews were conducted remotely one-on-one, through video calls so that the examination of nonverbal communication was still enabled. All the interviews were held in Finnish. Moreover, the interviews were conducted based on a systematic plan, which guided the data collecting phase with defining what is required to answer the research questions and which method suits the requirements (Johnston et al., 1999). Although the interviews were semi-structured, similar questions were asked from all interviewees to gain knowledge from the same perspective. The length of the interviews varied from 20 to 55 minutes. Thus, all interviews were recorded, and the interviews were transcribed verbatim to gather the data. Also, the cites applied in the findings were translated into English by the writer.

Similarly, as Stake (1995, pp. 8-13) demonstrates, the research process must be adaptable when unpredictable issues appear, this study was minorly adjusted and interview questions were modified after the first interviews, one was deleted, and a few questions were also fined down. The purpose of the study or the questions were not changed, the questions that were deleted appeared unnecessary, and the ones edited were understood incorrectly by the first interviewee. Additionally, throughout the interviews, the questions were presented differently to guide the discussion. As the topic is largely unknown, the formulation of the research question also changed during the study process.

An interview protocol (Table 10) was developed to be used to structure the interviews. The interview protocol helped to plan and prepare the questions to be asked in the interviews. It worked as a guideline for the interviews to detail and frame the flow of the interviews from the beginning to the end. While developing the interview protocol, it was ensured that the interview questions aligned with the research questions. Secondly, an inquiry-based conversation was constructed, and feedback was gathered from the interview protocol draft. Furthermore, the interview protocol was piloted with a marketing specialist acquaintance to assist that the questions to assure the timing of the interview, the comprehensibility of the questions, and the extent or scarcity of the questions.

Table 10. Interview protocol

S#	Section/Theme	Protocol
1.	Demographic profile	Profession Title
		How long have you worked in the company?
		How would you describe your current role?

2.	Organizational agility	How would you describe the way of working at your organization?
		When did your company implement agile methodologies? And why did you implement agile methodologies/ (or the motivation) of using the agile methodologies?
3.	Agile practices in marketing:	Which agile practices do you use? (A certain framework?)
		Could you describe the process?
		What are the reasons for using those agile practices?
4.	Agile benefits and challenges:	Could you describe the major benefits of using agile practices?
		What kind of challenges have you been facing when using agile practices?
		Do you think there are certain requirements for being agile?
5.	Agile in marketing:	How do you think the practices work especially for marketing?
		Have your marketing results improved from the use of agile practices?

In the context of this research project, interviews were especially useful because they helped in providing insight into the behaviour and perceptions of people and insight from key industry experts who can provide privileged knowledge.

3.3.2 Sampling

The individuals under analysis were selected through purposeful sampling, which stands for selecting strategically the participants who have a high in-depth understanding of the research objects (Patton, 2002; Gubrium et al., 2012). Hence, the participants of this study were selected based on requirements including the use of agile methodologies in the organization, and the work tasks being within marketing. Therefore, the participants worked within marketing and their marketing functions are using agile methodologies. In addition to the marketing executives, one non-marketer who is experienced with agile methodologies was interviewed to gather a further understanding of the methodologies. Besides, the study is conducted locally, including only organizations and interviewees located in Finland.

Table 11. Specifics of the interviews

Participant	Current role	Time in the current role	Duration	Date
Expert 1	Manager	3 years	18 min	29.1.2021

Expert 2	Creative	2 years	23 min	27.1.2021
Expert 3	Partner and director	6 years	41 min	17.12.2020
Expert 4	Manager	2,5 years	55 min	22.12.2020
Expert 5	Strategist	1 year	23 min	23.12.2020
Expert 6	Manager	1 year	21 min	13.1.2021
Expert 7	Manager	2,5 years	35 min	11.1.2021

The marketing experts are the ones experiencing the use of agile methodologies, which is why the study focuses on investigating them to acknowledge the motivation, suitability, benefits, requirements, and challenges of deploying such methodologies. The sample size of the research is 7 participants. As Eskola and Suoranta (1998, p. 18) state that the quality of the research is defined by the quality and not the amount. Within the subject of the research, after conducting 7 interviews, the interview data started to saturate and it was acknowledged that new interviews may not bring additional value to the study.

3.3.3 Analysis

The interview aimed to build a better understanding of agile marketing in practice. Moreover, the interviews brought up new insights to agile marketing methodologies, and further reasoned the theoretical findings.

The interview analysis started with transcribing the data to organize the dataset, in this case, the recordings, to be able to analyse them. In the analysis phase, it is important to get familiar with the whole dataset, in this case, the transcribed text transcripts of the interviews (Belk et al., 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Moreover, patterns were searched from the transcriptions and further logical reasoning and interpretation were conducted to break the data down into parts and a logical whole (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 108).

A content analysis was made to identify themes in the light of the research questions, interview questions, and the theoretical background. Moreover, the content and meaning of patterns were reported as themes that are referred to as identified abstract constructs. The analysis circulated between the data set, coded extracts of the data, and the produced analysis of the data. (Belk et al., 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2006.) Lastly, after the content analysis, the data were reported verbally and supported with quotations from the interview.

3.4   Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability define the quality and ethics of the study; therefore, they can be stated as the key aspects of research. The validity stands for the truthfulness and accuracy of the findings, whereas, reliability considers the stability, repeatability, and constancy of the results. (Brink, 1993.)

The validity of this research is preserved through defined questions, which enable the interviewee to describe their experiences and views of agile methodologies. Besides, the interview was based on examining experience and attitude and the questions were designed to reveal that. Moreover, the theme remained the same throughout the interviews and it incorporated the research objectives. Also, the interviews were held anonymously, and all data were analysed anonymously. The results do not consider demographic data.

The semi-structured interviews make data impossible to repeat with its freedom. Although the study considers experiences that may have differences individually, alike paths are discovered, acknowledged, and experiences compared. Therefore, reliability is ensured by precise data analysis, in addition to, accurate and extensive data assortment. Also, the findings are discussed and compared with an agile practitioner in another field of business. Thus, the results of the study may be considered in other organizations' marketing functions and utilized in other comparable industries. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 292.)

4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The world is getting more and more digital each day, economic conditions change dramatically, and everything is moving to online. Therefore, it is a great competitive advantage to be able to step up and stay ahead of the changing environment. Thus, marketing is shifting from traditional practices to being agile to be able to identify and monitor change in the marketplace, rapidly respond and change direction, and frequently measure impact. The first step towards the change is adopting management practices and mindsets that fit the current state since the current management methods are developed for a more stable world. Therefore, various marketing teams and organizations have adopted agile methodologies since there have been great results in the software development field over the last two decades. However, as witnessed, the change does not occur overnight, and there are challenges, requirements as well as benefits of the methodologies.

This chapter introduces the research findings by describing the discoveries of the interviews. The following parts will unfold the interviewees' experiences and opinions about agile methodologies starting from the background of implementing agile methodologies, following the agile practices used, and furthermore reviewing the perceived benefits and challenges of agile methodologies. Afterwards, the research findings of agile methodologies' requirements and agile marketing will be presented. The research findings incorporate quotes from the interviewees.

4.1 Background of implementing agile methodologies

Expert 1 demonstrates that their initial reason to attain agile methodologies was in 2016 when they felt that there were several teams, that worked somewhat together but not on a deeper level and that caused difficulties in everyday management. Moreover, they felt that the whole was fragmented, and people were overworked with requests coming from several places. There was a demand to compound a team, where all play together and think over organizational boundaries. That was attained in 2016 through marketing, analytics, and customer relationship management. After a couple of years, it was acknowledged that agility must spread over the borders of the mentioned departments, and therefore the whole organization decided to adopt an agile approach and started following a Scaled Agile Framework, also called as the Safe model. Collaboration, transparency, experiments, simplicity, and adaptability are held as the main values based on the actions.

The agile methodologies have been followed in Expert 2's organization since 2011, although the methodologies have been adjusting along the way. Expert 2 considers that agile methodologies were implemented because it is a more

humane way of working. Now working and especially working together with customers is easier as it is effortless to know the customers better. Therefore, the work gets done more efficiently. Moreover, Expert 2 states that compared to the traditional way of doing marketing, in an agile way everything is more informal, and lies in a conversation rather than employees working alone in briefings or big presentations. The result is organic and constantly in a progress. That has enabled measurement and analysis, and further testing with short notice and on a small budget. The testing and results are held at the highest value. Expert 2's organization follows Lean methodologies focusing on close collaboration, testing, waste minimization, no hierarchy, and flexible roles.

The organization of Expert 3 began using the agile methodologies because they believed in a great change in the way organizations do marketing and communicate with their customers. The way of detailing everything in advance in a marketing campaign no longer served the environment where everything is online. Therefore, the agile way of working attained an ambitious goal, a team with mutual trust, creativity to reach the goal in different ways, and models to enable an iterative way of proceeding. Expert 3 demonstrates that in their organization, low hierarchy and open working environment have been underlined for about 10 years. Everyone has the freedom to work with things that they know and have an interest in wherever they want to. No processes are controlling or ordering people. Also, weight is in maintaining responsibility to react to things that need to change. Moreover, the responsibility to make decisions lies in the hands of the employee, although if the work cannot be done the way wanted, help is always available.

> *"Organizations do not know how to be online; they use the same tactics as in the traditional side of media, which does not work. That is why we wanted to find a way to be visible regardless of the changing environment."* Expert 3.

Expert 4 reasons that, globalization and constant change are ongoing. The services and products must be built in a way that does not consume energy and resources as radically as it could. Therefore, the management acknowledged the necessary changes to make the organization's goals a reality at the organizational level. Expert 4 outlines that their organizational structure is flat with decision-making being delegated to the experts with the best knowledge of the matter. Although, they have assigned responsibilities and some managers are in charge if something occurs or is desired. However, these so-called managerial positions are based on helping employees to succeed in their job. Moreover, there is no command, the measures are based on consent and decisions are made flexibly in teams who have the ability to make them. Therefore, the hierarchy is based on responsibility issues.

Expert 4 describes that they hold experimental laboratories, that experiment with different management models and how people can do more meaningful work more efficiently, to leave more free time. Through experimentation, it was acknowledged that employees are individuals who should lead their work. Therefore, employees may choose how they want to work, when, where and with

what tools and technologies. In a team, the matters are discussed and agreed on together. Furthermore, the way of working is as comprehensible as possible, jargon is avoided, and stakeholders are addressed intelligibly. Expert 4 also reasons that better conditions to succeed are obtained from employees doing what they desire.

> *"People are the most important resource in the world, their job is to make decisions that are important to other people." Expert 4.*

Expert 5 notes that the agile methodologies were attained in their organization because they wanted to work in a modern and new way with methodologies that are proven to function. Furthermore, Expert 5 describes that agile methodologies are at the centre of their way of working, including data-driven, goal orientated and effective approaches. Expert 5 also points out that their key is to work one increment at a time so that there is a possibility to react to changes, adapt, and prioritize tasks. Also, it is noted that even if agile methodologies take away time from unnecessary planning, it does not mean there is no planning at all. There is always a strategy that is followed, which is always considered to be able to reflect actions on strategy and goals.

Expert 6 describes that the construction of the entire business and marketing strategy began when they personally joined the team. Moreover, at the same time marketing started implementing and building an agile model according to which to operate. Besides, agile methodologies were firstly implemented in the coding team, who have been working in an agile way continuously through a Kanban model. The marketing and other business functions aim to utilize the same approach and cycles. Moreover, Expert 6 states that they have implemented an agile methodology to marketing in a previous workplace with excellent results. Therefore, it was reasoned that through the knowledge and previous convincing experiences, the continuation of using and developing the methodologies further in a new marketing team was a natural choice.

Expert 6 explains the main methodologies include monitoring analytics and maintaining various measurement systems closely, intending to get a better picture of what works and what does not. At the same time, work is managed through several agile practices and tools. Also, transparency is attained throughout the team, one can monitor the progress of projects and test on a relatively fast schedule. Nonetheless, Expert 6 notes that they have a quite small team, which enhances agility itself.

Expert 7's organization started implementing agile methodologies as a whole at the start of 2012. The idea behind the implementation was that the decision-making process would be faster and more straightforward, without unnecessary hierarchy, enabling decision-making to teams that know the most about the matter. Moreover, Expert 7 reasons that before it was complicated in situations where someone had an idea, and they needed to wait for a team of managers to discuss and give approval, which could take even months. The system was too bureaucratic and led to smaller projects not even being started because of complicated processes that take time. Decisions can be now made more

adjustably; employees have more decision-power as they have better knowledge of the project. It is permitted for a project manager to decide what is needed to do, and unnecessary meetings can be cancelled as the methodologies allow open communication.

4.2 Agile practices

Expert 1 describes that at first, they did not work under any specific model, they attained different practices that worked for them. They started the process by only utilizing agile practices in the mornings when they worked together in the same room. After a while, the way of operating agile only half of the time appeared challenging since employees had normal tasks and separate agile tasks on their table. Therefore, the marketing department decided to implement an agile approach as a whole to manage the work tasks more efficiently. As mentioned, the organization follows a Safe model, which consists of practices such as the Agile Release Train, Program Increments, Agile Teams, Portfolio, Backlog and Value Stream. The Safe model was selected by the organization, possibly because there are various technological functions in the organization and the model seems to fit technological development well. These functions are demanding, requiring accurate implementation and timetables, tying several people, and enduring less flexibility than marketing. In marketing, they aim to follow an adjusted model, while maintaining the same timetable, documents, and tools with the organization.

More precisely, Expert 1 demonstrates that they follow 2-week sprints, which are defined beforehand. Although, now in the Safe model, the increments last for 8 weeks. The process works as collaboration with business units, there is a cycle on how the other business operations get involved in the process. Firstly, marketing functions identify their own goals, and then business operations prioritize the process, after which the business operations define what are the final tasks to whom. That way the process is transparent for everyone. Although, Expert 1 says that the Safe model is not as flexible as their agile process before.

While following the Lean methodologies, Expert 2 clarifies that they do not have certain goals of how often to keep meetings or such. When the projects are done, the next one is started. Although, they do keep the communication continuous, and it is stated that close communication is the key to success. Furthermore, Expert 2 describes that before the Covid-19 pandemic, they would be in close contact with employees and customers through meetings that could last for a day. Now the way of working has drastically changed as most of the employees work remotely. Besides, Expert 2 explains that the agile process includes a great amount of testing and analysis. There may be for example three versions that are tested to secure the optimal selection. Resulting in that even if one of the versions would be more liked by the team, the results hold more weight. Therefore, when the results come in, the changes can be made immediately. Expert 2 notes that

the best projects are long-lasting so that it can be seen how a certain message or audience works.

Expert 3 describes that in 2020 they have been focusing more on developing and conceiving a clear way of working with customers and partners. The new concepts attain agile methodologies strongly. They follow a sprint model, which starts with defining an ambitious goal that might not be even achievable but works as a direction on what should be done. Moreover, the tasks are listed and prioritized based on which tasks are the easiest, most important and realistic to implement and bring the most value. The tasks can be for instance developing a collaboration, social media channel, or a message to a customer. Furthermore, Expert 3 explains that their sprints last for two to three weeks, throughout which the team members are in constant communication so that everyone knows where the process is at, and whether there are any problems or need for help. After the sprint is done, the whole team reflects on the sprint; what went well, what is taking them closer to the initial goal, how was the collaboration, what could be developed, is there a need for changes, and what is the overall feeling of the project. After that, a new sprint starts. Besides, Expert 3 demonstrates that they sometimes define roles such as Scrum Master in a paper. But it is also reasoned that the role names do not matter that much in practice, since it is more about who can succeed in a certain role.

Expert 4 illustrates that their marketing activities require knowledgeable individuals, and the manager enables the team to succeed. In practice, the process follows a traditional Kanban method with one-week sprints. On Mondays, they start with a meeting to define what is to come in the upcoming week using Trello as a tool for the Kanban board. The set-up of Kanban is portrayed to be traditional, holding the Product Backlog on the left, moving the tasks from left to right when put into work, practically dividing tasks, and nominating team members. The tasks could be divided into columns addressing content production, graphic design, coding, or visualization. Therefore, the process is ongoing, moving from left to right until the set goal is met. During the week, the team meets every day remotely or in-person to go through how things are progressing. On the far right of the Kanban board is the Retrospective Meeting, where the process is evaluated by seeing how it went, what went well, where it failed, why it failed, what can be learned and how would we do it better the next time.

Expert 5 explains that their practices have taken pieces that were proven to be suitable for their needs from different frameworks. Their framework holds four-week sprints, sometimes two-week sprints, that start with Sprint Planning and ends with a Retrospective Meeting. The length of the sprint depends on the project and the team, if collaboration is done for instance with a startup organization, a sprint of two weeks might be enough. In between, they hold a 15-minute Scrum meeting in the beginning of each week to address the possible bottlenecks and current progress. Moreover, each week is demonstrated to be finalized with a weekly report including achievements and progress of the week that will be further discussed at a Scrum Meeting. Trello program is utilized throughout the sprint as a Kanban board. Lastly, the initial goals and strategy are evaluated

monthly in a Retrospective Meeting and further defined based on current data and information to enable better decisions.

Expert 6 describes that they use a mixed method of Kanban and Scrum, including Kanban board with a backlog of tasks and their process. Furthermore, the Kanban board includes sections of what is under work and what awaits approval, analysis, or review. Moreover, some sections aim to make it visible for the whole team, what kind of tasks and projects are currently in process, what is undone and what are the next steps. Through the board, the organization and prioritization of the whole process can be done. Besides, Expert 6 demonstrates that they have not defined a specific sprint time, although it is suggested that possibly in the future, marketing functions will work with one to four-week cycles. Therefore, for marketing teams, the agile framework appears as a mix of Kanban and Scrum. Thus, Expert 6 indicates that for marketing functions it is crucial to discover the most suitable and functional practices out of different models. Moreover, Expert 6 states that the agile practices include Daily Meetings, where questions: what you have done yesterday, and what will you do today, are asked from everyone. Also, Retrospective Meetings are held every two weeks.

> *"There are no models that are ready for implementing them directly as they are. It always requires customization" Expert 6.*

Expert 6 further explains that the Kanban board enables them to see that the tasks that are done, impact the whole development of the business, as easier or the most interesting tasks cannot be chosen freely. The board motivates to do business-oriented decisions and actions. Furthermore, Expert 6 reasons that the Kanban based method was chosen because it enables transparency extremely well. Also, the process is simple and easy, without as many moving parts as there are for instance in Scrum, where the process and roles are very detailed. Expert 6 illustrates that the Kanban based hybrid model they follow allows the team have less commitment to the model so that the model does not directly control too much.

Expert 7 notes that the practices they use depend a lot on the project. Therefore, Expert 7 reasons that they do not use all the practices in all projects, some projects might utilize more practices that concentrate on support and open communication. Although, Expert 7 highlights that the official Scrum protocol defines that if the events are not fully utilized, Scrum is not practised. Thus, Expert 7 highly emphasizes that probably no organization or team is operating Scrum precisely. Moreover, elements and practices are taken from different frameworks to adapt to activities better. Expert 7 describes that in some projects they use the practices of Scrum including for instance Sprint Planning, Retrospective, and Daily meetings. Also, a Kanban board is utilized in all projects, in a way that the team members have their individual Kanban boards and then a mutual Kanban board for the whole team. Expert 7 notes that the Kanban board allows them to keep track of the projects' development in real-time. It also helps the team members to focus on the right matters. Furthermore, Expert 7 expresses that agile philosophy is that it seeks to do value-creating tasks. Therefore, for instance the

deadlines are not forced if the tasks create value. On the other hand, if the project is regulatory, the team makes the decisions on what they can do during a sprint.

4.3 Perceived benefits and challenges of agile methodologies

4.3.1 Benefits

Expert 1 notes that in the beginning they experienced benefits such as less need to inform people when the whole process is working, and everyone is aware of the current situations. Therefore, transparency among employees and stakeholders has gotten crucially better through the practices and certain documentation. Expert 1 also expresses that the agile approach has helped enormously in the well-being of employees as they now have a clear vision of what is expected, they can settle down to focus on delivering those tasks. Besides, as the results come in fast cycles and tasks do not stay put in place, working becomes more rewarding. Also, people have been enjoying working together and talking with each other, which has resulted in less resistance. In the organization, they have noticed considerably better results when employees focus on a few projects at a time rather than aiming to advance several objects when usually none of them progresses.

> *"Efficiency and pleasure in one package" Expert 1.*

Expert 2 discusses that the frequent measurement, analysis and testing makes it easier to justify the process. Also, from the perspective of a creative, Expert 2 explains that the methodologies are highly satisfying because it allows the possibility to test ideas and accept that the first draft might not be perfect. When everything is possible, ideas can be tested. Besides, it is seen that agile methodologies are a great resource when there are sudden changes in the whole business environment. Expert 2 explains that the organization has not faced any breaks, as the continuity of change is always present even when the other businesses may need to reconsider their actions.

Expert 3 expresses that it has been highly satisfying working with an agile organization compared to previous experience in a more traditional working environment. Moreover, it is noted that with the agile approach, planning, moving forward with the ideas, getting feedback, testing and further editing is more efficient. Consequently, through experience, Expert 3 notes that there is a high belief that agile methodologies generate better results. Moreover, the employees have more freedom and possibilities to focus on tasks they are interested in. Through the methodologies, they can react to the changing environment without concerns.

> *"We did a project where agile approach was implemented in a situation where the customer knew what they wanted but they did not know how to proceed. It became a success story. We tried different approaches with fast cycles to find the right*

ones to progress with. The results were extensive visibility, increased understanding of marketing benefits throughout the organization, better organizational structure, and clearer operations." Expert 3.

Expert 4 specifies that the benefits include the fact that when working in a team, each team member knows the work situation of others in addition to their own. Besides, the bigger picture is visible, which may develop everyone's proficiency as a marketer. Also, the workload and progress are visible, which enables the manager to assess whether the workload is appropriate. The Kanban board makes it possible to adjust the blocks daily. Therefore, if something is not moving on the board, resources can be reinforced. Expert 4 notes that when you operate in the short term and evaluate daily with the whole team, there are fewer possibilities to outperform even at an individual level. Hence, when following agile principles and monitoring daily, unnecessary activities are eliminated.

"When you go through the process systematically, you know how it goes, you know how it went through the Retrospective meeting, you try to make each thing a little better and learn through it." Expert 4.

Expert 5 indicates that one of the main benefits of agile methodologies is transparency. Thus, all participants in a project are aware of how the process is progressing, and everyone can be aware of where the money is spent. Besides, there is a trace of everyone's tasks and the work done. Moreover, Expert 5 reasons that communication, which comes automatically through following the practices, increases transparency, and enables people to stay on track and removes the unnecessary hassle. Furthermore, the agile methodologies enable the creation of better decisions based on accomplishments and failures, which are treated as lessons to learn. Nevertheless, Expert 5 notes that the method has increased efficiency and customer satisfaction since the process is linear and clear to the customer.

Expert 6 explains that alignment, in general, is one of the biggest benefits of following agile methodologies. Moreover, Expert 6 argues that the agile approach brought transparency, collaboration, a decrease of hassle, customer satisfaction, speed, and better communication in their old workplace. Thus, the team is in total agreement with what they are doing and what they want to accomplish. Also, transparency as a benefit is mentioned, which increases equality among employees and removes unexpected surprises. Moreover, it is recognised, which things work, for which customers and on which platform.

"When everyone is working around the same model, information flows smoothly, and everyone is playing the same game aiming for the same target." Expert 6.

Expert 7 reasons that the greatest benefits of agile methodologies include the fact that real value is created. Also, the agile methodologies help to align with customers, for instance, by ensuring that the project focuses on what the customers

desire through continuous communication, precise plans, and the ability to adjust if business environments change. Moreover, the ability to change and adjust throughout the process makes it possible to develop and change direction at any time based on up-to-date information. In addition to the better decisions made, following an agile approach saves a lot of time for managers to focus on leading the individuals. Furthermore, Expert 7 reasons that agile methodologies enforce people to leave their comfort zone with the aim to become independent and self-directive. For instance, in a Scrum framework, the team includes people who decide the task, people who decide how to do the tasks, and a project manager who helps the team to solve how to do it.

4.3.2 Challenges

Expert 1 describes that there have been various challenges along the way. Mostly regarding people's doubts about whether the methodologies work and how they will be implemented. Besides, concerns of the increased amount of work was a challenge at first as employees were worried that additional tasks might suddenly appear to the backlog. The early resistance also came from the managers who oversaw their teams while trying to look after the teams' resourcing, which resulted in general friction. Furthermore, Expert 1 reasons that it is hard to calculate results coming from agile methodologies as it is difficult to define clearly what the factor is. Likewise, Expert 1 mentions that the next challenge is, how to get to the next level and include stakeholders to follow the agile methodologies, as for now, they are working in a traditional way with partners.

> *"It is constant adjustment, but so is normal work life. It is not about throwing rules in and then it works perfectly. Let us say that, where there are people, there is hassle. We would never return to the old way of working as we have proceeded a lot further"* Expert 1.

Expert 2 reasons that challenges can occur when different organizations are not as agile. Therefore, a functional entity depends highly on the nature of the organization, for instance, whether the person with the highest position has decision-making power. Likewise, whether a team can proceed based on their own decision, if the partner organization is not as agile, there might be some trouble from the agile organization's side on who has the decision-making power. Otherwise, Expert 2 describes that the challenges are usually related to practices and work culture. Lastly, Expert 2 notes that measuring the impact of agile methodologies in marketing is challenging since more tactic approaches are easier to measure than for instance brand image.

Expert 3 reasons that it may be difficult to define what is agile, and which things must be followed or attained to officially be working in an agile way. Also, Expert 3 demonstrates that in the business-to-business field, there is a need to balance with upcoming trends, as something that they have adapted several years ago might be relevant to more traditional organizations now. Although,

Expert 3 states that currently, most organizations are open to new ways of working. Also, one of the expressed challenges was resistance towards a new way of working, and how the implementation should be started without an organizational conflict.

Expert 4 proposes that it may become a challenge to work in an agile way when external people are added to the process, which might lead to difficulties in scheduling. It is reasoned that being agile does not always mean that everything occurs faster, it can also appear as a slower process. Also, external people might not be fully committed to their work input. Expert 4 notes that if they feel like the project is not going to work, they immediately stop them, reasoning that bad projects usually remain unfinished because of delays or blocks in the system that are not in place. Lastly, Expert 4 outlines that in their case, marketing was never measured in full before attaining agile marketing, which has made it impossible to measure the results of agile methodologies' impact.

Expert 5 expresses that if partner organization has been stiff, there have been challenges with committing to following the methodologies. Usually, it is not only about marketing but the whole organizations' understanding and approach to agility, which is required. Therefore, the whole organization must commit and comprehend that the agile methodologies work in a certain way and it must be respected. Expert 5 reasons that some organizations simply are not ready or capable to change.

Expert 6 expresses that in their current organization, there were no challenges in adopting agile methodologies. Although, Expert 6 explains based on earlier experiences that in older and more traditional organizations the agile methodologies may not be known by the employees and the management, which requires training. Furthermore, there may be old structures and processes that the employees must grow out of and adopt working in a new way. Thus, Expert 6 notes that when a suitable model and approach is adopted, it works well. The process takes time to develop, and after a few years, it will feel natural. Therefore, Expert 6 reasons that especially in a large organization, changing the way of working to agile may likely take at least half a year.

Expert 7 notes that in a large organization there may be a clash between different functions if the same models and practices are not followed. Moreover, Expert 7 justifies that it may be challenging if for instance Scrum events are followed strictly in a project that they do not work for. Therefore, Scrum events such as meetings may take unnecessary time from more important tasks. It is better to adjust practices and models depending on the project. Thus, Expert 7 describes that they often discuss the suitability of the practices with the whole team and their desires. Besides, Expert 7 reasons that the agile approach may be short-sighted if teams follow short sprints, which might lead to the team not considering the long-term goals and the end vision when working with smaller projects.

> *"What is agile? Agile is very difficult to define; agile can be an agile mindset, agile practices, agile frameworks, agile tools, many different perspectives."* Expert 7.

4.4 Requirements of agile methodologies

Expert 1 notes that in the beginning adopting agile methodologies requires courage to jump into the unknown and try. Also, the whole organization must be open to change. Moreover, Expert 1 states that it may be beneficial to start with one whole and then extend to acknowledge that it works.

Expert 2 indicates that agile methodologies require certain dynamics and uprightness, depending on how much the other people involved in the project need the support. Therefore, self-direction, the ability to take responsibility, being able to decide and take the initiative is a must. Moreover, Expert 2 notes that being agile requires a whole hierarchical change in the organization, where for example a team can proceed with their work without bureaucracy. Furthermore, Expert 2 notes that the most important thing is linear communication, which enables the identification of matters in need of assistance and other difficulties that ought to be resolved.

> *"It is highly important to acknowledge the core of the brand and have everyone agree on what the campaign aims to promote and what are the main abilities of the brand. After the areas of development and the objectives have been identified, the process continues to generate first sketches as soon as possible to enable first feedback. It is crucial to maintain transparency and openness throughout the process. Also, everyone should clearly know what the goal of the project is." Expert 2.*

Expert 3 suggests that the process of adopting agile methodologies requires time, experiments and change of attitudes. Also, the methodologies require full trust among the team members so that the process is transparent, open, and ongoing. Besides, there should be a clear and ambitious enough goal, to ensure the process is moving towards a significant benefit to the organization. Moreover, the methodologies require tolerance for failures as the methodologies direct to test and learn from mistakes. When there is a team with mutual trust, aiming for an ambitious goal, who take failures as an opportunity, it enhances results. Besides, Expert 3 recommends spending time among the team and getting to know each other to make tolerating uncertainty effortless. Characteristics such as stress tolerance and patience are noted.

> *"For instance, a goal of 10 000 new Instagram followers is not an ambitious goal enough and does not directly affect the business." Expert 3.*

Expert 4 outlines that working in an agile way requires self-direction and responsibility from the team members. The team members must be self-directed in their work, know what is being done and how to do it. Because, when there is a lot of freedom, there is more responsibility. Thus, Expert 4 notes that no one is perfect which makes open and honest communication important. Therefore, team members who have difficulties can express that right away. Moreover, certain freedom

requires longer orientation where the new employees must have a proactive, social, and curious attitude. Then the newcomer may understand what they want, and further, conditions and tools can be provided accordingly.

Expert 5 describes that depending on the organization and how broad it is, agile methodologies require different levels of comprehension and control. Although, it is suggested that the organization demands to find their own way of working agile. Moreover, Expert 5 reasons that there must be certain access to data to be able to practice the data-driven approach as agility leans increasingly on data. If there are no sources of data to look at whether the project can succeed, there are practically no abilities to practice agility. It is suggested that the minimum source requirement is Google Analytics, but with access to customer relationship management systems and detailed customer data, there is a higher chance to succeed. Besides, Expert 5 explains that the agile methodologies require close cooperation and commitment from the whole team. If the methodologies are practised with customers, a commitment and understanding of the methodologies is a must.

Expert 6 expresses that the most important ability is transparency, which enables everyone to see the process and express challenges if occurred. Thus, transparency must come from the individual as well as from the whole team in a new way. The team must maintain a mutual trust for sharing information among the members, even when sometimes there may be some jealousy of their own roles and tasks. Hence, communication must be open and honest. Moreover, agile methodologies require the ability to change, and withstand change, in addition to, readiness to test and experiment. Therefore, having an agile mentality, in general, is highly important allowing willingness to try new things and understanding that everyone can fail to some extent. Thus, one of the most crucial requirements in agile is having clear goals, metrics, and reliable analytics to be able to gain data, measure, analyse, and test. As agile methodologies are exceedingly based on working towards a goal, a vague process makes the whole operation sticky. Besides, even wilder ideas may be tested as nothing develops unless there is a mandate for the whole team to try new things. Therefore, Expert 6 notes that if old ideas are used with agile practices, there will not be an excellent outcome. But if testing is enhanced, there may be an exceptional success.

> *"I would invest as much as possible in data, analytics and measurement skills to make it work." Expert 6.*

Expert 7 notes that when practicing agility, there must be mutual trust and open communication within a team. Also, from the project manager's point of view, it requires more of a leader than a strict manager approach to management. Thus, the manager must be open to giving the team big goals for them to be able to direct themselves and find the best way to move towards the goal. The project manager holds the responsibility to enable the process and motivate and advise the team. Hence, the exaggerated idea of the project manager is to delegate the team to accomplish all the tasks the project manager ought to do. Expert 7 describes that it does not make sense for managers to make decisions on matters

that are known better by other individuals of the team. Furthermore, Expert 7 argues that in large organizations with many functions, the models should be the same throughout the organization. When there are many functions, and different teams following different project management models, it is extremely difficult to adjust the work throughout the teams if some use different deadlines and practices.

4.5 Agile in marketing

Expert 1 suggests that agile methodologies work in marketing as well as in other functions. Moreover, Expert 1 explains that the concerns of marketing requiring more creative actions or less regulation are not valid. The greatest benefits they have gotten in marketing are from discussions, the share of information and abilities enabled by their way of working. Hence, Expert 1 states that their marketing functions have been able to produce more than before and focus more on creating working delivery.

> *"Even if marketing is not the first place to try agile methodologies, I would encourage everyone to try as it works excellently for us, people are pleased, and results are great." Expert 1.*

Expert 2 expresses no reasons, why agile methodologies would not suit marketing. Moreover, it is described that agile methodologies suit marketing as fine as anything else. Expert 2 explains that there are similar factors in marketing as in software development, which makes using the agile methodologies reasonable. Besides, marketing does not hold a wrong or right way to do it, there are only better or worse ways to do it. Expert 2 suggests that from a marketing point of view, it is important to ensure that the team shares the same vision as the general public. Therefore, research about the right vision should be maintained to validate the decisions since marketing is not done for the organization but the consumers. Furthermore, Expert 2 indicates that they have gotten better marketing results from the use of agile methodologies in several cases. The most rewarded case resulted in an enormous amount of visibility, added value, increased customer satisfaction, innovation, and success.

> *"Change is so continuous nowadays that you cannot claim that things are so static that there wouldn't come any turnovers" Expert 2.*

Expert 3 reasons that agile methodologies fit marketing and its main objectives logically. Besides, Expert 3 suggests that marketing and information technology share similar features. In software development, the project should not be done with one enormous release as technology develops continuously. Likewise, as marketing communication channels evolve, consumers' behaviour changes constantly, the competitive landscape transforms and the whole world rotates.

Therefore, Expert 3 argues that even a marketing campaign set to run in three months is a risk. Especially in a situation of a global pandemic, if there is no ability to change direction, the organization is in trouble. Consequently, it is safer to operate in a way that allows frequent adjustment. Moreover, Expert 3 states that it is not about choosing today, what a campaign looks like in a month and then waiting for results. The process must be aware of the environment and keep on moving, adjusting, and recreating at any moment if surprising events occur.

> *"We start from simple and evolve in a way that if technology develops, we can develop with it and always proceed to do better than we can currently imagine."* Expert 3.

Reflecting on how marketing is traditionally done, Expert 4 acknowledges that normally there is a year clock, an annual plan, and measures that occur in a year. Expert 4 explains that it is surreal as the world is changing much faster. Therefore, if the marketing processes are heavy it is a constant conflict with the world, customers, society, technologies, and digitalisation, which are changing extremely fast. Expert 4 reasons that agile methodologies enable a more efficient, effective, and faster way to practice marketing in a shorter period. In their organization, plans are made a maximum of a quarter ahead for them to be in sync with sales measures and support. Hence, Expert 4 describes marketing for the upcoming 3 months is planned at a 60 % level and 40 % is completely ad hocked.

> *"If you are thinking about traditional marketing with an advertising agency. The customer comes in and tells you what they would like to achieve, what the target group is, what are the measures, in which channels, and what are the moving parts. The advertising agency takes the booth, we see it after 2 weeks, we give feedback, again the time of 2 weeks, either we start working forward or start from the beginning. There is no point in doing things like that, time is wasted terribly."* Expert 4.

Expert 4 suggest that instead of creating a marketing idea in two weeks, the ideas ought to be moved forward, tested, tried out, to cover what works and what does not to further revaluate and reinforce the ones that work. Expert 4 believes that agile methodologies may be suited for marketing better than anything else. Because, nowadays consumers are quick, therefore guessing what they are thinking is slow and inefficient. Furthermore, the more data and information organizations and people have, the more informed decisions they can make. Marketing measures must be targeted based on experiments and data to be able to make an impact. In Expert 4's team, the adaption of agile methodologies in marketing has resulted in quicker results, and better abilities to reason that marketing is producing an enormous number of leads and new customers. Therefore, currently, they know that marketing is working and bringing in returns. Lastly, Expert 4 mentions that partners and consultants have noted that they have never witnessed such superior results.

"I wonder, why people or companies who do marketing work do not use agile methodologies." Expert 4.

Expert 5 expresses that agile methodologies suit marketing exceptionally well, although most probably because marketing has been changing crucially through the recent years. Moreover, Expert 5 reasons that the evolving of marketing can be seen as becoming more like software development, as it is for instance more data-driven. Now it is easier to practice marketing in an agile way, as opposed to ten years ago. Therefore, Expert 5 suggests that agile methodologies may be applied to marketing in many ways, considering that the frameworks may need to be adjusted. Expert 5 demonstrates that there have been positive results detected in marketing after adopting agile methodologies in their organization. Although, as mentioned already before, it is difficult to measure and define the results. Besides, marketing practices are now easier to justify while the results are visible to other functions in an organization, and to other stakeholders. Therefore, the value of marketing can be proven. Lastly, Expert 5 notes that with the agile methodologies, they have witnessed increased employee and customer satisfaction, and that way better results in marketing.

"In my previous workplace schedules did not hold, the unnecessary hassle was common, communication was lacking, customers were not satisfied, and no one knew what the others were doing." Expert 5.

Expert 6 expresses that agile methodologies can be applied to marketing. Although, it is noted that after reading theory or taking training from a software developer about agile methodologies, they may seem difficult and unsuitable. Therefore, Expert 6 reasons that the adaption of agile methodologies to marketing requires having the ability to find own ways to create a model that fits. Also, Expert 6 describes that for instance, a clean Kanban model may not be that suitable for marketing means, as the tasks may not move similarly as with software development. Therefore, Expert 6 suggest a mix of Kanban and a sprint model for marketing with longer timespans. Furthermore, Expert 6 describes the experience in another organization where agile methodologies were followed in marketing. The adoption of agile methodologies in the organizations' marketing saved an enormous amount of time compared to the old ways. Also, the adoption streamlined operations and increased business growth and cost-effectiveness for all digital marketing.

Expert 7 suggests that marketing may utilize general agile tools, practices, and settings. Moreover, Expert 7 discusses that a large project should be divided into parts and tested throughout the project before the results are published. For example, if there is a communication style, instead of putting it out to all customers, it should be tested with a small audience at first. Also, with advertising, one advertisement should not be put alone all around, on the contrary, various advertisements should be tested to see which work and where. Thus, Expert 7 states that marketing actions should occur little by little so that non-working ideas are thrown out and working ones are developed and tested further. The decisions

should not be based on suppositions of what the consumers want but on real results.

> *"A scary thought is that someone in marketing would plan a campaign to be run in a year and the environment changes completely, then the whole work input of a whole year is wasted"* Expert 7.

> *"At Spotify, where they follow agile methodologies by dividing each sector into small divisions, and every time they want to develop something new, they start with a very small function and test it with a small audience of customers. If the function is desired, the audience is increased, and tested again until the function is modified and tested enough."* Expert 7.

4.6 Synthesis

To conclude all the findings, firstly the research reviews the research question of what factors motivate the organizations to adopt and implement agile methodologies for marketing purposes. The findings indicate that the main reasons for attaining agile methodologies for marketing in the teams and organizations of the interviewees were, need for more collaboration and communication, fragmented organization, desire to work in a modern and new way, need for the faster and more straight-forward decision-making process, and need for a more humane and informal way of working. Additionally, external motivation for the use of agile marketing was the need to change because of continuous change, globalization and digitalization, and promising results in other organizations. Moreover, the research gathers evidence that marketing shares similar factors with software development as it is for instance becoming increasingly data-driven, which may reason why the method suits marketing and its main objectives logically. Besides, the motivation comes from the demand to react and adjust to the current environment and customer expectations with testing and analysis.

Secondly, the research obtains evidence of what kind of prerequisites are required to use agile methodologies for marketing purposes. The main prerequisites the research reveals for using agile methodologies for marketing within the team included courage to start working in a new way and changing attitudes, certain dynamics, linear communication, ability to take responsibility and be self-directive, open communication, transparency, collaboration and mutual trust. Furthermore, from the organizational perspective, the research indicates that the organization must ensure that the processes work with the whole organization before practising agile completely. Besides, the research gathers evidence that there ought to be a hierarchical change with low to no hierarchy including removal of bureaucracy. Additionally, the explored prerequisites involve certain technological applications to enable measurement and analysis, access to data, clear goals, and readiness to test and experiment in general. The research displays

that for marketing practices, there may be a need to adapt and modify different agile methodologies. The research sheds light on practices that are indicated to be suitable for marketing means including sprints or short increments, the backlog of tasks, Sprint planning meetings, Daily meetings, and Retrospective meetings.

Thirdly the research reveals evidence of how agile methodologies benefit marketing practices. The benefits are widely discussed through different perspectives. From the marketing point of view, the indicated main benefits include business growth, cost-effectiveness, increased customer satisfaction, quicker results, ability to reason marketing practices better, decreased probability to outperform, ability to react to changes quickly and adjust, increased productivity, ability to focus more on creating working delivery, and better marketing results in several cases. Besides, from the employees' perspective, the perceived benefits include increased transparency and communication, higher well-being, more freedom and possibilities, everyone staying up to date, ability to learn from each other, fewer unnecessary activities, and increased self-directiveness.

Fourthly, the research states findings in the light of what kind of challenges an organization faces in using agile methodologies for marketing purposes. The research revealed challenges of practising agile marketing involving resistance, the concern of the increased amount of work and friction, difficulties to calculate and measure the impact of agility, challenge of working with partners who work differently and are not as agile, difficulties in adaption, learning out of old processes and structures, and difficulties with projects where agile models do not fit well. The study indicates that the biggest challenge in practising agile methodologies in marketing occurs when working with external partners who do not follow the same practices.

The full summary of the research findings based on the interview protocol can be found in Table 12.

Table 12. Summary of the results.

Area of research	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Expert 7
Background	Need for collaboration among different teams. Employees were overworked with requests and the organization was fragmented.	Agile was seen as a more humane and informal way of working focusing on communication.	Continuous change in the online environment forced the organization to attain agile methodologies.	Globalization and constant change led to management acknowledging the necessary changes.	Desire to work in a modern and new way with methods that are proven to function.	Previous excellent results reasoned the attainment of agile methodologies.	Need for faster and more straightforward decision-making process.
Way of working	Collaboration transparency, experiments, simplicity and adaptability.	Testing, collaboration, waste minimization, no hierarchy and flexible roles.	Low hierarchy, open working environment, no process controlling, and individual responsibility.	Flat organizational structure, flexibility, low hierarchy, collaboration, efficiency, experimentation, data, and analytics.	Data-driven, goal orientated and effective approach enabling to react to changes, adapt and prioritize tasks.	Transparency, analytics, measurement, and collaboration.	Removing jargon, less hierarchy, open communication, adjustability, and more decision-power to employees.
Agile practices	Adjusted Safe model. Agile Release Train, Program Increments, Agile Teams, Portfolio, Backlog and Value Stream in an 8-week increment.	Lean methods. Focus on close communication and connection with customers and the team. Emphasis on testing, experiments and analysis.	Clear sprint model in 2-3-week sprints. Product backlog, sprint backlog, daily meetings, and retrospective meeting.	Traditional Kanban method with 1-week sprints. Kanban board, product backlog, daily meetings, and retrospective meeting.	Adjusted model in 2-4-week sprints including sprint planning meeting, retrospective meeting, and daily scrum meetings.	Basic Kanban method including Kanban board with backlog of tasks and processes. Daily and retrospective meetings.	Depends on the project. Kanban and Scrum practices including sprint planning, retrospective and daily meetings.
Benefits	Transparency, well-being among employees, communication, and results.	Ability to justify the process and react to changes in the environment.	Better results, more freedom and possibilities among employees. Ability to react to the changing environment without concerns.	Everyone stays up to date, ability to learn from each other, it is less probable to outperform on an individual level and less unnecessary activities.	Transparency, communication, everyone stays up to date, removes hassle, better decisions, increased efficiency and customer satisfaction.	Alignment, transparency, equality, better communication, collaboration, removes hassle, and increase of employee and customer satisfaction.	Alignment with customers, time savings, ability to change and adjust depending on the environment. More self-directive and independent people.

Chal-lenges	Resistance, concerns of increased amount of work and friction. Difficult to measure. Collaboration with partners.	Difficulties working with organizations that are not as agile.	Hard to define. Balance with traditional organizations, and resistance.	Challenge to work in an agile way with external partners. Difficult to measure.	Challenge to work with stiff partner organization.	No challenges in the current organization. Previous experiences: resistance, adoption, and learning out of old processes.	Different practices within organization. Not all agile models fit all projects. Difficult to define.
Require-ments	Courage to attain a new way of working. Should start with one whole and ensure it works for the organization.	Certain dynamics, linear communication, uprightness, self-direction and ability to take responsibility and make decisions. Hierarchical change, to contain no bureaucracy.	Change of attitudes, time, experiments, full trust, transparency, and open communication. A clear ambitious goal. Stress tolerance and patience.	Self-direction and responsibility. Open and honest communication. Orientation and training. Social, curious and proactive attitude.	Depending on the organization, different levels of comprehension and control. Access to data and technological applications.	Transparency and trust. Ability to change, readiness to test and experiment. Clear goals, metrics and reliable analytics.	Mutual trust and open communication. A manager should be more of a leader than a strict manager.
Agile in marketing	Work as well as in any other function. Increased produce and ability to focus more on creating working delivery.	Suit marketing well. Similar factors in marketing as in software development. Better marketing results in several cases.	Fit marketing and its main objectives logically. Marketing and information technology share similar features. Need for the ability to adjust and adapt to changing environment.	More efficient and effective way to practice marketing in a shorter span of time. Suit marketing better than to anything else. Quicker results and ability to reason marketing practices.	Suit marketing exceptionally because of similarities with software development. Better results, easier to justify practices, and increased customer and employee satisfaction.	Applicable with marketing but requires adaption and modification of different practices. Time savings, streamlined operations, increased business growth and cost-effectiveness.	Agile may be utilized in marketing. Especially testing and analysis to react and adjust to the environment and customer expectations. Planning campaigns should be continuous.

5 DISCUSSION

The purpose of the research is to acknowledge *what factors motivate the organizations to adopt and implement agile methodologies for marketing purposes*. To reveal findings for the main research question, the study discusses, *what kind of prerequisites are required to use agile methodologies for marketing purposes, how do agile methodologies benefit the marketing practices,* and *what kind of challenges an organization faces in using agile methodologies for marketing purposes*. Before discussing the findings, the study assembles a theoretical background on marketing in the digital era, and agile marketing that builds the basis of the study. Moreover, the study explores the use of agile methodologies in marketing currently.

5.1 Theoretical implications

The fast-technological change, increased competition, and rapidly changing demand patterns create requirements for scholars to investigate in the field of marketing. The study generates various theoretical contributions and creates a way of demonstrating the motivation of organizations to use agile methodologies for marketing purposes by evaluating their perceived prerequisites, benefits, and challenges. The existing study of agile marketing is limited. The study approaches the issues from a marketing perspective that creates an interesting aspect of using agile methodologies that have been generally studied from a software development point of view. Altogether, the empirical part of the study explores agile marketing methodologies innovatively. The research findings strongly depend on the experiences of the interviewees, as they are viewed to be knowledgeable in the field. When comparing the study findings with the theory, some interesting components may be seen.

As Hagen et al. (2019) claim, the role of marketing is increasing as it for instance operates a crucial role in identifying, assessing and satisfying customer and market expectations. Besides, Brinker (2016, pp. 21-32) points out that the scale of change in marketing is continuously faster without any signs of slowing down. Similar to the matters that were claimed by the interviewees, marketing in the current environment must be efficiently managed, yearly marketing plans may not be successful in the disruptive business environment. Likewise, to the theory, the study expresses that the motivation to become agile in many cases started from the need to adapt and keep up with the continuous change, globalization and digitalization. Furthermore, the study findings support the idea that with active marketing and through communication with customers, organizations may use their innovative potential to the fullest (Poolton et al., 2006). Although, the study findings also suggest that the motivation has arisen from the concerns within the organization including lack of collaboration and bureaucracy, whereas the theory focuses on the need to be more abreast of the times.

One crucial part of the motivation to keep on practising agile marketing is the perceived benefits of such methodologies. Rigby et al. (2016) and Moth (2014) have suggested various benefits of agile methodologies compared to the traditional management methodologies including employee satisfaction, predictability, waste minimization, team productivity, customer satisfaction, transparency and the possibility to react and adapt. The study findings express similar benefits enhancing especially increased communication, transparency, possibility to react and adapt, better results, waste minimization, and increased customer and employee satisfaction. Whereas differing from the theory, there were fewer mentions about extending technologies and becoming more technologically focused only because of the methodologies.

The agile theory focuses on specific methodologies with different practices. Scrum theory especially highlights the importance of following the method in detail (Sutherland & Schwaber, 2017). Whereas, from the study findings, adjusting practices based on the needs of the project was argued to be the most suitable way from the marketing perspective. Besides, in the study, there was only one organization that followed a precise model in all functions. Although, even in this case, there were mentions of adjusting the method separately for marketing since it was selected for suitability in the information technology department. It was expressed that the suitable method should be chosen based on experiments by the organization and team. This may contribute to the existing theory in a way that to enable agility in an organization is not dependent on following a specific detailed method, but to experiment the suitable practices that deliver for each organization, department, and team. Thus, Rigby et al. (2016) have compounded that experienced agile practitioners ought to be able to customize agile practices to fit their needs. Lastly, the importance of certain roles in agile teams, as underlined in the theory, seems to not have that much importance based on the study findings.

The study broadens the theoretical research about the challenges that may affect the motivation to be agile. The theory suggests that the main challenges of practising agile methodologies include for instance lack of customer collaboration, using the old and new methodologies side by side, lack of knowledge and training, lack of motivation and commitment, too high workload, change resistance and scepticism, and lack of communication among teams (Laanti et al., 2011; Boehm & Turner, 2005; Dikert et al., 2016; Rigby et al., 2016; Gandomani & Nafchi, 2016; Hoda et al., 2011). The study findings indicate similar challenges to the mentioned ones in the theory, especially lack of customer collaboration in terms of customers from the marketing agency point of view was seen as problematic. Also, change resistance and scepticism were included in the study findings. Whereas, the biggest challenge expressed in the study findings, difficulties of working with partners who do not follow the agile way of working, was not mentioned to be the most challenging aspect in the theory. Although, the theory also suggests challenges in excessive enthusiasm, and rearrangement of physical spaces that were not part of the study findings. Whereas the study findings revealed that defining and measuring agility is seen as challenging.

One of the main concerns of the theory is, how agile methodologies fit marketing as they are invented for software development purposes. The thesis and its study findings suggest that agile methodologies fit marketing as well as any other functions. Although, there are requirements that must be thought of when becoming agile and practising agility. The theory describes the main requirements of transparency, collaboration, openness, ability to experiment and measure, technological tools, availability of data, knowledge of agile theory, expertise, certain behaviour, changes in processes, speed and simplicity, efficiency, and active involvement. The study findings agree with the theory on certain requirements but also highlights requirements such as self-direction and ability to take responsibility, comprehension and control, clear goals and metrics, hierarchical change, and the need for a manager to take a leadership approach. Thus, as mentioned, based on the study findings, it is emphasised to find the right methodologies that suit the practitioners. As Brinker (2016, pp. 21-32) describes, agile marketing enables a chance to increase competitiveness, and enhance several areas of business, which is supported by the study findings.

This thesis contributes to the existing theory of agile marketing in several ways. Firstly, it describes the overall history of agile. Secondly, it introduces the concept of agile, which has been gaining popularity since the Agile Manifesto was introduced in 2001 (Beck et al., 2001). Besides, the thesis explores agile marketing as a concept to shed light on the agile methodologies from a marketing perspective. As agile marketing and the motivation to become agile in marketing are relatively new research areas, the thesis broadens the theoretical research about them. Moreover, it brings more empirical evidence of the usage of agile methodologies in marketing, which is highly demanded from the field of agile research. Lastly, the study may compare the motivation behind being agile in marketing context from a theoretical point of view.

5.2   Managerial implications

There can be found several managerial implications in this study for all marketing functions. As mentioned, Rigby et al. (2016) state that becoming agile may be seen as a threat by many organizations or teams. It is described that the lack of knowledge about agile methodologies can be the cause of these kinds of views. Study findings of this thesis shed light on the relationship of benefits and challenges of practicing agile marketing. Besides, the study describes requirements for being agile, which can further minimize the impact of the perceived internal challenges. The study findings may be useful for marketing functions that are attaining or are already practicing agile marketing. Moreover, the study describes possible practices for marketing functions to follow. Certain managerial implications will be presented in more detail.

Based on the research findings, the mentioned requirements maintain motivation to practice agile marketing in an effective way. From a managerial point of view, the study shows that to be able to continue being agile and following the

methodologies, certain requirements must be met by the team. Especially, communication and transparency were mentioned by the interviewees. Moreover, it was highlighted that the whole organization must be aboard the change and attain a certain mindset to accomplish a working agile environment. The study findings underline, that being agile is difficult to measure or define, it is not only a process but also a mindset. Therefore, everyone in the organization must be committed, motivated and responsible for being agile. It can be assumed that if these requirements are fulfilled, the motivation to work increases.

Another managerial implication of the study is the matter that organizations must find suitable practices within many methodologies for marketing functions. Even if the method works in other functions in the organization well, it may not work in marketing. Therefore, it is extremely important for the marketing functions to experiment and find the best practices for them, even depending on the nature of the project. Besides, from the marketing perspective, based on the study findings, it seems that the traditional way of doing marketing does not lead to great success in the current environment. The study findings encourage marketing to measure and analyze marketing operations continuously to change and adapt based on findings. Moreover, by following agile practices, the management of marketing suits the continuous re-evaluation of marketing activities.

To conclude, a marketing organization or team may use agile methodologies in an operative way, if they recognize the requirements and consider the challenges. The motivation to practice agile marketing arises from the need to be more agile to keep up with the change in the business environment and make the organization function in a suitable way.

5.3   Suggestions for future research

The marketing field is changing rapidly as digitalization is continuous, and customers and the business environment amend constantly. New technologies generate various new business opportunities and yield a competitive environment. Especially the changes in the world during the last two years have forced organizations to make enormous changes to their ways of working. Organizations are starting to acknowledge the future and aim to utilize new ways of managing marketing to please the employees, partners, customers and other stakeholders in the best possible way. Superior marketing operations are significant in the future as the environment is becoming even more dynamic. Therefore, there is a need for future studies related to this matter.

There is a lack of observational research on teams or organizations that follow agile marketing practices for a longer period. Collecting experiences and seeing the change within the organization ought to be a possibility to measure the impact of agile practices as it is revealed to be difficult to evaluate. Moreover, more case studies to build specific practical guidelines for agile marketing may be beneficial. Lastly, as the amount of people working remotely has increased,

and there have been some concerns of agile methodologies' suitability in remote working, this may be a topic to research further.

5.4 Limitations

Each study has its limitations, otherwise, the study ought to be unending. Firstly, as agile marketing is a highly trending topic among organizations, it may be assumed that some of the study participants may be affected to be over-enthusiastic about the methodologies. This may have caused a more positive conception of the methodologies. Although, the effect of this limitation is impossible to measure. Besides, the interviewees were highly skilled individuals with knowledge of digital technologies and agility. Therefore, different results may be revealed if the study focused on people that were not so experienced in agile methodologies or digital tools as individuals with less knowledge in those matters may have different opinions for instance about the challenges and requirements of practicing agile methodologies.

Secondly, although the study conveys useful insights into agile marketing, the data sample is rather limited, and the findings are generalized. As agile marketing is still a somewhat new management method, it turned out that finding suitable participants for the research was quite difficult. Possibly in a few years, such research may be easier to conduct as the methodologies are being noted by more organizations. Therefore, it is not necessarily possible to generalize the study results. Thirdly, there is a demographical limitation in the study as it focuses only on the marketing experts in Finland and specifically in the capital region.

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