

THE SPOTIFY MODEL AS A STRATEGIC MARKETING TOOL FOR GAINING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

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Abstract

In an organizational context characterized by uncertainty, accelerated digital transformation and increased competitive pressures, a company's ability to innovate quickly and efficiently becomes an essential element for obtaining and maintaining competitive advantage. The Spotify model, originally developed to scale agile methods in a dynamic technological environment, proposes an organizational structure based on autonomous teams, cross-functional collaboration, and a culture of continuous learning. Implementing the Spotify model can be a success factor in the activity of any type of company, this model being the basis for quickly building a consistent and complete experience for the targeted consumer segment. Ensuring a complete experience for consumers leads to retention and building a solid relationship with representatives of the target segment.

In this context, the following paper explores how implementing the Spotify model can strategically contribute to creating a sustainable competitive advantage, by stimulating innovation, increasing the reaction speed to changes and strengthening employee involvement, examining both the benefits of this model – such as operational agility, reduced time to market and talent retention – and the challenges related to its adoption in different organizational contexts. The conclusions drawn emphasize the need to adapt the model to the specifics of each organization and the importance of an organizational culture that supports the principles of autonomy, responsibility and innovation.

Keywords: agile marketing, competitive advantage, management marketing, strategic marketing, Spotify model.

1. Introduction

The current period is characterized by an unprecedented accelerated pace of innovation and technological change that has led to changes on many levels. Technological advances and access to technology have led consumers to constantly change their needs, forcing companies to change their paradigms and way of working. The increasing speed, uncertainty and complexity that characterize the competitive environment causes companies to be increasingly adaptable and agile in order to survive and, even more so, to develop.

Agile organizations have the need to always provide value to all their customers as a cornerstone of all their activities, so continuous improvement prevails at all times. At the same time, the shorter the development time of a change, the more often changes can be made that meet the latest customer needs. Thus, reaction speed is the keystone of what agility represents in the context of an organization. Traditional business practices are characterized by rigidity and extended delivery timelines, whereas the agile approach emphasizes adaptability, shorter delivery cycles, and data-driven decision-making¹.

The traditional organization of a company's activity, in general, and of marketing activity, in particular, characterized by a rigid hierarchy, structured processes, and well-defined roles and responsibilities, has ceased to be the key to success in today's reality. Developing a marketing plan involves allocating time and resources to prepare and communicate its content, with the increasing risk that by the time the activities are implemented, the environment may have already undergone significant changes. To illustrate the current pace of change, the

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¹ See Y. Yusoff, Z. Alias, M. Abdullah, Z. Mansor, Agile Marketing Conceptual Framework for Private Higher Education Institutions, International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 2019, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2019, Pg. 1052 – 1058, available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334270042_Agile_Marketing_Conceptual_Framework_for_Private_Higher_Education_Institutions last time consulted on 20.06.2024.

case of Google serves as a relevant example. Thus, according to data provided by the company's representatives, in 2023 Google implemented over 4,700 changes of varying significance, amounting to an average of 14 changes per day, all adopted following 700,000 tests². Certainly no traditional marketing plan can keep up with this pace of change³.

In this context, there is a growing need for marketers to adopt new organizational frameworks aimed at enhancing operational efficiency and minimizing resource waste, with the Spotify model emerging as a potential approach to support these objectives. The Spotify model (also known as the tribe framework) offers a way for companies operating under constant market pressure to develop and deliver a wide range of new products within shorter timeframes. Originally developed within Spotify to scale agile methods, this model has become a reference point for organizations aiming to combine agility with operational coherence. Based on concepts such as "squads", "tribes", "chapters" and "guilds", the model promotes a decentralized organizational culture that empowers small teams to experiment, collaborate and deliver value at a sustained pace.

The framework has already proven its effectiveness in renowned companies such as Spotify, Netflix, and ING, significantly improving time to market, employee engagement and productivity. We believe that implementing the tribe model can be a key success factor for any type of organization, including those operating in the social or cultural sectors. The implementation of the Spotify model stems from the need to gain a competitive advantage in the market, this new organizational approach being the foundation for rapidly delivering a consistent and complete experience for the targeted consumer segment, by leveraging various distribution and communication channels. Providing a complete consumer experience leads to greater retention and fosters strong relationships with members of the target segment.

Also, another important reason for implementing the Spotify model is the company's development. As the company evolves, it must possess the capacity to expand and grow smoothly, without disruptions or discontinuities⁴. This is especially true for small companies. A small startup is characterized by the fact that employees' roles are rather loosely defined, as they generally carry out whatever tasks are necessary to get things done. This situation is beneficial in the early days of the business; however, as the business grows, this model becomes unsustainable.

The aim of this article is to examine how the Spotify model can contribute to achieving a competitive advantage by fostering innovation, enhancing organizational agility, and strengthening employee engagement.

This paper seeks to address the following research questions:

- Which components of the Spotify model may be regarded as sources of competitive advantage?
- In what ways can this model be adapted to various organizational contexts?
- What are the limitations and potential risks associated with the implementation of the Spotify model?

To address these questions, the article will provide a critical analysis of the relevant literature and elaborate on the practical implications of its implementation.

The study provides contributions that may be of interest to managers who define the strategic direction of the business, middle managers who oversee teams, as well as the academic community, both in terms of the research opportunities it offers and in preparing future professionals in business administration and marketing for the implementation of new team management methodologies that are currently in demand in the labor market.

2. Literature review

Achieving a sustainable competitive advantage has become a major concern for modern organizations, which are facing rapid and unpredictable changes in the external environment. Traditional theories of competitive advantage, such as those advanced by Michael Porter (1985) and Jay Barney (1991), underscore the significance of strategic positioning and of internal resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and organized in a manner that enables sustained value creation (VRIO framework). These perspectives provide a solid foundation

² See R. Montti, Google Says They Launch Thousands Of Updates Every Year, Search Engine Journal, March 29, 2025, available at: <https://www.searchenginejournal.com/google-says-they-launch-thousands-of-updates-every-year/543187/>, last time consulted in 28.08.2025.

³ See J. Ewel, The Six Disciplines of Agile Marketing: Proven Practices for More Effective Marketing and Better Business Results, John Wiley&Sons Publishing House, 2020, p. 4.

⁴ See A. C. Hardy, Agile Team Organisation: Squads, Chapters, Tribes and Guilds, The Product Hub, 2019, available at: <https://www.theproducthub.io/2019/10/20/agile-team-organisation-squads-chapters-tribes-and-guilds/> last time consulted in 25.09.2024.

for understanding competitive dynamics; however, they do not fully capture the current complexity of technological and organizational transformations.

The current period is characterized by a dynamic and rapidly changing environment that has driven swift evolution within the business sector. Within the context of the digital economy and ever-evolving markets, modern approaches place a strong emphasis on agility, organizational learning capacity, and strategic adaptability. According to a study conducted by McKinsey on a sample of 2,500 individuals from various companies, 37% of respondents stated that the organizations they are part of are in the process of implementing agile transformations, whereas 4% reported that such transformations have already been fully implemented. Furthermore, 80% of the companies that have undertaken agile transformation have reported an overall improvement in performance since the initiation of these transformations⁵. Agile organizations are distinguished by flexible structural designs, iterative operational processes, and an organizational culture oriented towards continuous improvement⁶. In this context, competitive advantage emerges not solely from resource control, but from the organization's capability to innovate swiftly, reconfigure its structures, and effectively adapt to environmental dynamics.

The evolutionary transformation has brought about changes across all fields, compelling companies to adapt to these shifts and renew themselves in order to avoid stagnation. The capacity to innovate and generate value for all stakeholders compels companies to constantly adapt to the dynamics of both domestic and international markets. This involves ensuring that both individual employees and teams are granted a significant degree of autonomy and responsibility, to a considerably greater extent.

The key principles of agile strategic orientation are represented by:

- focusing on the value created for consumers – implies the continuous monitoring of their evolving needs and preferences, coupled with the ability to rapidly adapt to identified market changes.
- development through iterations – involves formulating strategic directions through incremental steps and iterative cycles. In other words, decisions are taken based on small-scale experiments and the feedback received, which enables timely adaptation.
- cross-functional collaboration – involves the cooperation of representatives from various organizational functions. This translates into bringing together, in work teams, individuals who possess diverse skills and expertise to collaborate toward achieving a common goal.
- continuous improvement highlights the notion that the marketing strategy is never final, but is instead continuously refined and adjusted in response to feedback and outcomes.
- communication and transparency enable those involved to understand the strategic direction and the progress made along the way, thereby ensuring the achievement of the established goals.

Taking these principles into account, agile organizations must ensure cross-functional collaboration in the execution of their activities, and one possible approach to achieving this is by adopting a tribe-based organizational structure, as exemplified by the Spotify model.

The Spotify model was popularized in 2012 by Henrik Kniberg and Anders Ivarsson as a scalable framework to implementing agile practices within a complex organizational environment⁷. Although it does not represent a formal standardized framework, the model provides a set of principles and structures that promote rapid value delivery, cross-team collaboration, and operational autonomy. The core components of the model include: Squads – autonomous, cross-functional teams responsible for a specific product or functionality; Tribes – groups of squads collaborating within a common domain; Chapters – professional communities within tribes that ensure alignment of competencies; and Guilds – informal communities of practice that extend across the organization to foster knowledge exchange.

⁵ See A. De Smet, The agile manager, McKinsey Quarterly, July 2018, available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/the-agile-manager> last time consulted in 25.06.2024.

⁶ See D. Rigby, J. Sutherland, A. Noble, Agile at Scale, Harvard Business Review, 2018, available at: <https://hbr.org/2018/05/agile-at-scale> last time consulted in 20.06.2025.

⁷ See N. Tsonev, What Is the Spotify Model for Scaling Agile?, Businessmap, 2022, available at: <https://businessmap.io/blog/spotify-model> last time consulted in 27.06.2025.

The model emphasizes both autonomy and alignment, two seemingly contradictory forces that, when effectively managed, generate innovation and strategic coherence⁸. The literature also highlights the model's role in fostering an organizational culture characterized by trust, transparency, and empowerment⁹.

Although the Spotify model has been adopted and adapted by numerous organizations, such as ING and Zalando, it is not without limitations. Among its main theoretical constraints are¹⁰:

- Lack of standardization – the model does not constitute a formalized framework, which may lead to superficial implementations¹¹.
- Insufficient contextualization – its success within Spotify does not guarantee effectiveness in other organizational cultures or industries¹².
- Excessive idealization – some sources depict the model in an overly idealistic manner, overlooking the real issues encountered in practice.

Despite these limitations, the model provides a valuable analytical lens for examining contemporary organizational transformations, particularly with respect to the interplay between structural design, organizational culture, and continuous innovation.

3. Research methodology

The purpose of this research is to explore to what extent the Spotify model can contribute to achieving a sustainable competitive advantage within organizations operating in dynamic environments. Given the complex and contextual nature of the subject, a qualitative approach was adopted. The study falls within the category of exploratory research, aiming to develop an in-depth understanding of how the theoretical concepts associated with the Spotify model can be translated into organizational practices that generate competitive advantage.

Documentary analysis constitutes the primary method employed in this study. The sources examined include academic literature; white papers published by organizations that have implemented the Spotify model (such as ING – one of the most notable implementations in the banking sector – and Spotify itself, as the original reference point for understanding the model in its initial form); as well as case studies and applied research reports produced by consulting firms (e.g., McKinsey). These materials were analyzed with respect to the benefits derived from adopting the model, the challenges encountered, and the adaptations required to integrate the model into diverse organizational contexts.

It is important to note that, given the qualitative nature of the research, the results are not statistically generalizable. Furthermore, access to primary data was limited, with the study relying predominantly on secondary and publicly available sources. Nevertheless, the analysis conducted provides a coherent and useful framework for understanding the strategic potential of the Spotify model, as well as relevant directions for future research, including quantitative studies or field investigations.

4. The key dimensions of the Spotify Model

⁸ See H. Kniberg, A. Ivarsson, *Scaling Agile @ Spotify with Tribes, Squads, Chapters & Guilds*, Crisp Consulting Blog, 2012, available at: <https://blog.crisp.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/SpotifyScaling.pdf> last time consulted in 21.06.2025

⁹ See M. Mankins, E. Garton, *How Spotify Balances Employee Autonomy and Accountability*, Bain & Company, 2017, available at: <https://www.bain.com/insights/how-spotify-balances-employee-autonomy-and-accountability-hbr/> last time consulted in 22.06.2025; See A. Moore, *Spotify's Organizational Culture & Strategic Considerations*, Rancord Society, 2021, available at: <https://www.rancord.org/spotify-organizational-culture-strategic-cultural-characteristics> last time consulted in 22.06.2025

¹⁰ See K. Conboy, N. Carroll, *Implementing Large-Scale Agile Frameworks: Challenges and Recommendations*, IEEE Software, 2019, available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330556190_Implementing_Large-Scale_Agile_Frameworks_Challenges_and_Recommendations last time consulted in 24.06.2025

¹¹ See A. Salamaleh, J. M. Bass, *An architecture governance approach for Agile development by tailoring the Spotify model*, *AI & Society*, 2022, Volume 37, pp 761-780, available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00146-021-01240-x?utm> last time consulted in 24.06.2025

¹² See L. Cluster, *What Is the Spotify Agile Model and Its Impact?*, Invensis – Global Learning Services, 2025, available at: <https://www.invensislearning.com/blog/spotify-model-in-agile> last time consulted in 24.06.2025

The Spotify model was developed internally within the company bearing the same name, with the aim of scaling agile methods in a dynamic and rapidly expanding organizational context¹³. Although it was not originally designed as a formal, replicable framework, the model was documented and disseminated through internal publications and conferences¹⁴, subsequently becoming a reference for numerous organizations seeking to combine agility with scalability.

The model was developed as an alternative to rigid or difficult-to-scale agile structures, emphasizing autonomy, collaboration, and continuous learning over procedural compliance. The underlying philosophy guiding the implementation of the model is expressed by the formula¹⁵: “be autonomous, but don’t suboptimize—be a good citizen in the Spotify ecosystem.” This reflects the effort to find a balance between decentralization and strategic alignment, between team-level innovation and the organization’s unified direction.

The key to tribal organization lies in working within multidisciplinary teams comprising a mix of marketing specialists, product experts, commercial specialists, designers, data analysts, and IT engineers—all focused on addressing customer needs and united by a shared definition of success¹⁶.

The tribe model essentially represents an organizational structure in which the company’s activities are arranged according to a dynamic matrix with two dimensions: one represented by capabilities and the other by the “value creation” dimension. Almost all employees have both a long-term functional role within the company, within a so-called ‘chapter’ (somewhat analogous to traditional organizational functions), and a role in the value creation process dictated by the objectives and needs assumed by the team to which the employee belongs (see Figure 1)¹⁷. In other words, the matrix structure ensures that each integrated member receives guidance on what to build (value creation) as well as how to build it effectively (functional role).

Figure 1. The basic structure of the Spotify Model



Source: ING’s agile transformation, McKinsey Quarterly, 10 January 2017, available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/financial-services/our-insights/ings-agile-transformation> last time consulted in 19.09.2024

The model is based on the following key structural concepts¹⁸:

¹³ See J. Langerman, C. Marnewick, A Concept for Extending the Spotify Organisational Model to Cater for Platform Organisations, 30th International Conference on Information Systems Development, 2022, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, available at: <https://aisel.aisnet.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1394&context=isd2014> last time consulted in 5.10.2024

¹⁴ See H. Kniberg, A. Ivarsson, Scaling Agile @ Spotify with Tribes, Squads, Chapters & Guilds, Crisp Consulting Blog, 2012, available at: <https://blog.crisp.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/SpotifyScaling.pdf> last time consulted in 21.06.2025

¹⁵ See M. Mankins, E. Garton, How Spotify Balances Employee Autonomy and Accountability, Bain & Company, 2017, available at: <https://www.bain.com/insights/how-spotify-balances-employee-autonomy-and-accountability-hbr/> last time consulted in 22.06.2025

¹⁶ ING’s agile transformation, McKinsey Quarterly, 10 January 2017, available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/financial-services/our-insights/ings-agile-transformation> last time consulted in 19.09.2024

¹⁷ See A. De Smet, The agile manager, McKinsey Quarterly, July 2018, available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/the-agile-manager> last time consulted in 25.06.2024

¹⁸ See Exploring Key Elements of Spotify’s Agile Scaling Model, July 23, 2018, Kendis, available at: <https://kendis.io/spotify/exploring-key-elements-spotifys-agile-scaling-model/> last time consulted in 27.06.2025; See L. Madhavi, Spotify Model: Benefits, Challenges, Scaling Agile & Usage, Star Agile, 2024, available at: <https://staragile.com/blog/spotify-model> last time consulted in 3.07.2025; See A. Salamaleh, J.

- Squads – are small, autonomous, cross-functional teams responsible for a product or a clearly defined set of functionalities. Each squad manages its own processes and work pace (e.g., using Scrum or Kanban), with the freedom to make technical and business decisions within its sphere of influence.

The team represents the basic component within the Spotify model, with a tribe comprising multiple teams, which are physically located in the same office of the tribe. The team is similar to a Scrum team¹⁹, being end-to-end responsible for a long-term mission based on the objectives of the tribe. Each team takes ownership of a specific part of the customer experience. A product tribe can include several self-managing teams of approximately 8–10 members²⁰, each responsible for a specific, clearly defined objective. For instance, one team may be responsible for new customer acquisitions, another for contract renewals, a third for enhancing the onboarding experience, and a fourth for business development and innovation. Within each team, there is a product owner, who is not a formally appointed leader, and whose role is to manage the product vision and prioritize the team's work, without intervening in how team members carry out their tasks.

The autonomous nature of teams does not eliminate interdependencies among them. Consequently, it is periodically useful to identify these interdependencies and to assess the extent to which they hinder or slow down the team, in order to enable reprioritization, reorganization, architectural modifications, or the development of appropriate technical solutions²¹.

Teams are encouraged to apply two fundamental principles in their activities. The first principle concerns the rapid and frequent release of any changes affecting the customer experience, while the second principle focuses on validated learning derived from quantified results and A/B testing conducted to determine what is effective and what is not²².

- Tribes are groups of squads that work within related domains or on interrelated products. The tribe constitutes a fluid structure that provides and integrates all the resources necessary for fulfilling its mission. Tribes facilitate information exchange, coordination, and cohesion among squads. Each tribe is led by a Tribe Lead who fosters collaboration without exercising strict hierarchical control.

Tribes do not organize or coordinate day-to-day operations; instead, they are responsible for business management, as well as the development and maintenance of products and services. Their primary mission is to enhance the manner in which the customer is served. Tribes are, to some extent, similar to strategic business units or product lines in traditional organizations. These units constitute the company's delivery centers, responsible for defining how products will be distributed, the pricing levels to be applied, and the manner in which customers will be served in accordance with the company's strategy.

According to the 'Dunbar's number' principle, which posits that individuals cannot maintain more than roughly 150 relationships simultaneously²³, tribes are designed so as not to exceed approximately 100 members²⁴.

The implementation of the tribal model entails dividing the company's delivery activities into several types of tribes, as follows²⁵:

M. Bass, An architecture governance approach for Agile development by tailoring the Spotify model, *AI & Society*, 2022, Volume 37, pp 761-780, available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00146-021-01240-x?utm> last time consulted in 24.06.2025

¹⁹ See J. Langerman, C. Marnewick, A Concept for Extending the Spotify Organisational Model to Cater for Platform Organisations, 30th International Conference on Information Systems Development, 2022, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, available at: <https://aisel.aisnet.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1394&context=isd2014> last time consulted in 5.10.2024

²⁰ See A. De Smet, The agile manager, *McKinsey Quarterly*, July 2018, available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/the-agile-manager> last time consulted in 25.06.2024; M. Carnan, A. Rozen, ING's Agile Transformation – Teaching an Elephant to Race, *Journal of Creating Value*, 2019, Volume 5, Issue 2, available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2394964319875601> last time consulted in 15.09.2024

²¹ See H. Kniberg, A. Ivarsson, Scaling Agile @ Spotify with Tribes, Squads, Chapters & Guilds, *Crisp Consulting Blog*, 2012, available at: <https://blog.crisp.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/SpotifyScaling.pdf> last time consulted in 21.06.2025

²² See H. Kniberg, A. Ivarsson, Scaling Agile @ Spotify with Tribes, Squads, Chapters & Guilds, *Crisp Consulting Blog*, 2012, available at: <https://blog.crisp.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/SpotifyScaling.pdf> last time consulted in 21.06.2025

²³ See R. Dunbar, Dunbar's number, *New Scientist*, available at: <https://www.newscientist.com/definition/dunbars-number/> last time consulted in 26.08.2024

²⁴ See H. Kniberg, A. Ivarsson, Scaling Agile @ Spotify with Tribes, Squads, Chapters & Guilds, *Crisp Consulting Blog*, 2012, available at: <https://blog.crisp.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/SpotifyScaling.pdf> last time consulted in 21.06.2025

²⁵ See J.T. Lorenz, D. Mahadevan, B. Oncul, M. Yenigun, Scaling agility: A new operating model for insurers, *McKinsey & Company*, September 14, 2020, available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/financial-services/our-insights/scaling-agility-a-new-operating-model-for-insurers> last time consulted on 03.05.2024; M. Carnan, A. Rozen, ING's Agile Transformation – Teaching an Elephant to Race, *Journal of Creating Value*, 2019, Volume 5, Issue 2, available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2394964319875601> last time consulted in 15.09.2024

- A tribe dedicated to products/services, aimed at developing new offerings, stimulating market penetration, or managing the customer portfolio;
- A tribe dedicated to sales, comprising customer-oriented teams focused on selling products and services to clients;
- A post-sales tribe may, for example in the insurance sector, pursue the enhancement of claims-management efficiency, the improvement of spare-parts procurement, the automation of damage-related operations, or the design of a digital experience for the first notification of loss.

The Tribe Lead acts as a general manager focused on creating value, driving growth, and serving customers. He is fully responsible for the efficient fulfillment of the tribe's mission through the teams, allocates budgets, and establishes interfaces with other tribes. At the tribe level, there are also one to two coaches who train individuals and teams to enhance performance, contributing to the development and improvement of their way of working. The agile coach organizes retrospectives, sprint planning meetings, conducts individual coaching, and so on.

Chapters – are horizontal structures that bring together members with similar competencies (e.g., back-end developers, QA testers) from different squads but belonging to the same tribe. The Chapter ensures technical alignment and professional development, and is led by a Chapter Lead, who often also holds a functional role within a team.

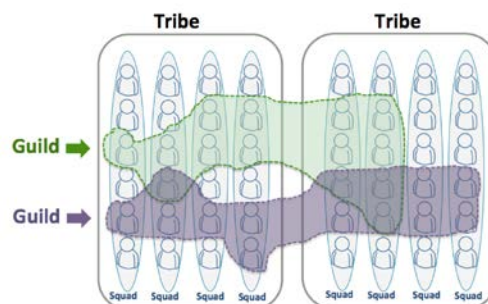
Team members originate from the distinct functions that constitute the chapters within the tribe. Thus, chapters represent capability domains, analogous to functions in traditional organizations, and are managed by a Chapter Lead who, in addition to the role performed within the team to which they belong, is responsible for the personal development, coaching, and professional management of the chapter's members. For instance, the marketing function constitutes a distinct chapter within the tribe, serving as a source from which members are selected for inclusion in teams. For example, the marketing chapter is responsible for managing promotional campaigns, as well as overseeing customer experience. Additional chapters may be added to the tribe as needed, depending on its mission and priorities, to provide the required resources. Legal and finance functions may remain independent and outside the team, but can be consulted to provide support and objective advice.

The chapter members assemble on a regular basis to discuss current issues, emerging challenges, and recent developments within their respective areas of expertise. The activities carried out within the chapter provide an effective framework for fostering innovation and facilitating the dissemination of ideas among the tribe's teams.

Guilds – represent informal communities of interest that span across tribes and departments, organized around shared thematic areas (e.g., DevOps, UX, Data Science). Guilds promote the sharing of knowledge, tools, and practices, as well as the voluntary standardization of best practices across the organization. In contrast to chapters, which are organized at the tribe level, guilds operate at the organizational level (e.g., the testers' guild, the agile coaches' guild; see Figure 2)."

One of the key elements for ensuring the success of a guild's activities is the establishment of well-documented objectives, a clearly defined mission, and a set of guidelines for its members; without these, the impact of the guild's work will remain limited and the outcomes achieved will not be measurable²⁶.

Figure 2. Guild Organization Structured According to the Tribe Model



²⁶ See A. C. Hardy, Unlocking the Spotify Model: Why your Guild is Failing, The Product Hub, 2022, available at: <https://www.theproducthub.io/2022/05/10/why-your-guild-is-failing/> last time consulted at: 26.09.2024

Source: Henrik Kniberg, Anders Ivarsson, *Scaling Agile @ Spotify with Tribes, Squads, Chapters & Guilds*, Crisp Consulting Blog, 2012, available at: <https://blog.crisp.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/SpotifyScaling.pdf> last time consulted in 21.06.2025

Trio – is composed of three members, each occupying a leadership role within their respective tribe. The composition of a Trio is as follows: a Product Manager, who is responsible for defining what is to be built by articulating consumer requirements and defining product priorities; a Chapter Lead (or Engineering Manager), who oversees who is part of the team and ensures the professional development of the engineers; and a Design Lead/Tech Lead/Architect, who determines how the solution is to be built, addressing both technical and design-related aspects.

Alliance – represents a grouping of three Tribes that ensures coordination and collaboration among multiple Tribes operating within the same product domain or exhibiting significant interdependencies. For instance, a “Payments Alliance” may be formed to coordinate all Tribes engaged in the development and operation of payment systems.

The Chief Architect oversees the organization-wide (or division-level) technical direction, ensuring architectural coherence and adherence to established standards.

The Spotify model operates on a set of principles that complement its structural architecture:

- Autonomy with alignment – Teams make decisions locally while adhering to an overarching strategic direction.
- Servant leadership – Leaders provide support to their teams rather than exerting direct control.
- Fail-friendly culture – The organizational culture embraces mistakes as learning opportunities.
- Transparency and trust – Broad access to information and open collaboration are encouraged.
- Distributed innovation – Ideas emerge from all levels of the organization, not solely from the top of the hierarchy.

Through this structure, the Spotify model enables the formation of teams in ways that support rapid value delivery (reduced time-to-market), continuous employee development through knowledge sharing, and increased motivation driven by a sense of autonomy and ownership. Moreover, the elimination of traditional hierarchical layers and the adoption of a culture rooted in trust and experimentation enable organizations to become more agile, more innovative, and more resilient to change.

5. The Spotify Model as a source of competitive advantage

In an economic environment characterized by volatility, uncertainty, and a constant need for innovation, organizations seek ways to differentiate themselves not only through their products, but also through the manner in which they structure their internal activities and leverage human capital. The Spotify model, through its inherently adaptable and decentralized nature, provides favorable conditions for achieving a sustainable competitive advantage, both in terms of operational efficiency and continuous innovation.

Implementing an agile, cross-functional team structure is useful when the company seeks to quickly adapt to changes and respond swiftly to evolving customer needs and expectations to a greater extent than its competitors. Such an agile structure can provide the company, within a remarkably short timeframe (three to four times faster²⁷), with viable product alternatives ready for market launch, while also ensuring the continuous improvement of the product and the consumer experience after launch, based on systematically collected customer feedback.

By examining the Spotify model through the lens of the VRIO theoretical framework (Value, Rarity, Inimitability, Organization) proposed by Barney (1991), the following points can be highlighted:

The “Value” component. The Spotify model – structured around autonomous teams (squads), coordinated groups (tribes), communities of practice (chapters), and informal networks (guilds) – fosters an agile and collaborative environment that supports continuous innovation and the rapid delivery of digital solutions. The squad and tribe structures enable improved adaptability to dynamic market requirements and contribute to reducing product time-to-market, thereby generating value both for customers, by delivering personalized and

²⁷ See T. Kurian, D. Patwardhan, H. K. Hughes, *Making Spotify-Inspired Agile Work*, Infosys Knowledge Institute, 2021, available at: <https://www.infosys.com/iki/perspectives/spotify-inspired-agile.html> last time consulted in 26.08.2025

relevant solutions, and for the organization, by enhancing operational efficiency. In this context, teams can efficiently develop and implement hyper-personalized marketing campaigns by leveraging users' behavioral data and adapting content in real time to their preferences. The model thus contributes to value creation by enhancing the relevance and efficiency of customer interactions and by enabling sustainable differentiation from competitors. Beyond reducing time-to-market and enabling campaign personalization, the Spotify model contributes to value creation within an organization through several other essential mechanisms. Team autonomy fosters continuous innovation, the chapters and guilds facilitate efficient knowledge sharing, and the modular structure supports scalability without losses in efficiency. Moreover, increased employee engagement and clear alignment with strategic objectives contribute to the consolidation of a sustainable competitive advantage. Thus, the value generated is not confined to marketing or delivery activities but extends across the entire organizational ecosystem.

The "Rarity" component. Within the context of analyzing organizational resources and capabilities using the VRIO framework, the rarity component refers to those resources or capabilities that are possessed by a limited number of organizations and, therefore, have the potential to generate sustainable competitive advantages. The implementation of the Spotify model can significantly contribute to the development of this component, particularly in traditionally hierarchical or organizationally conservative industries.

A first essential aspect is an organizational culture oriented toward autonomy and trust, which promotes decision-making at the team level and the minimization of direct hierarchical control. Such a culture, rarely encountered in industries characterized by rigid formal structures, creates a climate conducive to continuous innovation and active engagement, which are fundamental elements of a rare capability.

Moreover, the model emphasizes servant leadership, in which leaders act as facilitators of team development and performance rather than as the sole source of authority. This type of leadership, rarely observed and authentically implemented, relies on deeply internalized organizational values and on continuous leadership development practices.

Another essential element is the existence of a strategic alignment mechanism without excessive control, in which shared objectives are maintained through practices such as OKRs (Objectives and Key Results), while not restricting team autonomy. Striking this balance between autonomy and alignment is a challenging task and is seldom accomplished effectively by large organizations.

The Spotify model also fosters a culture of continuous feedback and iterative learning through frequent retrospectives and transparent improvement mechanisms. Together with an experimentation-oriented mindset and the acceptance of failure as a source of learning, these practices create an organizational environment grounded in psychological safety and continuous learning, which is difficult to replicate in organizations characterized by low risk tolerance or authoritarian management styles.

Finally, the high level of technological autonomy granted to teams, which hold end-to-end responsibility for the delivered solutions (from architecture to maintenance), contributes to their rarity by enabling the rapid development of tailored and scalable solutions beyond hierarchical decision-making structures.

Therefore, the coherent implementation of the Spotify model not only supports organizational agility but also establishes a set of capabilities that are rare and difficult to replicate and, when underpinned by an appropriate organizational structure, are capable of generating and sustaining a distinctive competitive advantage.

The "Inimitability" component. As emphasized by Kniberg and Ivarsson²⁸, the organizational structure of the Spotify model represents only one component of the system, while its success fundamentally depends on organizational culture and team adaptability. Therefore, the effects of implementing the model may become inimitable, in the sense proposed by Barney, only to the extent that the organization succeeds in transforming the model into a distinctive internal capability.

Organizations that succeed in implementing the Spotify model in a coherent and in-depth manner – by embracing agile principles, fostering team autonomy, enabling cross-functional collaboration, and encouraging innovation – develop a form of internal know-how that is difficult to replicate. This know-how often results from continuous organizational learning and from emergent practices, uniquely shaped by the organization's culture, history, and informal structure. Therefore, although the Spotify model can, in principle, be replicated in terms of

²⁸ See H. Kniberg, A. Ivarsson, *Scaling Agile @ Spotify with Tribes, Squads, Chapters & Guilds*, Crisp Consulting Blog, 2012, available at: <https://blog.crisp.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/SpotifyScaling.pdf> last time consulted in 21.06.2025

structure, its strategic effects become inimitable when implementation is authentic and supported by a profound transformation tailored to the organization's specific context. This distinctive characteristic may provide the organization with a sustainable competitive advantage, as rivals are likely to face significant difficulties in replicating not only the structure but also the culture and processes that bring the model to life.

The "Organization" component. An organization's ability to leverage its valuable, rare, and difficult-to-imitate resources depends fundamentally on the way it is internally organized. According to the VRIO theoretical framework (Barney, 1991), the "Organization" component reflects the presence of structures, processes, systems, and cultural mechanisms that enable the effective exploitation of potential advantages.

In this regard, the Spotify organizational model provides a set of practices and mechanisms that can substantially contribute to strengthening this component. Through its flexible structure, composed of squads (autonomous multidisciplinary teams) and tribes (groups of teams aligned around a shared objective), the model facilitates a scalable and adaptable form of organization. At the same time, components such as chapters and guilds support internal standardization and knowledge dissemination, thereby contributing to a framework of continuous learning and capability development.

Another central element of the model is the distribution of decision-making responsibility, which allows for the acceleration of processes and rapid adaptation to changes, by promoting team autonomy and informal leadership.

These characteristics facilitate the internal alignment of the organization around the exploitation of strategic resources, thereby increasing the likelihood of achieving a sustainable competitive advantage.

Thus, the integration of the Spotify model principles into organizational design may represent a key vector in transforming strategic resources into sustainable performance, thereby confirming its relevance as a modern mechanism for supporting the "Organization" component within the VRIO framework.

Therefore, the Spotify Model is not merely an operational framework, but a strategic mechanism through which organizations can transform their internal culture into a competitive advantage.

One of the central pillars of the model is the ability to innovate rapidly and continuously. Autonomous teams (squads) are granted the freedom to experiment, iterate, and fail fast, without being constrained by rigid hierarchical structures. This approach reduces decision-making bottlenecks and encourages idea generation across all levels of the organization – an essential factor in sustaining long-term competitive relevance.

Another strategic benefit of the model is the increased motivation of employees²⁹. Studies indicate that autonomy and a sense of ownership increase job satisfaction and reduce employee turnover³⁰. Chapters and guilds contribute to the continuous development of employees, thereby providing the organization with an advantage in attracting and retaining talent in a competitive environment.

One of the major challenges in agile transformation is achieving scale without sacrificing coherence. The Spotify model enables organizational growth while preserving responsiveness and local adaptability. The modular structure and the distribution of leadership within tribes and chapters ensure a balance between control and autonomy, thereby contributing to a scalable yet adaptive organizational design.

The adoption of the Spotify model by well-established organizations such as ING Bank and Zalando supports the view that this framework can be successfully applied beyond the IT sector, provided it is adapted to the culture and specific context of each organization:

ING implemented the squads–tribes structure as part of its agile transformation process initiated in 2011, a transformation that accelerated the time-to-market for new services and fostered a fully customer-centric mindset – two factors that, according to the company's management, contributed to receiving the Global Finance award for World's Best Bank in 2018³¹.

²⁹ See N. Tsonev, What Is the Spotify Model for Scaling Agile?, Businessmap, 2022, available at: <https://businessmap.io/blog/spotify-model> last time consulted in 27.06.2025

³⁰ See A. Baiyere, J. W. Ross, I. M. Sebastian, Designing for Digital—Lessons from Spotify, MIT – Center for Information Systems Research, No XVII – 12, 2017, available at: https://c isr.mit.edu/publication/2017_1201_DigitalDesignAtSpotify_BaiyereRossSebastian last time consulted in 27.06.2025

³¹ See T. Schotkamp, M. Danoesastro, HR's Pioneering Role in Agile at ING, BCG Henderson Institute, 2018, available at: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2018/human-resources-pioneering-role-agile-ing> last time consulted in 7.09.2025; See N. Perkin, Agile Transformation: Structures, Processes and Mindsets for the Digital Age, Second Edition, KoganPage Publishing House, 2023, available at: <https://ebin.pub/qdownload/agile-transformation-structures-processes-and-mindsets-for-the-digital-age-2nbsped-1398608807-9781398608801.html> last time consulted in 7.09.2025

Zalando, a German fashion retailer, implemented organizational practices derived from the Spotify model (tribes, squads, and chapters) within its technology teams, leading to shorter delivery cycles and enhanced performance across features critical to customer satisfaction³².

The implementation of a tribe-based structure for organizing a company's activities cannot be effective without a redesign of its processes around agile principles. Thus, an effective transformation grounded in agile principles entails ensuring a solid technological foundation (continuously updated software tools), conducting strategic marketing planning in an agile manner, and placing emphasis on people (performance and career management) as well as on processes (agile ceremonies, delegation of authority, etc.).

The implementation of a tribe-based structure for organizing a company's activities is recommended to proceed through the following stages³³:

Performing a diagnostic analysis and benchmarking to define a clear vision at the very outset of the company's agile transformation and that of its operations.

Establishing an initial tribe before extending this type of organizational structure across the entire company. For instance, the tribe could be established for a product or product line, integrating all necessary functions: portfolio management, design, marketing, data, sales, and so on. The tribe should implement the agile model in its entirety, rather than merely experimenting with a few ceremonies. Establishing an initial tribe before expanding the structure on a broader scale will serve as a reference point in the process of implementing the model across the entire organization. Furthermore, following this experience, a series of conclusions can be drawn regarding the aspects that performed well and those that posed challenges in implementing the model, with a view to identifying improvements and refinements for wider-scale deployment.

Learning from the experience of the first tribe and scaling the agile model across the entire organization. In pursuing agile transformations, it must be acknowledged that not everything can be identified and planned upfront, and that the most effective approach to implementation is continuous adaptation as progress is made.

Human capital transformation through the development of employee skills and competencies and the recruitment of talent. Agile transformation requires new skills and competencies, especially for employees within traditional operating structures, thereby requiring organizations to focus on workforce upskilling and the recruitment of talent to support the newly established tribes.

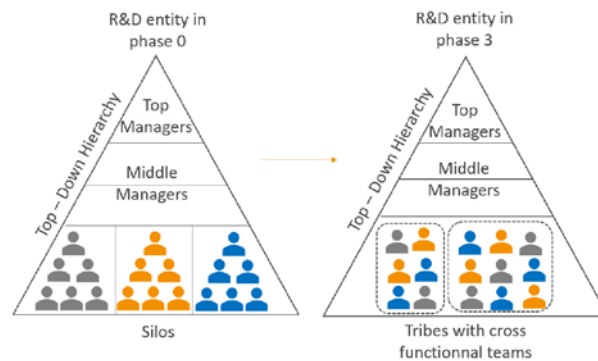
Cultural transformation initiated from the early stages of the agile transformation, given that cultural change takes significantly longer than organizational transformation. Therefore, at the early stages of an agile transformation, organizations need to deliberately set the behaviors they aim to change and may even create a dedicated tribe responsible for facilitating cultural transformation and reinforcing specific behaviors, through the implementation of a new performance management system, a new communication framework, and other supporting organizational structures.

Although the tribe model entails a higher degree of self-organization, its integration does not necessarily have to result in a modification of the organizational hierarchy, as illustrated by the model shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Organizational evolution within an agile organization

³² See J. Twentyman, Zalando embraces 'Radical Agility' in its bold platform play, Diginomica, 2016, available at: <https://diginomica.com/zalando-embraces-radical-agility-in-its-bold-platform-play> last time consulted in 17.09.2025; See S. Cadieux, M. Lobis, The journey to an agile organization at Zalando, McKinsey & Company, 2018, available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/the-journey-to-an-agile-organization-at-zalando> last time consulted in 17.09.2025

³³ See J. T. Lorenz, D. Mahadevan, B. Oncul, M. Yenigun, Scaling agility: A new operating model for insurers, McKinsey&Company, September 14, 2020, available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/financial-services/our-insights/scaling-agility-a-new-operating-model-for-insurers> last time consulted on 03.05.2024; M. Carnan, A. Rozen, ING's Agile Transformation – Teaching an Elephant to Race, Journal of Creating Value, 2019, Volume 5, Issue 2, available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2394964319875601> last time consulted in 15.09.2024; See T. Kurian, D. Patwardhan, H. K. Hughes, Making Spotify-Inspired Agile Work, Infosys Knowledge Institute, 2021, available at: <https://www.infosys.com/iki/perspectives/spotify-inspired-agile.html> last time consulted in 26.08.2025; Overcoming Agile Transformation Challenges, Agility at Scale, available at: <https://agility-at-scale.com/implementing/transformation-leadership> last time consulted in 27.08.2025



Sursa: B. Akim, C. Dominique, *Explaining the agile transformation through management innovation adoption*, Euram Conference, 2019, available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335722822_Explaining_the_agile_transformation_through_management_innovation_adoption, last time consulted on 19.08.2024

Within the resulting structure, an agile methodology such as Kanban, Scrum, or a hybrid form thereof may be incorporated³⁴, contributing to improved work organization and the achievement of a sustainable working pace. Teams may adopt practices derived from Scrum and Kanban, but they are not required to strictly adhere to them. They may adapt any practice that team members consider suitable and may abandon it at any time. Thus, each team may employ a distinct working approach to achieve its objectives, which may differ from the approaches adopted by other teams³⁵.

Another useful instrument in this context is the QBR (Quarterly Business Review), an approach implemented by organizations such as Google and Netflix. The QBR represents an exercise during which each tribe documents its achievements from the previous quarter, while also articulating its objectives for the upcoming quarter and identifying the other tribes or teams with which it needs to coordinate in order to achieve these objectives³⁶.

Furthermore, the implementation of this structure requires the availability of supporting tools that enable effective project management, such as JIRA³⁷.

6. Challenges and limitations in implementing the Spotify Model

Although the Spotify model is often presented as a successful example of organizational agile transformation, its application in different contexts entails a number of challenges. Adopting the model without a deep understanding of its underlying principles or without appropriate adaptations may lead to suboptimal outcomes or even organizational failure.

The main limitations and challenges identified in the relevant literature include:

Lack of formal standardization. One commonly reported challenge in adopting the Spotify model is its lack of status as a formal framework, in contrast to approaches such as the Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe), Large-Scale Scrum (LeSS), or Nexus³⁸. The model was developed as a customized solution tailored to the specific needs of Spotify and was not originally intended to be replicated in other organizations. This informal and flexible

³⁴ See H. Kniberg, A. Ivarsson, *Scaling Agile @ Spotify with Tribes, Squads, Chapters & Guilds*, Crisp Consulting Blog, 2012, available at: <https://blog.crisp.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/SpotifyScaling.pdf> last time consulted in 21.06.2025

³⁵ See Spotify Tribe Model: Is it or is it not a Scaling Model?, Kendis, 2021, available at: <https://kendis.io/scaling-agile/spotify-tribe-model> last time consulted in 27.06.2025

³⁶ See ING's agile transformation, McKinsey Quarterly, 10 January 2017, available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/financial-services/our-insights/ings-agile-transformation> last time consulted in 19.09.2024

³⁷ JIRA official website, available at: <https://www.atlassian.com/software/jira> last time consulted on 18.08.2024

³⁸ See Spotify Tribe Model: Is it or is it not a Scaling Model?, Kendis, 2021, available at: <https://kendis.io/scaling-agile/spotify-tribe-model> last time consulted in 27.06.2025; See N. K. Singh, *Do we really need SAFe, LeSS, Spotify, or Nexus to be agile?*, Agilemania, 2021, available at: <https://medium.com/agilemania/do-we-really-need-safe-less-spotify-or-nexus-to-be-agile-e47e0f7a46b8> last time consulted in 28.06.2025

nature, although advantageous in the original context, may lead to confusion during implementation, particularly in organizations that lack a well-developed culture of self-organization³⁹.

Challenges related to cultural adaptation. The success of the model is fundamentally dependent on organizational culture. Spotify benefits from an internal environment characterized by trust, openness, and a strong sense of accountability⁴⁰. In organizations with a hierarchical culture oriented toward control and compliance, the implementation of principles of autonomy and self-organization may be perceived as chaotic or lacking clear direction. Thus, resistance to change, fear of failure, or a lack of agile leadership can hinder transformation.

Risk of superficial adoption (cargo cult agile). The academic literature draws attention to the phenomenon referred to as cargo cult agile, defined as the superficial imitation of agile structures in the absence of a genuine understanding of their core principles. In the case of the Spotify model, this risk is amplified by its popularity and by organizations' temptation to replicate formal structures (squads, tribes, chapters) without embracing core values such as team autonomy, transparency, or a learning-oriented culture. This often results in pseudo-agility, where changes are limited to surface-level adjustments⁴¹.

Increased complexity at scale. As the model is scaled within large organizations comprising thousands of employees, challenges related to coordination, communication, and consistency emerge⁴². Although the model proposes scaling mechanisms (tribes, chapters, guilds), these can become difficult to manage in the absence of robust technological support and effective leadership. In addition, the lack of clearly defined roles similar to those in Scrum (Product Owner, Scrum Master) can give rise to ambiguities in decision making.

Dependence on Agile Leadership. Another critical point concerns the role of leadership. Agility represents a framework in which hierarchical positions and power do not find a place in their traditional form. Accordingly, within the tribes model, the leader's functions and responsibilities have migrated from a planning and managerial role to that of a coach and visionary⁴³. The leader's role aims at creating an appropriate environment that enables the formation of self-organizing, performance-oriented, and motivated teams. In the absence of such leadership, there is a risk that autonomous teams may become isolated, misaligned, or lose sight of strategic objectives. Thus, the quality of agile leadership is a critical factor for successful implementation.

Although the Spotify model is widely popular and has shown potential in the performance of leading organizations, its application demands a thorough assessment of the organizational context, culture, and current agile maturity. It is not a universally applicable model, as its success relies primarily on organizational mindset and values rather than on the formal architecture of teams.

7. Conclusions

Within an economic landscape characterized by uncertainty, intensified global competition, and the rapid pace of technological innovation, organizations' ability to be agile, adaptive, and oriented toward continuous learning has become an essential prerequisite for achieving competitive advantage. The Spotify model, although

³⁹ See N. Tsonev, What Is the Spotify Model for Scaling Agile?, Businessmap, 2022, available at: <https://businessmap.io/blog/spotify-model> last time consulted in 27.06.2025; See N. Walker, Why Enterprises and Legacy Organizations Struggle with the Spotify Model, Neil Walker blog, 2018, available at: <https://neilwalker.net/why-enterprises-struggle-with-the-spotify-model> last time consulted on 28.06.2025

⁴⁰ See A. Moore, Spotify's Organizational Culture & Strategic Considerations, Rancord Society, 2021, available at: <https://www.rancord.org/spotify-organizational-culture-strategic-cultural-characteristics> last time consulted at 30.06.2025; Unlocking the secrets of Spotify's organizational culture A case study of success and innovation, Lyzmo.com finance portal, 2023, available online at: <https://lyzmo.com/unlocking-the-secrets-of-spotifys-organizational-culture-a-case-study-on-success-and-innovation> last time consulted at 30.06.2025

⁴¹ See M. Levison, The Spotify Model of Scaling - Spotify Doesn't Use It, Neither Should You, Agile Pain Relief Consulting available at: <https://agilepainrelief.com/blog/the-spotify-model-of-scaling-spotify-doesnt-use-it-neither-should-you/> last time consulted in 1.07.2025

⁴² See L. Cluster, What Is the Spotify Agile Model and Its Impact?, Invensis – Global Learning Services, 2025, available at: <https://www.invensislearning.com/blog/spotify-model-in-agile> last time consulted in 24.06.2025; See M. Ledalla, Spotify Model: Benefits, Challenges, Scaling Agile & Usage, Star Agile, 2024, available at: <https://staragile.com/blog/spotify-model> last time consulted in 3.07.2025

⁴³ See L. Alvar, Successful with the Agile Spotify Framework: Squads, Tribes and Chapters - The Next Step After Scrum and Kanban?, BoD – Books on Demand, Norderstedt, Germany, 2020, pag. 13; See M. Mankins, E. Garton, How Spotify Balances Employee Autonomy and Accountability, Bain & Company, 2017, available at: <https://www.bain.com/insights/how-spotify-balances-employee-autonomy-and-accountability-hbr/> last time consulted in 22.06.2025; See G. Backlander, Doing complexity leadership theory: How agile coaches at Spotify practise enabling leadership, Creative and Innovation Management, 2019, Vol. 28, Issue 1, available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/caim.12303> last time consulted in 20.07.2025; See V. Stray, A. Tkalic, N. B. Moe, The Agile Coach Role: Coaching for Agile Performance Impact, Proceedings of the Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS), AIS Electronic Library, 2021, pp. 6816–6825, available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349152609_The_Agile_Coach_Role_Coaching_for_Agile_Performance_Impact last time consulted in 23.07.2025

not a universally formalized framework, offers an innovative alternative to traditional hierarchical structures by promoting autonomy, collaboration, and collective accountability, and may be regarded as a relevant organizational framework for supporting agility and innovation – key factors in shaping a sustainable competitive advantage within a dynamic market environment. An analysis of its structural and cultural components highlights its potential to support organizations' ability to respond rapidly to market changes and to deliver value consistently.

Understanding the competitive advantage generated by the Spotify model requires a careful analysis of how it succeeds in integrating organizational agility with scalability. The model proposes a framework that enables the preservation of rapid responsiveness and continuous innovation, even in contexts of accelerated growth. Its characteristic structure – based on autonomous, collaborative, and interconnected teams – supports a flexible ecosystem oriented toward the consistent delivery of value and the development of internal capabilities. However, the true source of competitive advantage does not reside in the formal structure, but rather in the organizational culture that supports autonomy, self-regulation, and agile leadership. Moreover, the implementation of the tribes model in organizing a company's activities entails the assimilation of the three fundamental dimensions of any agile practice – namely transparency, inspection, and adaptation – as well as a clear understanding of the pursued objectives and the available resources.

However, the effective implementation of this model requires a deep understanding of its fundamental principles, as well as careful adaptation to the specific context of each organization.

Considering the complexity of adopting the Spotify model and its impact on organizational structures, processes, and culture, the following recommendations are addressed to practitioners seeking to leverage this framework as a strategic tool for achieving sustainable competitive advantage:

Preliminary evaluation of organizational culture. Prior to initiating the adoption of the Spotify model, it is essential to conduct a rigorous assessment of the existing organizational culture. This should include the level of maturity regarding agile practices, the teams' openness to autonomy, and the leaders' capacity to adopt a servant leadership style. Such a preliminary analysis enables the identification of potential cultural barriers and the prerequisites for a sustainable transition.

Gradual implementation tailored to the organizational context. It is recommended to adopt an incremental approach to introducing the model, by initiating pilot projects in clearly delineated organizational areas. This strategy allows the Spotify structure to be adapted to the specific characteristics and needs of the teams, thereby facilitating more effective integration and mitigating the risks associated with large-scale organizational transformation.

Avoiding a mimetic approach to Spotify's structural model. Practitioners should avoid adopting the model in a mechanical manner, limited to the replication of its formal structure (squads, tribes, chapters, etc.). The success of the implementation fundamentally depends on the internalization of the values and principles underpinning the model. Authentic transformation entails a cultural paradigm shift, rather than a merely structural one.

Strategic investments in agile leadership. To support the autonomous and collaborative teams characteristic of the Spotify model, the training and development of agile leaders is required. This type of leadership requires a distinct set of capabilities, including the facilitation of distributed decision-making, the support of continuous learning, and the cultivation of trust within teams. Investments in the development of these leadership competencies constitute a critical factor for the long-term success of organizational transformation.

The implementation of the tribe model may follow the above-mentioned recommendations, ultimately resulting in a framework tailored to the company's specific needs and characteristics. The tribe model will be refined through practical application, gradually assuming a form that reflects the company's specific processes. Imitation has always served as a starting point, but true competitive advantage can only be achieved through adaptation. Thus, by learning from both existing examples and one's own experiences, an organization-specific approach to any given model may be formulated, one that is expected to evolve continuously over time. Commitment to the transformation process and a willingness to adapt, rather than remaining anchored to a predefined roadmap or strategy, are essential to the success of the transformation. When implementing any agile model, organizations should focus on carefully adapting agile practices that have proven effective in other organizations to the specific needs and structural context of each company, based on a period of experimentation within the respective organization.

Despite extensive analysis of the Spotify model across various organizational contexts, the literature indicates that certain aspects remain insufficiently explored and deserve greater attention in future research. A first research avenue concerns the assessment of the long-term impact of the model's implementation on organizational performance, through longitudinal studies examining the relationships between the structuring of autonomous teams, organizational culture, and indicators of efficiency, innovation, or talent retention. Another research opportunity lies in exploring the adaptability of the model in non-technological industries, given that its applicability has been predominantly examined within the IT sector and digitally oriented organizations. Furthermore, comparative studies between the Spotify model and other agile scaling frameworks – such as SFA (Scaled Agile Framework), LeSS (Large-Scale Scrum), or Nexus – can help highlight differences in approach, implementation challenges, and effects on organizational agility across diverse contexts. Therefore, a nuanced understanding of the Spotify model and its strategic implications provides not only a framework for reflection for practitioners, but also a valuable starting point for the development of future research aimed at exploring the potential of this model across the diversity of contemporary organizational contexts.

The present paper provides a solid theoretical framework and a critical analysis of the Spotify model as a potential source of competitive advantage. When organizations acknowledge that this model is not a universal prescription but an organizational philosophy grounded in people, autonomy, and learning, it may serve as a powerful instrument for strategic adaptation and sustainable innovation.

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