

ENSURING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE THROUGH AGILE MARKETING

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Abstract

Recent events have taught us that change can occur with surprising speed. Those who had the ability to adapt to these changes continued to operate and succeed. The success of these companies was determined, among other things, by the speed of reaction to change. The rapid changes in the market impose an increasingly acute need for a marketing activity that is more agile by the day, translated into a reaction to change at least as fast by marketers. The competitive advantage belongs to those marketers and brands who can plan faster, experiment more effectively, and constantly adapt in order to accelerate success.

Today's society has become much too complex to be stabilised, structured and forecasted so agile marketing is quickly becoming a requirement for successful business operations. Agile marketing is a new approach in the field of marketing management based on a series of practices aimed at solving the rigidities of traditional marketing. Agile marketing is the current way of doing marketing in volatile markets with informed consumers and fast-reacting competition. Agile principles can support companies of any size by allowing large projects to be broken down into distinct units, continuous improvement of results, and rapid adaptation in response to internal or external environment changes.

In this context, the following paper reveals important aspects regarding the methodology and instruments of agile marketing to serve as a guide in incorporating agile practices into the marketing planification process in order to achieve changing business goals more efficiently.

Keywords: agile marketing, competitive advantage, management marketing, Scrum, Kanban.

1. Introduction

We are in the age of changes that happen in the blink of an eye. Extrapolating, we can affirm with the same conviction that this situation is valid in any market. In this context, a reaction speed that is at least as fast is required from marketers. The need for them to be more agile by the day, capable of quick and efficient reactions to the changes identified in the market, is becoming more and more acute. The competitive advantage belongs to those marketers and brands who can plan faster, experiment more effectively, and constantly adapt to accelerate success¹.

Today's society has become much too complex to be stabilised, structured and forecasted so that agile marketing has become an orientation that is increasingly required in the company's activity. In addition events such as the pandemic, climate change or the war have determined significant changes in the markets' conjuncture on which the companies operate. A more careful analysis of what constitutes agility in the marketing activity and the impact of this orientation on companies is therefore required.

Agile marketing is the current way of doing marketing in volatile markets with informed consumers and fast-reacting competition. Agile marketing is a new approach in the field of marketing management based on a series of practices aimed at solving the rigidities of traditional marketing, encouraging team members to work better together to achieve customer-centric goals and constantly identify weaknesses and unnecessary steps to quickly adjust and optimise company operations².

Unfortunately, currently, the literature does not fully elucidate the advantages and benefits of adopting agile marketing practices and their impact on improving a company's marketing capabilities. Likewise, there are

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¹ See P. Roetzer, *The Marketing Growth Hackathon: Spend Less Time Planning, More Time Doing*, in Ready North, 2018, <https://www.readynorth.com/blog/the-marketing-growth-hackathon-spend-less-time-planning-more-time-doing>, last consulted on 16.06.2023.

² See L. Moi, F. Cabiddu, *An agile marketing capability maturity framework*, Tourism Management, vol. 86, 2021, <https://fardapaper.ir/mohavaha/uploads/2021/05/Fardapaper-An-agile-marketing-capability-maturity-framework.pdf>, last consulted on 16.06.2023.

even fewer systematic studies conducted from an academic perspective on agile marketing approaches. Thus, the present study is intended to contribute to the development of the theory and to a clearer conceptualization of the benefits and specific strategy of agile marketing through the systematic analysis of the relevant literature. The study presented in the following is useful for research specialists but also for practitioners who want a more efficient and strategic marketing activity.

2. The role and place of agile marketing in a company's activity

The concept of agility was introduced in the 1930s in the automotive industry in order to divide tasks in an efficient way and carry out the activity under optimised resources conditions³. Specialists in the field, such as Jeff Sutherland, emphasise that Agile was born from Lean thinking and that Agile would represent, from a conceptual point of view, a set of Lean principles and practices. Lean is a philosophy in which the activity follows a learn-measure-build cycle, with the company performing many tests, frequently connecting to customer needs, understanding their value, and focusing its key processes on continuous improvement. Marketing activity guided by these coordinates will lead to sustainability, intelligent development and success⁴.

However, the roots of agile marketing lie in the IT field of the 90s when agile methodologies were developed for software development.

In February 2001, at a meeting in Snowbird Station, Utah, 17 software developers developed the Manifesto for Agile Software Development to address the problems of the traditional waterfall approach to software development at the time, an approach characterised by the slow process considering that the requirements were changing at a much too fast pace, a situation that ultimately led to obtaining an already outdated software⁵.

Similarly, on June 11, 2012, a group of marketing specialists met for a two-day discussion, now considered the Zero Sprint⁶, held to exchange ideas about agile marketing and concluded with the elaboration of the *Agile Marketing Manifesto*⁷ designed to provide a series of necessary coordinates for marketing teams looking to become more agile. The values promoted by agile marketing according to the above-mentioned manifesto are formulated as follows⁸:

- Focus on customer value and business outcomes;
- Delivering value as quickly and as often as possible rather than chasing perfection;
- Learning based on experience and data rather than opinion and convention;
- Consumer-oriented collaboration and not silos and hierarchies;
- Response to change and not the pursuit of a static plan.

Being agile in marketing means using data and analytics to continuously identify opportunities or solve problems in real time, quickly test, quickly evaluate results, and quickly iterate⁹.

From the dynamic capability theory perspective, agility is defined as the company's dynamic ability "to manage uncertainty [...] to effectively redistribute/redirect its resources towards value creation and to protect (and capture) the value of high-yield activities" taking into account its internal and external context¹⁰. In other words, agile marketing implies a greater responsiveness to the ever-changing consumer needs and the consequent harmonisation of marketing objectives with existing resources. This approach requires that the company has the capacity to reconfigure marketing activities in an extremely short time, to quickly adapt to the

³ See M. Nuseir, A. Aljumah, *Digital marketing adoption influenced by relative advantage and competitive industry: a UAE tourism case study*, International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change, vol. 11, issue 2, 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339789075_Digital_Marketing_Adoption_Influenced_by_Relative_Advantage_and_Competitive_Industry_A_UAE_Tourism_Case_Study, last consulted on 24.06.2023.

⁴ See *Visual guide to Agile methodologies for modern product management*, Miro Blog, <https://miro.com/blog/choose-between-agile-lean-scrum-kanban/>, last consulted on 10.08.2023.

⁵ See P. Sachdeva, D. Kumar, *Strategic Marketing: Agile Marketing Developments*, Journal of Positive School Psychology, vol. 6, no. 5, 2022, pp. 6575-6589, <https://journalppw.com/index.php/jpsp/article/view/8183/5332>, last consulted on 24.06.2023.

⁶ See Adobe Communication Team, *Agile Marketing*, Adobe Experience Cloud Blog, 18.03.2022, <https://business.adobe.com/blog/basics/agile-marketing>, last consulted on 11.07.2023.

⁷ See *Agile Marketing Manifesto*, <https://agilemarketingmanifesto.org/>, last consulted on 03.07.2023.

⁸ See A. Fryrear, *What is Agile Marketing: From Buzzword to Best-in-Class Way of Working*, Atlassian, <https://www.atlassian.com/agile/agile-marketing/what-is-agile-marketing>, last consulted on 04.07.2023.

⁹ See D. Edelman, J. Heller, S. Spittaels, *Agile marketing: A step-by-step guide*, McKinsey and Company, 2016, <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/growth-marketing-and-sales/our-insights/agile-marketing-a-step-by-step-guide#/>, last consulted on 25.07.2023.

¹⁰ See D. Teece, Margaret, Peteraf, Sohvi, Leih, *Dynamic Capabilities and Organisational Agility: Risk, Uncertainty, and Strategy in the Innovation Economy*, California Management Review, vol. 58, issue 4, 2016, pp. 13-35.

changing market situation and to satisfy the consumers' needs in a more efficient way than the competition¹¹.

Agile marketing is a strategic tool designed to implement the marketing strategy in a fluid and changing environment¹² where a quick reaction to the changes that occur is desired, and the media in which the strategy is implemented is malleable and has fast feedback loops providing the opportunity to iteratively optimise execution, quickly and inexpensively.

Adaptation to the particularly changing environment must be achieved and agile marketing allows a faster adaptation with less chance of failure by dividing the experiences into smaller, easy to implement, segments that are provided to consumers in order to obtain exceptional experiences that can be tested on smaller markets, dedicated only to a certain segment of the existing need (for example, on a city or only on a type of product user) and, subsequently, based on collected data, the experiences should be improved, then extrapolated to the entire market¹³. Agile principles can support companies of any size by allowing large projects to be broken down into distinct units, enabling continuous improvement of results, and rapid adaptation in response to internal or external environment changes.

Agile marketing involves the long-term application of an agile methodology to manage and improve the way a marketing team operates¹⁴. The marketing activity carried out in the spirit of this methodology is carried out cross-departmentally bringing together members from different departments to capitalise marketing opportunities and to modify marketing plans based on the changes in the dynamic environment¹⁵.

Compared to the traditional marketing approach that treats each stage of the marketing activity management as separate and sequential, agile methods use iterative work cycles (see Figure 1). In addition, from the traditional perspective the marketing activity must be done right from the first attempt, instead agile methods aim to provide a response as quickly as possible. The difference in the pursued objectives determines different characteristics between the two approaches in terms of adaptability, documentation, testing and collaboration.

The interest in agile marketing stems from the significant contribution to the organisation and implementation of an effective marketing activity, adapted to the current period characterised by rapid changes and complex needs, placing emphasis on frequent releases, intentional experimentation and a permanent commitment to consumer satisfaction¹⁶.

¹¹ See L. Moi, F. Cabiddu, *An agile marketing capability maturity framework*, *Tourism Management*, vol. 86, 2021, <https://fardapaper.ir/mohavaha/uploads/2021/05/Fardapaper-An-agile-marketing-capability-maturity-framework.pdf>, last consulted on 16.06.2023.

¹² See S. Brinker, *Choosing between being strategic or being agile is a false dichotomy*, *Chief Marketing Technologist*, July 11, 2018, <https://chiefmartec.com/2018/07/choosing-strategic-agile-false-dichotomy/>, last consulted on 29.06.2023.

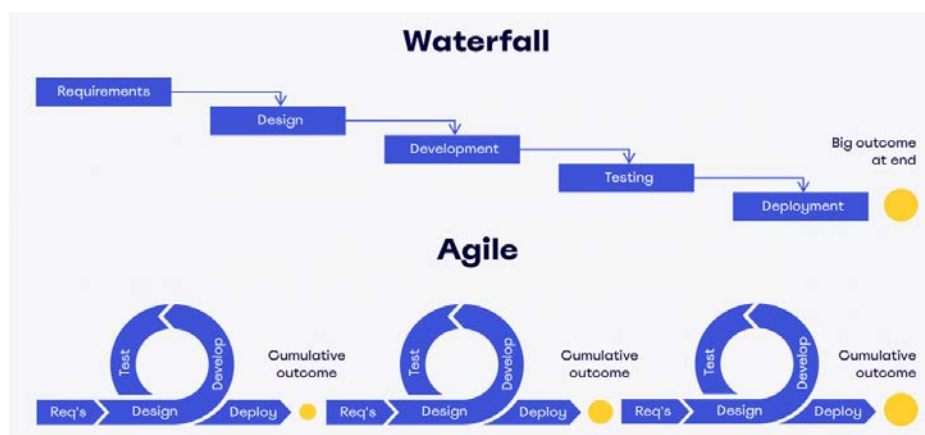
¹³ See Y. Yeret, *Defining Agile Marketing*, *Agile Sparks* blog, 2017, <https://www.agilesparks.com/defining-agile-marketing/>, last consulted on 23.08.2023.

¹⁴ See A. Fryrear, *What is Agile Marketing: Everything You Need to Know*, *Agile Sherpas*, <https://www.agilesherpas.com/blog/what-is-agile-marketing>, last consulted on 28.07.2023.

¹⁵ See P. Sachdeva, D. Kumar, *Strategic Marketing: Agile Marketing Developments*, *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, vol. 6, no. 5, 2022, pp. 6575-6589, <https://journalppw.com/index.php/jpsp/article/view/8183/5332>, last consulted on 24.06.2023.

¹⁶ See A. Fryrear, *What is Agile Marketing: From Buzzword to Best-in-Class Way of Working*, *Atlassian*, <https://www.atlassian.com/agile/agile-marketing/what-is-agile-marketing>, last consulted on 04.07.2023.

Figure 1. Traditional approach (Waterfall) versus agile approach in activities management



Source: Visual guide to Agile methodologies for modern product management, Miro Blog, <https://miro.com/blog/choose-between-agile-lean-scrum-kanban/> last time consulted on 10.08.2023

Among the major contributions that the agile perspective can bring in the company's marketing activity are¹⁷:

- *Increasing productivity* by focusing the activity on what is important for the consumer, on what better aligns with the company's objectives, as well as on the elimination of unproductive work. Teams involved in agile marketing are much better organised, they focus on quick response and iterations based on the feedback received in order to make changes;
- *Increased awareness regarding the marketing activity contribution* due to better measurement and monitoring of results.
- *Adaptability to change.* Agile marketing provides built-in adaptation mechanisms such as emphasis on iteration, focus on consumers, and the spontaneous emergence of requirements from experience. Companies that previously needed weeks or even months to get a good idea implemented into an offer for the customers have progressed to less than two weeks in which they can accomplish the same thing by applying agile techniques¹⁸.

- *Increased job satisfaction as well as talent attraction and retention.*

Agile marketing makes significant contributions to product development, marketing mix development and brand marketing through the permanent feedback it provides, through the constant market testing and retesting of ideas and communications as well as accelerating the process of delivering impact by the branding activity.

3. Agile marketing coordinates

Agile marketing involves approaching the marketing activity starting from the following coordinates¹⁹:

- *Constant response to change rather than following a plan.* Recent events have taught us that changes can occur at surprising speed, and over time we have remained with the certainty that change is constant. Companies that can quickly adapt to these changes gain a competitive advantage in the market.
- Strategic marketing planning has a special role in the marketing activity. However, in the previously mentioned conditions, an important role currently belongs to the constant monitoring of the market and, in particular, of the changes that occur in consumer behavior in favor of stubbornly implementing a marketing plan. In the current context, we are becoming aware that no marketing plan survives in its entirety the contact with consumers and their purchasing behavior. Every action needs to be filtered from the following perspective: if it

¹⁷ See J. Ewel, *The Six Disciplines of Agile Marketing: Proven Practices for More Effective Marketing and Better Business Results*, John Wiley&Sons Publishing, New Jersey, 2020, p. xx-xxi.

¹⁸ See D. Edelman, J. Heller, S. Spittaels, *Agile marketing: A step-by-step guide*, McKinsey and Company, 2016, <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/growth-marketing-and-sales/our-insights/agile-marketing-a-step-by-step-guide#/>, last consulted on 25.07.2023.

¹⁹ See J. Ewel, *The Six Disciplines of Agile Marketing: Proven Practices for More Effective Marketing and Better Business Results*, John Wiley&Sons Publishing, New Jersey, 2020, p. 13; P. Sachdeva, D. Kumar, *Strategic Marketing: Agile Marketing Developments*, Journal of Positive School Psychology, vol. 6, no. 5, 2022, pp. 6575-6589, <https://journalppw.com/index.php/jpsp/article/view/8183/5332>, last consulted on 24.06.2023.

does not benefit the end consumer, it is not a priority. Agile marketing recognizes this truth by emphasizing the need to react, first and foremost, to the current reality rather than following a plan that does not work²⁰. This does not mean that those implementing agile marketing do not plan, but planning is flexible, plans are formulated in the short term and oriented towards delivering value, being constantly subject to revision.

- *Rapid iterations and continuous improvement in exchange for large-scale campaigns*, an idea implemented through continuous task cycles and improvements made at each cycle;

- *Testing and data rather than opinions and conventions*;

- *Many small experiments in return for a few big bets*. Agile marketing reduces experiences and experiments to a smaller, much more manageable size. The tests are carried out at a small level and if a failure is recorded, it is very easy to move on to another experience. Agile marketing teaches us to fail quickly, learn from failure and constantly adapt, an adaptation with small steps, avoiding the risk of major failures.

- *Individuals and interaction instead of hierarchy*. Agile marketing requires continuous collaboration instead of hierarchy, based on constant interactions with stakeholders and customers in order to provide a clear answer to their requirements.

Under these conditions, the implementation of agile marketing in a company meets a series of characteristics without which the marketing activity cannot bear this name²¹:

- *Adaptability* to the constantly changing conditions materialised in the rapid adaptation of marketing plans in order to react to the changes in consumer needs and desires;

- *Change of mentality*. Marketers on an agile team demonstrate respect, a penchant for collaboration, continuous improvement and learning, a focus on delivering value, and the ability to quickly adapt to change.

- *Experimentation, iteration and small releases*. Agile marketing involves carrying out experiments and small launches, the team subsequently using the obtained results in the next work round.

- *Leadership that serves the team*. Agile managers support the team on the path to success, instead of being set on achieving numbers at any cost

- *Teamwork and collaboration*. The application of agile marketing requires the existence of a cross-functional team that organises itself and that performs frequent iterations with continuous feedback²². A collaborative and integrated work environment allows the development of close relationships based on trust between individuals, between departments and with customers.

- *Data-driven marketing*. The agile team will ensure that work is measurable and that they will rely on empirical evidence to make decisions.

- *Monitoring and forecasting market needs* through projections of future characteristics and trends allowing companies to respond proactively or reactively in order to increase customer satisfaction;

- *Continuous and rapid innovation pace*.

Another element that is characteristic to this type of marketing is the agile marketing team that works with all of the organisation's top-level managers, focusing their efforts towards achieving the set objectives, each of its members having the responsibility of achieving them, placing the consumer at the center of any adopted decision and constantly measuring the level of achievement of said objectives. Instead of grouping individuals by function, agile organisations prefer small, cross-functional teams able to autonomously complete projects without too much handoff between teams²³. For example, an agile marketing team working on a digital marketing campaign can include a copywriter, a graphic designer, a SEO specialist, and an analytics lead.

On the other hand, the agile marketing activity cannot be carried out without the collaboration between various individuals with various functions (research, project management, art and creation, web design, strategy, etc.), facilitated by agile software systems. Otherwise, marketing activity cannot be agile without proper software tools. Thus, there are management platforms that allow a good structuring and visibility of priorities, projects

²⁰ See J. Ewel, *The Six Disciplines of Agile Marketing: Proven Practices for More Effective Marketing and Better Business Results*, John Wiley&Sons Publishing, New Jersey, 2020, p. 15-16.

²¹ See L. Moi, F. Cabiddu, *Leading digital transformation through an Agile Marketing Capability: the case of Spotahome*, *Journal of Management and Governance*, vol. 25, 2021, pp. 1145–1177, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345312111_Leading_digital_transformation_through_an_Agile_Marketing_Capability_the_case_of_Spotahome, last consulted on 23.06.2023; A. Fryrear, *What is Agile Marketing: Everything You Need to Know*, Agile Sherpas, <https://www.agileherpas.com/blog/what-is-agile-marketing>, last consulted on 31.07.2023.

²² See A. Fryrear, *What is Agile Marketing: From Buzzword to Best-in-Class Way of Working*, Atlassian, <https://www.atlassian.com/agile/agile-marketing/what-is-agile-marketing>, last consulted on 4.07.2023.

²³ *Ibidem*.

and the rapid flow of complex tasks²⁴ - Asana²⁵, ClickUp²⁶, Monday.com²⁷, Workfront²⁸, Kanbanize²⁹, etc.

The agile marketing activity involves going through the following stages:

- *Data analysis.* The team formed for the agile marketing activity analyses the data collected, first of all, from the actual or potential consumer segments with the aim of identifying anomalies, weaknesses, problems or opportunities. Also, there are daily stand-ups at the beginning of the working day in which each team member gives a report on the objectives achieved the previous day and those to be achieved for the day ahead.
- *Testing ideas.* For each identified opportunity and problem, the team will formulate ideas for improving the consumer experience. The ideas will then be evaluated in terms of business impact and ease of implementation, and methods of efficient testing will be developed by formulating hypotheses related to them along with the values of the pursued performance indicators.
- *Conducting tests.* The agile marketing team carries out the tests during 1-2 weeks to verify the effectiveness of the proposed approach for which it has developed efficient and reliable tracking mechanisms to quickly report the performance of each test. Afterwards, review sessions will be held to review test results and decide whether to implement promising results, adapt to feedback, and eliminate solutions that don't work—all done in a very short time frame.

4. Methods used in the agile marketing activity

The main methods used in the agile marketing activity are represented by³⁰:

Scrum represents a methodology that involves implementing a project through a Sprint held over a period of 2-6 weeks with a team that usually includes 5-9 people. In order to implement complex projects, it is necessary to perform several Sprints dividing a large project into smaller projects. Each aspect of the project will be broken down into measurable objectives, thus ensuring a solid foundation for effective implementation. The involved teams will have the feeling that they are achieving their goals from the very first phases, thus being motivated for the further development of the project.

During the Scrum implementation, the involved team will be led by a „scrum master” with experience in agile techniques together with an assistant who will set priorities, define assumptions, manage backlogs, identify the necessary resources and manage „sprints”³¹. On the other hand, a „product owner” will focus on the final product of the sprint (this could be represented, for example, by a promotion campaign) and on the interests of the end consumer, the rest of the members being considered „developers”.

To achieve effective and timely communication in order to adopt effective decisions, the Scrum methodology involves holding four key events representing the components of a Sprint:

Sprint planning involves an initial meeting in which the team discusses the project components and the sprint objective formulated in measurable terms. Typically, this meeting runs for 4-8 hours (generally one hour will be allocated for each week of the sprint³²), during which the team members must be able to establish the tasks within the sprint, the estimated time for each task and the people tasked with carrying them out. Practically at the end of this meeting each member must know clearly what is the task they will be working on. In this case, it is useful for planning to be carried out on a centralised platform dedicated to project management, such as Adobe Workfront.

²⁴ See S. Brinker, *Have we entered a post-agile marketing age?*, Chief Marketing Technologist, May 31, 2022, <https://chiefmartec.com/2022/05/have-we-entered-a-post-agile-marketing-age/>, last consulted on 27.06.2023.

²⁵ See Asana official website, <https://asana.com/>, last consulted on 27.06.2023.

²⁶ See ClickUp official website, <https://clickup.com>, last consulted on 27.06.2023.

²⁷ See Monday.com official website, <https://monday.com/>, last consulted on 27.06.2023.

²⁸ See Adobe Workfront official website, <https://business.adobe.com/ro/products/workfront/main.html>, last consulted on 27.06.2023.

²⁹ See Kanbanize official website, <https://kanbanize.com/>, last consulted on 27.06.2023.

³⁰ See S. Katare, *Agile Marketing as a Key Driver to Increasing Operational Efficiencies and Speed to Market*, International Journal of Business Administration, vol. 13, no. 2, 2022, <https://www.sciedu.ca/journal/index.php/ijba/article/view/21730/13450>, last consulted on 30.06.2023; Adobe Communication Team, *Agile Marketing*, Adobe Experience Cloud Blog, 18.03.2022, <https://business.adobe.com/blog/basics/agile-marketing>, last consulted on 11.07.2023.

³¹ See D. Edelman, J. Heller, S. Spittaels, *Agile marketing: A step-by-step guide*, McKinsey and Company official website, 2016, <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/growth-marketing-and-sales/our-insights/agile-marketing-a-step-by-step-guide#/>, last consulted on 25.07.2023.

³² See A. Fryrear, *What is Agile Marketing: Everything You Need to Know*, Agile Sherpas, <https://www.agilesherpas.com/blog/what-is-agile-marketing>, last consulted on 2.08.2023.

Daily scrum (or daily standup) represents meetings held daily in a maximum interval of 15 minutes in order to evaluate the progress towards reaching the sprint goal, plan the activities for the next 24 hours and discuss possible obstacles that have occurred since the last standup. Practically every team member has to answer three questions during the meeting³³: I. What have you accomplished since the last meeting?, II. What are you working on until your next meeting? and III. What exactly prevents you from carrying out your assigned task? The daily meetings are meant to allow the team to focus their efforts on getting the job done better in the next 24 hours.

Sprint review takes place at the end of the sprint and consists in reviewing and discussing the sprint results in the presence of all stakeholders. Incomplete tasks are set aside and taken into account in the next sprint planning.

Sprint retrospective takes place in the last sprint meeting in which the team reviews the process that took place during the sprint and discusses future improvements.

Considering that environmental changes occur with a much higher frequency than in the past, this method has evolved over time in hybrid forms.

Scrum methodology has the following benefits³⁴:

- Teams are encouraged to meet regularly and discuss progress towards achieving short-term marketing objectives, which contributes to the achievement of long-term objectives.
- Teams can test, iterate and correct which contributes to increased productivity, flexibility and adaptability to change;
- Enables marketers to understand customer needs and deliver content that satisfies them, creating a long-term test-and-learn perspective.

Kanban is a methodology that supports the correct visualisation of data and leads to continuous improvement (kaizen). The Kanban methodology was created within the Toyota company in the 1940s, its name meaning „panel” in Japanese. The engineer Taiichi Ohno was the one who initiated the first Kanban board in his effort to streamline the inventory management process of the Toyota company. Thus, similar to the practice of grocery stores that stock only as much merchandise as is requested, Toyota's production teams began using kanbans (tickets) to signal to the production line when production of a larger number of parts was required.

Based on the Kanban board, the Kanban methodology allows the visualisation of stages and tasks in order to maximise the efficiency in implementing tasks. This method is based on three basic principles:

- *Workflow view* using the Kanban board where the tasks within a project are represented by tickets and columns according to the degree of completion. The simplest Kanban has three columns: „To do”, „In progress” and „Completed”. A task is represented on a note that circulates through the columns (maximum 7-10 columns) on the Kanban board. In order to structure the Kanban board it is recommended to take into account the elements that cause delays in the workflow such as approvals, reviews, transfers from one person to another or broadcasting to certain target audiences, and use them to create columns. The Kanban board must be a representation as accurate and as simple as possible of how the team work is done.

- *Work-in-progress limitation* - a maximum number of elements within a column is fixed to impose a manageable workload but also to improve efficiency. Thus, once a column reaches the maximum number of tasks no new task can be added until another task is moved from that column. Wip limitation is a particularly useful tool considering the fact that when team members aim to accomplish too many tasks, they often become inefficient.

- *Explicit policies*. Another key element in the Kanban implementation process is the formulation of explicit policies on how the team's work will be carried out. Formulating and communicating clearly how the team will work will eliminate misunderstandings and create consistency in the way of working³⁵.

- *Process analysis and improvement*.

Workflow visualisation enables better collaboration between individuals and teams in the marketing activity. Also, by setting a limit on the tasks to be performed simultaneously, the marketing team becomes much

³³ See Adobe Communication Team, *Daily Stand-Up Meetings*, Adobe Experience Cloud Blog, 18.03.2022, <https://business.adobe.com/blog/basics/daily-stand-up>, last consulted on 17.07.2023.

³⁴ See S. Katare, *Agile Marketing as a Key Driver to Increasing Operational Efficiencies and Speed to Market*, International Journal of Business Administration, vol. 13, no. 2, 2022, <https://www.sciedu.ca/journal/index.php/ijba/article/view/21730/13450>, last consulted on 30.06.2023.

³⁵ See A. Fryrear, *What is Agile Marketing: Everything You Need to Know*, Agile Sherpas, <https://www.agilesherpas.com/blog/what-is-agile-marketing>, last consulted on 03.08.2023.

more efficient.

For this methodology also, daily meetings are held (daily stand-up) with the difference that in this case the team members will not communicate the individual report, as is done in the Scrum method, instead the meeting will be focused on the Kanban board and the work to be done with an emphasis on tasks experiencing a deadlock. Retrospective meetings are also held every two weeks in which the activity carried out is analysed and elements for improving the way of working in the future are identified.

Scrumban, also known as modified Scrum, is one of the most accepted hybrid agile marketing methods representing a flexible methodology that combines practices from both Scrum and Kanban. This approach combines the flexibility and adaptability of Kanban with the structure and formality of Scrum by incorporating Scrum's sprints and Kanban's visual boards. According to this methodology, the teams will work in two-week sprints, similar to the Scrum methodology, and will visualise the entire project on a board with a maximum of wips set from the beginning, just like in Kanban. Although it is a method that can be easily adapted to the needs of different teams, some essential aspects must be preserved: daily standup meetings, workflow visualization and regular retrospectives.

Based on team structure, specific workflow and business context, marketers can select and combine Kanban, Scrum and Lean practices as desired to identify effective solutions for implementing agile marketing. Beyond the methodology that is used, it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that the success or failure of the implementation depends on the team that implements the project. Under these circumstances, the methodology must be selected and adapted according to the marketing team characteristics and its desire and ability to undergo transformations.

5. Conclusions

Conducting the marketing activity from an agile perspective provides companies with a competitive advantage in today's highly changing environment characterised by volatile markets with informed consumers and fast-reacting competition, creating an appropriate climate for cross-functional team members to work together to achieve goals centered on consumer needs and to constantly identify weaknesses and unnecessary steps in order to quickly adjust and optimise the company's operations. It is important to consider that for agile marketing implementation, businesses must have a clear idea of what they want to accomplish through this initiative as well as of the data and the technological infrastructure available to them for carrying out their marketing activity.

Of all the elements that are necessary in adopting agile marketing, people are the most important component. Creating a team of talented people who are able to work well and quickly together is crucial³⁶. The implementation of agile marketing can start with such a team and, depending on the obtained results, create more teams whose activity is focused on achieving certain objectives, focused on certain products or services starting from the objectives set by the company. Teams focused on certain products from the company's portfolio, customer segments or moments in the consumer experience can be created.

Having an agile mindset in marketing means always thinking that something could be done better. The agile process can be modified to best suit the marketing team. On the other hand, we can consider forming an agile team only when each team member can fully commit to the sprint without falling behind on other responsibilities, alternatively a different team structure can be considered, new tools can be tested or WIP limits can be adjusted - all sorts of adjustments can be made that can help the team better implement agile marketing.

Under these conditions, the documentary research carried out is intended to provide an in-depth understanding especially of the benefits that can be obtained using the agile marketing perspective to obtain competitive advantage in a constantly changing environment and to serve as a guide in incorporating agile practice into the marketing planning process to more effectively achieve ever-changing marketing objectives.

³⁶ See D. Edelman, J. Heller, S. Spittaels, *Agile marketing: A step-by-step guide*, McKinsey and Company official website, 2016, <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/growth-marketing-and-sales/our-insights/agile-marketing-a-step-by-step-guide/>, last time consulted on 25.07.2023.

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