



BACHELOR THESIS

AGILITY FOR COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS: GOING BEYOND THE SOFTWARE INDUSTRY

ADVANTAGES AND DRAWBACKS OF AGILITY
DURING COMMUNICATION STRATEGY PLANNING

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The communication industry is as dynamic as ever, posing new challenges, industry changes and global competition. Agile methodologies offer the ability to predict environmental changes and respond effectively and efficiently when they happen. However, little is known about agile methodology's perceived advantages and drawbacks during communication strategy planning.

Objective: This study aims to examine communication professional experiences and opinions about the advantages and drawbacks of the agile methodology during communication strategy planning.

Method: Qualitative methods with semi-structured interviews were chosen for this study. Fourteen interviews were conducted with communication professionals to explore their perceived advantages and drawbacks during communication strategy planning. The interview guide supported navigating through semi-structured interviews.

Results: This study resulted in a list of 29 advantages and drawbacks of agile methods based on three areas of interest, namely tools and technologies, processes and structures, and culture and people. Literature contradicts the finding of fragmented departments. This study extends the understanding of the competitive advantage. Additionally, this study confirms the importance of top management support and the drawback of employees' resistance to change in working styles. Lastly, this research found that changes in terms of new hires can hinder agile culture adoption and cause confusion regarding a way of working.

Practical Implications: It is suggested that agencies or communication departments should acknowledge the critical role of top management and account managers during communication strategy planning. Also, this research shows the importance of putting effort into agile training, consistent use of the agile method and consistent use of agile technology. Moreover, this research can benefit clients as much as communication professionals in understanding the experiences and opinions of agile methods during communication strategy planning.

Conclusion: Research showed the vitality to assess agile communication strategy planning from various angles. Communication professionals suggested a variety of advantages and drawbacks experienced or thought of while working in an agile way. As there is little research about agility in the communication industry, this study can be a starting point for more thorough analyses of communication professionals' experiences with agility.

Keywords: agile methodology, communication strategy planning, communication industry, agility.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The accelerated rate of new technologies, global competition, and the ever-changing environment requires a flexible way of working and thinking. In a world full of unpredictable changes, organisations struggle to rapidly react and respond to them (van Oosterhout et al., 2005). While quick adaptability and flexibility are the key elements to staying up to date in every industry, or in other words, being agile. The agile way of working differs tremendously from traditional work (van Ruler, 2021). It embraces different values and flexible organisational culture. That led to the growing interest in agility for academics and professional press (van Oosterhout et al., 2005). As both are interested in the impact of agility in terms of reacting and adapting to sudden and unexpected events, such as market changes or unanticipated regulations. Even though only a few studies have looked into the need for agility, a large number of articles and books have attempted to describe agility (van Oosterhout et al., 2005). In this paper, agility is referred to as:

“Agility is the overall capability of an organisation to respond to and take advantage of the changes initiated by the drivers in the internal and external environments. It includes the ability to identify relevant changes and to respond proactively, efficiently and effectively, employing the right personnel based on competence, not hierarchical status. Additionally, it includes the ability to implement flexible structures and processes suited to the immediate tasks at hand and to employ the appropriate resources in the shortest possible time.” (Zerfass et al., 2018)

Agility has multiple advantages for organisations. Organisations employ agility to have the ability to predict environmental changes and respond effectively and efficiently when they happen (Ashrafi et al., 2005). It was reported that agile organisations can deliver results faster, bringing higher returns to the stakeholders (van Ruler, 2019). Another study reported that agile methods improve team morale, time efficiency, and better responsiveness to sudden changes (Waldock, 2015, p. 6). Nevertheless, agility is not a solution to every encountered problem and is not a silver bullet protecting from issues (van Solingen, 2018, p. 23). Agility cannot fit every situation nor every task. The author of the book “Agility”, van Solingen (2018, p. 23), stated that agility is suitable for companies that work in complex environments. Zerfass et al. (2018) supports this claim by explaining that agility is usually advantageous in complex, volatile, uncertain and ambiguous conditions. He adds that companies in areas that demand a clear chain of command and a one-voice policy are less prone to agility, for example, investor relations, risk communication, and compliance. Hence, agility is not an answer to everything and does not fit every organisation. Agile methods are usually advantageous for companies in volatile conditions.

Research about agility mainly focuses on the software development industry, whereas agile communication management is not a popularly studied field (van Ruler, 2019). Nonetheless, agility can be applied in industries that depend on the political and societal changes, technological innovations, and new market needs, which demand organisations to speed up their processes and

become more responsive and adaptable to changes (Zerfass et al., 2018). That also includes the dynamic communication industry in which the role of communication professional is changing from simply implementing a communication strategy to facilitating strategy adaption to the changing environment (van Ruler, 2021). Also, Arthur W. Page Society (2013, p.17) emphasised that the role of Chief Communication Officers is changing, and it needs to be more adaptive in terms of transparency, speed and globalisation to stay ahead of communication trends and issues. Thus, the communication industry is a dynamic field with many changes, and consequently, the communication professional role requires more flexibility and adaptability.

Building on these several studies, agile methodology benefits organisations in uncertain times. It gives the ability to act quickly and efficiently by nurturing a flexible and adaptable organisational culture. As agility is not a well-studied field in the communication industry, there are few research papers analysing agile methodologies during communication strategy planning. However, the communication field is as dynamic as ever and poses new challenges to communication professionals. That sheds a new opportunity to explore experiences and opinions towards an agile way of working and possibly contribute to the literature. Thus, this research paper aims to examine communication professional experiences and opinions about the advantages and drawbacks of agility during communication strategy planning. The research question of this study is:

“What do communication professionals perceive as advantages and drawbacks of agile methodologies during communication strategy?”

The following part of this research paper starts with a theoretical framework that elaborates on the key constructs of this study, such as strategy theory, communication planning models and three areas of organisational agility. After that, the method chapter introduces the research design and data collection procedure, instrument, sampling method and sample, quality procedures and data preparation and analysis. This follows with the results chapter that presents the advantages and drawbacks discovered during the data analysis. Thereafter, the main findings, limitations and theoretical and practical implications are discussed. Lastly, the conclusion summarises the study and the most prominent findings.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study's theoretical framework distinguishes the classical from contemporary strategy theories to better understand the role of agility in the modern strategy theory and communication planning models. This follows with the introduction of Dühring et al. (2021) concept of organisational agility and its dimensions, which were adapted for this study and clustered into three areas. These three areas of organisational agility, namely tools and technologies, processes and structures, and culture and people, are analysed more thoroughly by explaining their aspects, advantages, drawbacks and challenges.

2.1 STRATEGY THEORY & COMMUNICATION PLANNING MODELS

Agility in strategy can be best understood by analysing the current strategy theory. There are two main distinctions between classical and contemporary strategy theories. Classical strategy theory claims the importance of long-term goal planning, while more contemporary strategy theory emphasises the dynamic world and continuous change that strategies should take into account (van Ruler, 2021). The contemporary strategy planning process can be based on assumptions to be tested and adjusted accordingly. Both contemporary strategy and agile theories encourage responsiveness and adaptivity. Therefore, today's turbulent environment requires communication professionals to focus on contemporary strategies more often than classical ones.

Moreover, traditional communication planning models benefit the classical strategy theory, as it suggests long-term goal planning. More particularly, planning that starts with the research and analysis, followed by smart goals, strategy and then a detailed action plan, which ends with result evaluation (van Ruler, 2015). This planning has little room for flexibility and adaptability to the changing communication industry requirements. Moreover, a review of current communication planning models indicates that the adaptability element is also not frequently seen (van Ruler, 2021). Creating a disadvantage for contemporary strategy planning. However, agile project planning is an ongoing process that requires changes reflected on the emerging internal and external environment (Zerfass et al., 2018). Popular agile methods, such as Reflective Communication Scrum, Kanban, Design Thinking, etc., give a different approach in the digitalised society. The general idea of agile methods is to experiment and test ideas during cycles or iterations (van Ruler, 2019). Because of that, agility might be a key to sustaining competitive advantage in an environment that requires continuous reinvention (Appelbaum et al., 2017a). That includes the communication industry. Thus, traditional and current communication planning models exclude the complexity of communication issues and its dynamism, and it does not benefit the contemporary strategy theory since it requires adaptability. Agile project planning might facilitate the contemporary strategy theory.

2.2 ORGANISATIONAL AGILITY

The approach to organisations has changed throughout the years. Organisations were once compared to machines with a clear division of work, rules and standards (Aghina et al., 2018). Nowadays, they are often seen as living organisms with quick changes, adaptive leadership and accountable teams.

The essence of communication strategy planning lies in the organisation and its employees. Employees' way of working can influence the productivity and quality of communication strategy planning. Organisational agility sparks a new light on keeping up to date with changes occurring in the internal and external environments (Appelbaum et al., 2017b). Organisational agility can be analysed with six dimensions: tools, technologies, structures, processes, culture and people (Dühring & Zerfass,

2021). These six dimensions influence the way of working, project planning and organisational mindset. For analysing the advantages and drawbacks encountered during agile communication strategy planning in this research, the study of Dühring et al. (2021) was taken as an example.

For this study, six dimensions of Dühring et al. (2021) were adapted and clustered into three areas, namely, tools and technologies, structures and processes, and culture and people. The rationale behind this grouping lies in the similarities of each duo. It was noticed that tools are enhanced with technologies, agile processes are influenced by flat organisational structures and culture is influenced by people. Thus, the following parts of this research paper follow three areas of organisational agility that were used as an inspiration for this study. Table 1 aims to explain the aspects of those three organisational agility areas.

Table 1
Areas of agile organisation

Areas	Aspects	Definitions
Tools & Technologies (see 2.3)	Scrum	Scrum is an iterative and incremental model that provides steps to control the agile process and is aimed to increase development speed, team performance and support value creation for the stakeholders (Srivastava et al., 2017).
	Kanban	Kanban is aimed to give an overflow of the team process and progress (Zerfass et al., 2018).
	Design Thinking	Design Thinking follows six steps: empathise, define, ideate, prototype, test, and implement (Traifeh et al., 2019).
	Collaboration platforms	A software that includes social networking and collaborative capabilities to enhance work processes (TechTarget, n.d.).
	Knowledge management	It is the process of storing and sharing information in the company (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.).
	Digital project management	Digital project management involves using technology to boost the project management process (Aston & Stubbs, 2022).
Processes & Structures (see 2.4)	Cross-departmental collaboration	It is a collaboration with people that have different job functions and responsibilities within the organisation (Wipulanusat et al., 2021).
	Shorter project cycles	Shorter project work cycles are also called sprints. The usual duration is one to four weeks (van Ruler, 2019).
	Transparent decision making	It is about creating a transparent organisational environment for openness in decision-making (Kalenda et al., 2018).
	Horizontal structures & flat hierarchies Interdisciplinary teams	An organisation with a few layers of management and hierarchies (Lee & Saerom Lee, 2022). Interdisciplinary teams provide diverse perspectives that might stimulate creative ideas due to having team members from various professional backgrounds (Paulus et al., 2011).
Culture & People (see 2.5)	Collaboration	It is an activity where two or several people work on the same goal (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.).
	Risk tolerance	The level of risk that can be accepted by the organisation (Gantz & Philpott, 2013).
	Accepting failure	Working in agile means abandoning a zero-failure mindset (Mergel et al., 2021).
	Empowerment of staff	Agile culture is about empowering the team, creating value for the community and supporting the team in succeeding and growing (Mergel et al., 2021).

Different mindset	Agility is a mindset of flexibility and adaptability (van Ruler, 2015).
New leadership style	Leadership positions are dismantled in agile culture (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021).
Self-management	One of the agile principles is self-management teams (Gutierrez et al., 2019).

Note. Adaptation of six dimensions into three areas of organisational agility from “The Triple Role of Communications in Agile Organisations” by L. Dühring & A. Zerfass, 2021. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 15(2), 93–112 (<https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2021.1887875>). Copyright 2021 by the L. Dühring & A. Zerfass.

2.3 TOOLS & TECHNOLOGIES

This section explains Kanban, Reflective Communication Scrum and Design Thinking to give a better idea of agile methods and their advantages. This follows with an explanation of agile technology advantages.

Kanban is aimed to give an overflow of the team process and progress (Zerfass et al., 2018). The most common way to visualise the process is by using sticky notes from ‘To-Do’ to ‘Doing’ to ‘Done’. Today web-based applications like Trello Board let users map the team process and progress (Siderova, 2020). This follows up by the 15-minute daily stand-up meetings to inform the team about the stage of the project.

Another popular agile method is Scrum. This method is aimed to increase development speed, team performance and support value creation to the stakeholders (Srivastava et al., 2017). A pioneer in agile communication research, van Ruler (2014, p.18) developed a Reflective Communication Scrum Framework as an alternative methodology for the field of communication. The adjusted method is based on iterative planning and reflective communication (van Ruler, 2015). An essential aspect of this method is stand-up meetings. It was noticed that stand-up meetings work best when they are held daily and are not longer than 15min (van Ruler, 2015). Reflective Communication Scrum has five essential elements: “Permanent monitoring of change”, “Programming of interventions in time-boxed sprints”, “Daily team reflections in stand-up meetings”, “Adaption of new interventions in every new sprint”, and “Self-steering teams with team responsibility, coached by a scrum master”. These five elements guide the Scrum process. Hence, Communication Scrum Framework was created as a response to the growing dynamism and changes in the communication industry.

Design Thinking is another popular agile method. This method has gained momentum in sectors such as information technology, business, medicine and education (Dorst, 2011). The literature discusses that the Design Thinking approach has the potential to facilitate the strategy development process to reach marketing goals (Chen et al., 2018). It follows six steps: empathise, define, ideate, prototype, test, and implement (Traifeh et al., 2019). Organisations emphasise with stakeholders, define the challenges based on the stakeholder observation, and generate first solutions from those observations. The ideas that have the most potential are being prototyped, then tested to get the first reaction from the target group and lastly, the best idea is being produced. This method allows testing and experimenting with ideas before executing the final one to ensure the idea’s need for the target

group. Thus, Design Thinking is about creating innovative solutions through a lot of testing and experimenting.

Some organisations are reluctant to commit to the agile method since it requires drastic organisational changes. Also, implementing the agile method can come across as costly (Overby et al., 2006). Such organisations make use of agile techniques taken from agile methods, such as burndown charts, user stories, stand-up meetings, iterations/sprints and retrospectives (Zerfass et al., 2018). One of the key attributes of agile methods and techniques is technology (Hoda et al., 2011). Various project management technologies and applications can facilitate those techniques in supporting the re-working, supplying incremental evolution and continuous integration (Gandomani et al., 2013). Agile technologies are collaboration and knowledge management platforms that are usually task or object oriented (Conboy et al., 2011). They include social networking and collaborative capabilities to enhance the work process and easier information sharing. Thus, agile methods can be facilitated by agile technologies that have collaborative and information sharing capabilities.

Thus, agile tools, such as Reflective Communication Scrum, Kanban or Design Thinking, are aimed to increase the development speed of the communication strategy, support value creation to the stakeholders, and improve team performance. These tools can be supported by agile technologies that are usually task-oriented, include social networking and collaborative capabilities, and are aimed to boost the project management process.

2.4 PROCESSES & STRUCTURES

Another area of organisational agility is processes and structures that can influence communication strategy planning. This section discusses the challenges and advantages of agile processes and flat organisational structure.

One of the challenges for communication organisations and departments is to align agile processes and structures since agile processes require a flat organisational structure with decentralisation of power (Zerfass et al., 2018). Hierarchical structures and traditional planning models hinder the organisation's flexibility and adaptability to various circumstances in the fast-moving world (Appelbaum et al., 2017a). For instance, bureaucracy may slow down the strategy planning process resulting in organisations failing to act on emerging trends and opportunities (Overby et al., 2006). Also, it tends to slow down the decision process, hindering the strategy's quality (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021). Conversely, agile processes and structures have the benefit of control during the work process since team members are allowed to make decisions while avoiding long bureaucratic approval processes (Mishra et al., 2021). Another advantage of agile process and structure is that it can help minimise functional silos, lack of information sharing and transparency (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021). Functional silos appear when communication professionals work without cross-collaboration, separately from each other. Agile working embrace cross-collaboration and interdisciplinary teams, in which team members are from different professional backgrounds. As a result, it stimulates creativity,

information sharing and brings different perspectives to the table (Paulus et al., 2011; Wipulanusat et al., 2021). Also, transparency plays a significant role in the agile way of working since it creates openness in decision-making (Kalenda et al., 2018). Hence, flat organisational structure and agile processes tend to avoid long bureaucratic processes, functional silos, lack of information sharing and lack of transparency.

The agile process has the benefit of productivity; however, it might be less experienced during the transition from the traditional to the agile way of working since adapting to a new working style takes time (Cohn & Ford, 2003). However, the success rate of agile projects depends on the continues working in an agile way (Coram & Bohner, 2005). Additionally, a poorly integrated agile process may cause damage to the communication strategy. The poorly planned agile process may slow down project development activities, resulting in the organisation missing valuable opportunities (Overby et al., 2006). Thus, to experience agile advantages, a commitment to agile adoption, processes and a flat organisational structure is needed.

2.5 CULTURE & PEOPLE

Culture and people are critical factors in implementing and using agility during communication strategy planning. Organisational culture can be defined as employees shared values, norms and behaviour that form an understanding of what is valid and acceptable (Wilson, 2001). This section analyses the advantages and drawbacks of this area of organisational agility.

Agility beyond methodology is also a mindset. An agile mindset is one that promotes a cultural change in bureaucratic organisations to be more open to reforms and adaptable to public needs, values and changing environments (Mergel et al., 2021). It was also reported by Mergel et al. (2021) that agility embraces abandoning a zero-failure mindset. In short, agility is a mindset of flexibility and adaptability (van Ruler, 2015). The agile mindset works best in a culture that cultivates collaboration and openness in cross-functional teams (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021). In return, agile culture and mindset can influence innovative practices, planning, decision-making, problem-solving strategies and social negotiations at the organisation (Nerur et al., 2005). Thus, agile culture empowers a mindset of openness, flexibility and adaptability to public needs and changing industry requirements. Such a mindset has an influence on work practices.

Some organisations struggle to bring their aspired agile culture to reality. One of the biggest challenges in establishing an agile culture is due to the lack of top management support (Zerfass et al., 2018) and employees' resistance to change (Kalenda et al., 2018). The lack of management support negatively impacts the adoption of agility in the organisation (Mishra et al., 2021). The agile culture is about empowerment, value creation for the organisational members and team support in succeeding and growing (Mergel et al., 2021). The lack of top-management support hinders the adoption since top management support is necessary to establish a culture of trust and freedom for self-managing teams (Hoda et al., 2011). Moreover, resistance to change can come from fear of micromanagement (Cohn &

Ford, 2003). Some employees see agile methods as a way to micromanage them because an agile way of working requires constant interaction and job reporting in short project cycles. Also, this resistance can come from the top management. Top management members are usually risk and opportunity focused, and they can be reluctant to adopt agility due to risk without visibility (Coram & Bohner, 2005). Agility might be viewed as a drastic cultural change with little documentation for tracking progress since it avoids long bureaucratic processes.

Resistance to the way of working can also come from the client side. The communication agency and client have to align on the way of working. In an agile adoption, clients play an essential role since, for successful collaboration, they need to be committed, collaborative, responsible and knowledgeable about the agile method (Conboy et al., 2011). If agile communication projects lack commitment and are not supported and protected, they can be easily crushed by the organisation (Zerfass et al., 2018). Thus, agile culture adoption can be hindered by the fear of micromanagement, lack of top-management support and misalignment with a client's way of working.

The team structure in the agile culture is different from the traditional culture. Agile team members are empowered with more decision-making powers rather than confined to a specific role (Mishra et al., 2021). This results in the diversity of team skillset and empowerment to self-organise one's work (Nerur et al., 2005). However, agility is not for everyone. Some people struggle to adjust to agility more than others. Even with the advantages of self-organisation, freedom and flexibility, not every employee would positively engage in this way of working (Zerfass et al., 2018). Some people prefer stability since they do not embrace uncertainty, and they do not flourish in an agile organisation. Hence, the agile team dynamic embraces self-management, giving communication professionals more decision-making power.

Present Study

In conclusion, this theoretical framework aims to introduce the strategy theory, planning models and three areas of organisational agility: tools and technologies, processes and structure, and culture and people. It gave an overview of the advantages, drawbacks and challenges encountered within each area. Knowing all this, it inevitably leads to this research aim. In assessing agile communication strategy planning, this theoretical framework is a guiding force in the present study. For this study, the method was influenced by these three areas of organisational agility. More about the method is in the following chapter.

3. METHOD & INSTRUMENT

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN & DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The research design for this study was chosen to be an explorative qualitative method with semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were chosen since it is necessary to understand

employees' experiences by listening to their stories and experiences. Semi-structured interview format addresses specific dimensions of agile communication strategy planning and, at the same time, leaves space for participants to share their meaning of the study topic in order to get a better overview of the applied agility in the communication industry (Kallio et al., 2016). Also, this format enables a less formal environment to ask follow-up questions, resulting in richer data.

Before the data collection procedure, ethical approval was obtained on the 29th of April. After receiving approval from the ethical committee, semi-structured interviews were conducted over a period of two and a half weeks. Five strategists, six media strategists, two public relations managers and one resource planner participated in this research. Semi-structured interviews were held through a video-conferencing tool Microsoft Teams. Interviews were conducted in a quiet environment to avoid any possible disturbances. The researcher's role was to ease the stress of interviewees, ask them the right questions about the topic of this study and record the interview with the tool provided by Microsoft Teams.

The interview procedure started with a researcher/interviewer defining agility, describing the study aim and explaining the importance of anonymity of the study. During the video-conferencing interview, participants were informed about their rights and asked to either approve or disapprove by giving verbal consent. After this, ice breaker questions were given to ease the formality of the interview nature and help participants open up during the following parts of the interview. The researcher's goal for this interview was to have an enjoyable interview rather than a strictly formal one. That is why the researcher focused on creating an interview environment where a participant could express her/his thoughts freely. Furthermore, after an ice-breaker, a couple of demographic questions were asked, such as position, experience in the industry and experience at the current job. Afterwards, the researcher asked the main questions about the three areas of agile communication strategy planning: tools and technologies, structures and processes, and culture and people. Because of the nature of the semi-structured interview, the prepared questions were meant to guide the interview. That is why additional questions arose during the interview to learn more about communication professional experiences. After all the questions, the researcher thanked the participant for sharing her/his thoughts and experiences. Interviewees were informed that their concerns or questions can be addressed at any time by contacting the researcher.

3.2 INSTRUMENT

The instrument of this study was a guiding list of questions for semi-structured interviews. The instrument can be found in Appendix A. The question list is divided into three parts. The first part contains ice-breaker questions to ease the formality of the interview. During this part, questions such as "How are you doing?"; "How are you feeling today?" were asked. Also, this part asked some demographical questions to learn more about the position at the current job, experience in the

communication industry and experience at the current agency. Due to the agreed confidentiality and anonymity of the agency and communication professionals, only three demographical questions were asked. Nonetheless, these three questions show the experience level in communication strategy planning.

The second part contains a general question about the experience with agile methodology. The rationale behind starting with a more general question is based on employees' different experience levels since some employees are junior level with little experience in agility. General question, such as "What is the role of agile methods during the strategy planning (at your work)?" showed how much that participant uses and knows about the usage of the agile method during the communication strategy planning.

The last part of the question list dives deeper into the communication professional experiences based on three areas of organisational agility: tools and technologies, structures and processes, and culture and people. During the tools and technologies part, questions were asked about which agile techniques and technologies are practised at the agency and what are the observed and experienced advantages and drawbacks. In the process and structure part, questions analysed the current way of working and how a flat organisational structure supports agility. Lastly, during the culture and people part, questions were asked about the culture of flexibility and adaptability, top-management, team dynamics and challenges. The interview list was meant to guide a researcher during the interview, which is why additional questions arose regarding the advantages and drawbacks.

3.3 SAMPLING METHOD & SAMPLE

The sampling method of this study was chosen to be purposive sampling. The rationale behind this specific sampling technique was the need for purposeful selection of the sample, which in this case is a communication agency and its strategists, media strategists and public relations managers. By selecting a sample that matches the research aims, purposive sampling improves the trustworthiness and credibility of the results (Campbell et al., 2020). Participants of the research were selected with the objective of expanding the understanding of the research topic (Palinkas et al., 2015). Thus, this sampling technique uses the criterion of selecting knowledgeable or experienced participants in communication strategy planning.

Gaining access to the field was achieved through the personal network. Due to the mutual agreement, this research is anonymous and cannot disclose the name of the communication agency and its employees. Due to that, only a few demographical questions were asked. Interviews were conducted with the whole strategy, media strategy and public relations team. More specifically, five strategists, six media strategists, two employees from public relations and one resource planner. They were asked to state their job role and experience in the communication industry and at the researched agency. It was found that the average experience of a communication professional in the

communication field is six years. Also, the average time working at the researched agency is 1.5 years. The summary of this information is provided in Table 2.

Table 2
Summary of demographics

Participant number	Position	Experience in the communication industry	Time working at the current agency
Participant 1	Strategist	1.5 years	1.5 years
Participant 2	Resource Planner	27 years	6 years
Participant 3	Brand Strategy Director	10 years	1 year
Participant 4	Public Relation & Account Manager	4 years	1 year
Participant 5	Digital Media Strategy Intern	2 years	3 months
Participant 6	Digital Media Planner	2 years	1 year
Participant 7	Senior Digital Media Strategist	7 years	1.5 years
Participant 8	Digital Media Strategist	6 years	3 years
Participant 9	Strategy Intern	3 Months	3 Months
Participant 10	Brand Strategist	8 Years	5 Months
Participant 11	Public Relation Intern	3 Months	3 Months
Participant 12	Creative Strategy Director	8 Years	5 Months
Participant 13	Junior Media Strategist	7 Years	3 Months
Participant 14	Media Content Manager	1 Year 3 Months	1 Year 3 Months

3.4 QUALITY PROCEDURES

The quality of the study is measured by looking at the reliability and validity of the study. The reliability of the study was measured with Cohen’s kappa (κ). It is a measure of agreement between the two raters (Blackman & Koval, 2000). The rater of this study was a fellow communication science student who coded 10% of the interviews, more precisely, two transcriptions. The κ was calculated per three areas. Tools and technologies got κ of 0.61, which shows a substantial interrater agreement; processes and structures got κ of 0.73, which again shows a substantial interrater agreement; culture and people got κ of 0.71, which illustrates a substantial interrater agreement (McHugh, 2012). The overall κ of the study is 0.71.

Validity is about measuring the right subject (Boeije, 2009, p.247). The interview questions were designed for communication professionals who are involved in the communication strategy planning. The sample represents the research segment since all the participants have some sort of experience in communication strategy planning. One of the demographical questions was asking about employees’ daily tasks to ensure that the right people were being interviewed. To increase the validity and avoid research biases, interview questions were formulated in a neutral way. During the interview process, the researcher was also neutral to avoid systematic errors.

3.5 DATA PREPARATION & ANALYSIS

The data preparation process was done through transcription of interviews, data anonymisation, and safely storing transcriptions. Online interviews conducted on Microsoft Teams were transcribed with the live Microsoft Teams transcription tool. After the automatic transcription, all the transcriptions were checked and updated to match the recordings. Also, all the sensitive information was taken out to keep the confidentiality of the interviewees. The data was stored on the personal computer in a secure location with a folder for each participant. Interview transcripts were uploaded to the programme Atlas.ti where the data analysis part was done.

The data analysis was conducted based on thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a six-phased method that is useful for analysing interviewees' perspectives, differences and similarities and generating insights (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first phase of data analysis was familiarising with interview data before starting to code (Nowell et al., 2017). This part is crucial for familiarising with the breadth of the content in the transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thus, in the first phase, the researcher carefully read all the transcripts two times to immerse in the data and search for patterns before starting the coding phase.

The second phase started after familiarising with the data and having initial ideas about the content that might be interesting for this research. The aim of this phase was to generate initial codes (sub-categories) by revisiting the data in order to focus on certain characteristics (Nowell et al., 2017). This coding was theory sensitive since the researcher had predetermined three areas of interest, namely tools and technologies, structures and processes, and culture and people. These areas were guiding topics for searching categories and sub-categories. During this phase, a researcher coded essential text sections by attaching a label that relates to a particular topic. This way, the researcher was able to identify important topics and data patterns by using the program, Atlas.ti. Thus, a list of first codes was developed at the end of the initial coding.

The third phase began after the initial coding process. During this phase, a researcher sorted and collated essential coded data sections into themes or, in other words, categories. Three areas of organisational agility influenced those categories. However, those categories are meaningless when one views them alone, but they are discovered by bringing together fragments of experiences (Aronson, 1995). Categories capture essential information to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). When looking for categories, the researcher started with some predefined codes that helped to examine the relevant parts for the data analysis part. Eventually, codes discovered in phase two formed main subcategories. Some codes did not belong anywhere. That is why a “miscellaneous” theme, recommended by Braun et al. (2006), was developed to store those codes temporarily.

The fourth phase of thematic analysis started with categories and sub-categories from phase three. They were devised and required some refinement (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The aim of this phase is to review categories and sub-categories to evaluate whether they form a coherent pattern. Some

inadequacies made in phases two and three required various changes. Some sub-categories were newly generated, and some were discarded as the sub-category had no use anymore. This process of going back and forth is natural to this phase as coding is an ongoing process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During this phase, the data was reduced into a set of essential categories and sub-categories that cohere together meaningfully. Those selected sub-categories were specific enough to explain the situation and ideas of agile communication strategy planning advantages and drawbacks. Thus, the end result had different categories and sub-categories, knowing how they fit together and what they tell about the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this phase, Cohens Kappa was checked where a fellow communication science student got two interview transcripts and a codebook to code 10% of interviews. Hence, the end result of this phase was a list of 12 categories and 29 sub-categories.

The fifth phase is aimed at defining and naming categories and sub-categories of the final theme list (codebook) (Nowell et al., 2017). This phase started with an analysis of each category and sub-category by determining what aspect they capture and the rationale behind choosing them. Then the researcher started defining each sub-category by explaining what each of them means and how it supports understanding the data. This stage helps a researcher to see the overall story that each sub-category tells in terms of the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Sufficient time was invested in this part to finalise the sub-categories and develop credible findings. The end result of this phase was clearly defined sub-categories. The complete codebook is presented in Appendix B.

The last sixth phase of thematic analysis started when each sub-category was sufficiently described in terms of scope and content. This phase involves the final analysis and production of the report (Nowell et al., 2017). It is aimed at reporting the results, discussion and conclusions, which are presented in the following chapters of this report. The following chapters explain those sub-categories' underlying meanings, assumptions, and implications. Quotes from the interviews accompanied the reporting to create an overall story about the relevance of each sub-category.

4. RESULTS

This chapter presents interview results based on three main themes: tools and technologies, processes and structures, and people and culture. These themes are based on categories and subcategories that explore the advantages and drawbacks of the agile way of working during communication strategy planning. It touches upon various elements to better understand the influencing aspects of the communication strategy planning, such as organisational structure, technology and team dynamic. The following sections present results in descriptive tables of categories and sub-categories and explain each sub-category. Information provided in this chapter is supported by quotes from interviews. A codebook with the complete list of quotes is provided in Appendix B. Additionally, a summarised table of categories and sub-categories is presented in Appendix C.

4.1 TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGIES

It was discovered that the most prominent agile technology advantages for communication professionals were having (1.1) a central platform for communications, having (1.2) a clear overview of the division of labour and (1.3) improved collaboration during communication strategy planning. On the other side, the drawback of agile technologies is the possible (2.1) lack of commitment to them.

Regarding the agile techniques, three advantages were the most prominent in the interviews. The first advantage is specific to the agile technique, stand-up meetings. These meetings tend to (3.1) establish more certainty in strategy quality. Also, agile techniques (3.2) allow testing and experimenting more with various strategic ideas. Lastly, several participants mentioned that using agile techniques creates (3.3) a competitive advantage in the communication industry. Apart from that, two drawbacks of agile techniques have been identified in interviews. One is (4.1) a lack of initiation of agility at the agency and (4.2) poorly planned stand-up meetings. The following paragraphs explain each category and subcategory more in-depth. See the summary of the tools and technologies theme in Table 3.

Table 3

Summary of tools and technologies theme

Main Category	Sub-Category	Description	Example
(1) Agile Technology Advantages	(1.1) Central Platform	Agile technology can serve as a central platform for a range of use cases, such as communication. It can be used instead of traditional communication platforms.	“On another project the creatives said that would have been nice if we had a Trello board because at one point we’ve been using WhatsApp, email, Teams and all the documents were like scattered throughout different platforms. In all honesty, they weren’t in one place, so it was really hard to find stuff. So it was really nerve wracking because, you know, if you didn’t read an email, you missed one, then you didn’t know what’s happening.” (Participant 3)
	(1.2) Overview of Division of Labour	Agile technologies can be used for showcasing an overview of labour division, timeline views, calendar views, etc.	“Having all of the digital processes listed with the clear overview, who’s doing what and who’s responsible for what, is really actually helpful to eliminate any issues going forward.” (Participant 8)
	(1.3) Improved Collaboration	Team cooperation on the agile software when working on a strategy.	“I think it’s really interesting way of getting all your thoughts down on the page, aligning your thoughts, allowing collaboration on those thoughts. I think that probably be the biggest one in terms of actually narrowing down, multiple thoughts into one a very seamless way.” (Participant 12)
(2) Agile Technology Drawbacks	(2.1) Lack of Commitment to Technology	Employees’ lack of commitment to agile technology challenges forming a habit of using it.	“People get excited about something, so there’s a lot of talk, a lot of energy, we introduce something and then after two weeks, no ones using it. I’ve had that multiple times as in exactly with Trello, like everyone got excited. We’ve all used it for a month and then after a month everyone forgot to use Trello and everyone went back to using email. So that was just annoying.” (Participant 3)
(3) Agile Technique Advantages	(3.1) Stand-Up Meetings	Stand-up meetings have a feature to keep everyone on the same page and establish	“I think that would save me a lot of heartache and actually test thoughts out before they become fully functional

	Establish Certainty	certainty of the quality of a strategy, especially when there are hiccups or problems in the strategy.	strategies. And so I see a humongous amount of value in it.” (Participant 12)
	(3.2) Allowing to Test and Experiment More	Agile methodologies allow being more flexible in terms of testing, experimenting and reflecting.	“I believe that they allow you to test out more thoughts. I believe that they allow you to think a little bit crazier because I can go down the road that could be more crazy, a little bit more risky without having to travel the whole way down it. I believe that you get to a better spot because I get insights and communication for more areas and also that gives me an opportunity to listen to conversations that I would never have been a part of, but actually could really affect the way that I think about project.” (Participant 12)
	(3.3) Competitive Advantage	Implemented agile methodology techniques can help to stay ahead of the curve.	“I think definitely in our industry we need to like stay ahead of the curve or make sure brand stay ahead of the curve as well. So, I would say yes, there is always a need. For it, and there's always more to learn . . . I think there's definitely a need and a need that will stay for agile methods.” (Participant 4)
(4) Agile Techniques Drawbacks	(4.1) Lack of Agile Initiation at the Agency	Agile methodologies cannot be implemented without key people initiating them. The lack of agile methodology initiation can be a bummer to a flexible and adaptable way of working.	“I think a lot of companies also say that they do it and they aren't actually implementing it. And so I think it is important that more processes and not rules, but techniques are put into place to actually ensure that it's happening because it's much easier to say that it's taking place in actually making sure that it is.” (Participant 11)
	(4.2) Poorly Planned Stand-Up Meetings	Poorly planned stand-up meetings can end up in less productive way of working.	“I think that there might be ways to make these stand up meetings a little bit more precise just to make sure that we are always covering the right amount. The right amount like exactly what we need to talk about. Sometimes these meetings are a bit flimsy. And we get lost a little bit. So I think there would like we would benefit for a little bit more organization from that side. It would be much more productive.” (Participant 14)

Agile Technology Advantages and Drawbacks

It was noticed that communication professionals perceive agile technology as having (1.1) a central platform for keeping everyone up to date when it comes to communications since there is frustration and confusion when several communication platforms are being used simultaneously during the strategy planning process. Employees also see the benefit of having (1.2) a clear overview of the division of labour. Participant 4 mentioned that *“Especially if you're working on a lot of different projects, it can help you just like keep an overview or like things that you can't forget.”* Another benefit that came often was (1.3) an improved collaboration between communication professionals when working on communication strategy. Participant 12 mentioned that *“Specifically, during the ideation phase, it's like we got a million different strategies or insights. Let's put them all down and actually, let's figure out which of these make a story. And that's always good. When I'm communicating with my boss and trying to visualise as those in reality.”* Hence, it is evident that agile technologies establish a central communication platform that provides a clear overview of labour division, and it might improve collaboration and thought sharing during the communication strategy planning.

On the contrary, these advantages may not be achieved without employees' (2.1) commitment to using agile technologies. This was noted as a drawback that happens due to a short-lasting excitement of new technology and failed habit formation. Participant 3 mentioned that the key to successful usage of agile technologies is consistency: *"People get excited about something, so there is a lot of talks, a lot of energy, we introduce something and then after two weeks, no ones using it. I've had that multiple times, as in exactly with Trello, like everyone got excited. We've all used it for a month, and then after a month, everyone forgot to use Trello, and everyone went back to using email. So that was just annoying. So I would say that if the consistency is the key, I think that's the biggest problem."* Without consistent utilisation of agile technologies, the advantages might be less noticeable. It was noticed that employees see the advantages of agile technologies for their productivity but struggle to form a collective habit of using such technologies.

The Benefits and Drawback of the Stand-Up Meetings

Stand-up meetings are short team meetings to discuss the work progress (van Ruler, 2015). Interview participants mentioned that such meetings give certainty (3.1) with the work being done as it clears out the problems, allows to test thoughts among other strategists and collect everyone's opinions on necessary parts of the communication strategy. Participant 7 mentioned that *"Making sure that if there any hiccups or like problems that challenge us that anyone has that we put people, we used the forces that we have to ensure that we solve the problem and also in terms of accounts I think we have stand ups to ensure where the workload is at the moment not maybe to a scrum that you're like checking."* Communication professionals mentioned that they see a great value in stand-up meetings. However, at the same time, it was noted that poorly planned stand-up meetings (4.2), for example, too many meetings result in wasted time, unproductivity and less efficiency. Participant 14 summarised this as *"I think that there might be ways to make these stand-up meetings a little bit more precise just to make sure that we are always covering the right amount. The right amount like exactly what we need to talk about. Sometimes these meetings are a bit flimsy. And we get lost a little bit. So I think there would like we would benefit for a little bit more organization from that side. It would be much more productive."* These two contrasting opinions show that the advantages of stand-up meetings can get lost if they are poorly planned.

Agile Techniques Advantages and Drawbacks

Interview participants mentioned that agile techniques allow strategists to (3.2) test, experiment, and reflect on communication ideas. Participant 12 mentioned that agile techniques could be riskier than the traditional way of working during communication strategy planning. However, agile techniques might be more beneficial for communication strategy: *"I believe that they allow you to think a little bit crazier because I can go down the road that could be more crazy, a little bit more risky without having to travel the whole way down it. I believe that you get to a better spot because I*

get insights and communication for more areas and also that it gives me an opportunity to listen to conversations that I would never have been a part of but actually could really affect the way that I think about the project”.

Furthermore, agile techniques are known to be flexible and adaptable. Thus, they might create a (3.3) competitive advantage for communication professionals since many changes are happening in the field of communication, such as new media regulations and trends coming in and out. With rapid changes, communication professionals have to quickly learn and unlearn trends or media regulations. This might be achieved through experimenting, testing, and reflecting that creates a competitive advantage. Participant 5 mentioned that *“Agility, it's very needed in the advertisement because in advertising and marketing I see that every week we have changes in every platform and even just one year, I feel like last year I've learned something at school or other people told me to do so. But this year, everything has changed, so I think agility is very important for us to adapt like right away and to unlearn. I think that's ability to unlearn from the people you have learned but also, yeah, to unlearn yourself.”* The communication industry experiences daily changes, whereas according to participants, agile techniques could be beneficial since they allow to test and experiment with communication ideas more, creating a competitive advantage for an agency and client.

Nevertheless, a competitive advantage of having agile techniques cannot be reached without its successful (4.1) initiation at the agency. This is due to the unwillingness to change the way of working. Participant 11 mentioned that there is usually more talking about agile methodology initiation at the agency than doing it: *“I think a lot of companies also say that they do it and they aren't actually implementing it. And so I think it is important that more processes and not rules, but techniques are put into place to actually ensure that it's happening because it's much easier to say that it's taking place in actually making sure that it is.”* Thus, in order to achieve a competitive advantage, agile initiation in the organisation is necessary.

4.2 PROCESSES AND STRUCTURES

Interview participants see a considerable value in agile method processes for communication strategy planning. It was discovered that communication professionals see the agile process as (5.1) a source of inspiration for creativity that gives (5.2) more control in taking care of the strategy planning process. Also, having (5.3) a clear work structure and timeline was perceived as valuable and beneficial. Additionally, participants mentioned that the agile process advantages the communication strategy planning since it increases employees' (5.4) productivity and (5.5) efficiency. However, it was discovered that the drawback is the (6.1) poor agile process planning. Regarding the flat organisational structure, participants mentioned one advantage and drawback: (7.1) the feeling of comfort and (8.1) unequal responsibility division. This section analyses these advantages and drawbacks more thoroughly. See the summary of the processes and structures theme in Table 4.

Table 4*Summary of processes and structures theme*

Main Category	Sub-Category	Description	Example
(5) Agile Process Advantages	(5.1) Source of Inspiration for Creativity	The agile strategy creation process may spark inspiration to be more creative.	“Repeatable methods cause predictable outcomes and if you're predictable in marketing you're dead. So in strategy you need to come up with new stuff every day. You need to be agile in that sense. (Participant 1)
	(5.2) More Control Over Work Process	Agile methods may give more control over the process of strategy planning.	“I like agile more because I think you have more control over the process, over costs, over everything and you align with other people in earlier stages because you know what the different stakeholders needs to do because you defined them already in an earlier stage, you're already discussed that everybody is aware every step of the way.” (Participant 2)
	(5.3) Clear Work Structure and Timelines	Agile methodologies are based on a clear work timeline and structure.	“it gives structure and timelines to a lot of processes. I think especially in such fast-paced environment such as advertising, there are a lot of times it feels that you're in a factory generating different strategies and it can be really difficult because it involves actually intellectual work. And sometimes it's very difficult to jump from one thing to another and produce high level output. Structuring your workload and structuring it together with your colleagues and making sure that there is actually space and there is team support to produce such outcomes is super important.” (Participant 8)
	(5.4) Productivity	Agile processes are short and well-defined. This may lead to a more productive way of working.	“So ultimately, I would say number one is productivity and in getting inspired or getting a view of different people because you include them in the process. So but productivity is number one and I would highly recommend it for agencies to look into it because that saves money and time.” (Participant 3) “I think in terms of productivity, like naturally bang out the results quite quickly.” (Participant 10)
	(5.5) Efficiency	Agile methods may result in efficient processes in terms of costs, time and results.	“It became so much easier to actually understand what's going on in every single project and input effectively in those in those meetings, rather than having to chase someone for an answer or find out about something after it already happened. And so effectiveness went up a huge amount.” (Participant 12)
(6) Agile Process Drawbacks	(6.1) Poor Agile Process Planning	Not putting effort into organising an agile process plan may lead to unproductive processes.	“Our work setup and just having more of a proper, you know like plan right now it's a bit like up in the air and every account manager kind of does things their own way. So we don't have a proper schedule or let's say, even if we had like, yeah, OK, we got Float program now, but it still doesn't work properly. So I think it should just maybe like account could start thinking about some agile strategies that we could implement a little bit more in our daily lives.” (Participant 14)
(7) Flat Organisational Structure Advantages	(7.1) Feeling of Comfort	A flat organisational structure creates a feeling of comfort to speak up, try new things and be flexible.	“I think having a flat style of working it helps everyone be more flexible and it helps everyone feel more comfortable, work together better.” (Participant 11)
(8) Flat Organisational Structure Drawbacks	(8.1) Unequal Division of Responsibilities	A flat organisational structure can result in unequal responsibility division for more senior	“We've had this discussion last week that because the structure is flat and we're all in silos. Technically speaking, head of strategy shouldn't be working on everyday clients, because he's chief strategy officer. Like

communication professionals.

his tasks should be big stuff, organizational, making sure the team runs smoothly and he should be only in contact with me and another strategy director because we're directors. So we should be reporting to him what's happening on client." (Participant 3)

Agile Processes Advantages and Drawbacks

It was mentioned that the agile process is (5.1) a source of inspiration for creativity that gives (5.2) more control over the process of communication strategy planning. Participant 1 mentioned that working in an agile way could be a source of inspiration for being creative since it opposes the usage of repeatable methods, *"Repeatable methods cause predictable outcomes and if you're predictable in marketing you're dead. So in strategy you need to come up with new stuff every day. You need to be agile in that sense."* Also, Participant 3 mentions that the agile process can inspire creativity since it questions the status quo, *"if you've been doing things for over 10 years and you know we have people that have worked in the advertising agency even longer then you kind of become very repetitive and then you stop questioning the status quo, and that's where I think some of the techniques help push you a little bit."* Having more control over the processes might facilitate these advantages. Participant 2 mentioned that the agile process gives a feeling of control over the alignment with stakeholders and costs: *"I like agile more because I think you have more control over the process, over costs, over everything and you align with other people in earlier stages because you know what the different stakeholders needs to do because you defined them already in an earlier stage, you're already discussed that everybody is aware every step of the way."* The control over the process might support creativity since agile processes aim to better align with stakeholders' needs and look at the problem from a different, more empathetic perspective.

Furthermore, agile processes have the benefit of (5.3) a clear work structure and timeliness that can potentially increase (5.4) productivity and (5.5) efficiency. However, (6.1) poorly planned agile processes can lead to inefficient communication strategy planning. During interviews, communication professionals mentioned that agile processes might benefit strategy planning since they have a clear work structure and timeliness that helps to produce high-level outcomes, as Participant 8 mentions, *"it gives structure and timelines to a lot of processes. I think especially in such fast-paced environment such as advertising, there are a lot of times it feels that you're in a factory generating different strategies and it can be really difficult because it involves actually intellectual work. . . . Structuring your workload and structuring it together with your colleagues and making sure that there is actually space and there is team support to produce such outcomes is super important."* Work structuring makes employees' tasks more straightforward, potentially increasing their productivity. Participant 2 mentions that *"In my opinion, if you work in an agile way, it's very productive because the lines are short and you know exactly what to do."* Agile processes are well-defined to keep everyone on the same page and let communication professionals work on higher

priority tasks which might increase work efficiency. As Participant 4 mentions, *“I think it helps you like prioritizing. Prioritizing ideas off with your colleagues Get the work done quicker and achieve higher results.”*

On the contrary, these advantages can come across as a drawback if planned poorly, resulting in lower productivity and efficiency. Not having a proper agile plan can cause dissatisfaction, as Participant 14 explains, *“Our work setup and just having more of a proper, you know like plan right now it's a bit like up in the air and every account manager kind of does things their own way. So we don't have a proper schedule or let's say, even if we had like, yeah, OK, we got Float program now, but it still doesn't work properly.”* Communication professionals find process planning beneficial for their work in terms of a clear work structure and timeliness, increased productivity and efficiency. Nonetheless, agile process planning has to be well defined to potentially augment productivity and efficiency.

Flat Organisational Structure Advantages and Drawbacks

A flat organisational structure gives (7.1) a feeling of comfort, potentially increasing willingness to share communication ideas and test them more often. Participant 4 mentions, *“I think a flat structure makes people feel more comfortable and speak up more and try like if people have more sense of being able and being allowed to try certain things or say certain things.”* However, a flat organisational structure might backfire due to an (8.1) unequal division of responsibilities for senior communication professionals. Participant 3 illustrates this *“Technically speaking, head of strategy shouldn't be working on everyday clients, because he's chief strategy officer. Like his tasks should be big stuff, organizational, making sure the team runs smoothly and he should be only in contact with me and another strategy director because we're directors.”* Thus, to some extent, a flat organisational structure might give a sense of comfort to sharing and testing ideas, but it can backfire with an unequal division of responsibilities for senior communication professionals.

4.3 CULTURE AND PEOPLE

The culture and people section presents various advantages and drawbacks of agile culture, agile culture adoption, and team dynamic. Interview participants find agile culture advantages as having (9.1) an open-minded mindset, (9.2) flexible working hours, (9.3) team bonding experience and (9.4) individual adaptability. For the agile culture adoption drawbacks, communication professionals felt that several factors hinder the adoption process, such as (10.1) changes in terms of new hires, (10.2) need for consistent training, (10.3) resistance to changes from employees, (10.4) traditional clients, (10.5) lack of top management support and (10.6) inefficient accountability of account managers. During the interviews, communication professionals mentioned that the benefit of an agile team dynamic is having (11.1) a self-organising/self-managing team dynamic. On the contrary, the drawback was identified to be (12.1) fragmented departments. The following sections analyse these advantages and drawbacks. See the summary of culture and people theme in Table 5.

Table 5*Summary of culture and people theme*

Main Category	Sub-Category	Description	Example
(9) Agile Culture Advantages	(9.1) Open Minded Mindset	Open-minded mindset towards testing, new knowledge and initiatives.	“I would say personally their personalities are not that flexible. . . .But every week I can observe for my team that we share optimal practice every week, so I think that's a very cool thing, and I, and I would say that they're really willing to learn from those tests.” (Participant 5)
	(9.2) Flexible Working Hours	In an agile culture, employees can manage their own time.	“I would say it's very flexible in terms of how you divide your timings. You can choose that yourself as long as you have something on the deadline.” (Participant 1)
	(9.3) Team Bonding Experience	Agile processes may bring the team closer, creating a stronger team spirit.	“if you working together on a project for over a year or maybe less, but it can happen that we work more than a year, you can really get the sense of a team spirit and you need to build up and you need to be able to because if it's a year, it has its ups and downs.” (Participant 2)
	(9.4) Individual Adaptability	Individual adaptability is about adapting to different personalities within the team, and also it is about adaptability to various changes and crises.	“I think that this could be answered basically by the fact that like we always, everybody works and creates strategies in different ways. I feel like everyone has their own method, let's say like the head of strategy is more of a briefer while creative strategy director is more of a writer. So like, I feel like we don't really have like a proper method in place in terms of how we write strategy but everybody has their own style and it ends up just working for the client.” (Participant 14)
(10) Agile Culture Adoption Drawbacks	(10.1) Changes in Terms of New Hires	Big changes in new hires or employees leaving can lead to issues with onboarding new hires with the agile way of working.	“I've noticed that there is a little bit of time spent on onboarding new people. So the new people are so confused. They don't understand what the process is. So they also make up their own process. So ultimately there is chaos.” (Participant 3)
	(10.2) The Need for Consistent Training	To preserve an agile culture, consistent training might be needed, which for some may come across as a drawback.	“We kicked off with Scrum. We had the goals, like the higher goals and the lower goals. This was kicked off by a resource planner and then it should have been taken on by the account team because they are responsible for having like the project in check, but then it didn't happen. I'm thinking that maybe our account people in the office are also like a bit inexperienced with Scrum.” (Participant 1)
	(10.3) Resistance to Changes from Employees	The fear of changes in terms of working style. Disturbance in the usual way of working	“It was rough at first and there was huge resistance to it via these. Why these meetings coming in that that this, this is stupid man, I'm never going to have time to do anything and I would.” (Participant 12)
	(10.4) Traditional Clients	Working in agile goes both ways. The agency and client sides have to agree on this way of working. Sometimes clients are more traditional and less likely to work in an agile way posing a threat to an agile agency's culture.	“For you to be truly agile, client has to be agile too. And with us having so many different clients. That becomes very hard to do because if the client traditional and we're not, then I don't know how you can truly be doing it.” (Participant 12)
	(10.5) Lack of Top Support	The lack of top management support in fostering an agile	“I think it should be having a cheerleader. You know management needs to believe in it. And if the

	Management Support	working poses a threat to an agile culture adoption.	management believes in agility, then you can do it.” (Participant 2)
	(10.6) Inefficient Accountability of Account Managers in Agile Working	The account manager's role is to facilitate agile working for the successful adoption of the agile culture. However, there can be confusion in the accountability of agile process facilitation.	“I think that account should take it upon themselves to have more of a checklist and to moderate the conversations during the meeting a little bit more.” (Participant 14)
(11) Agile Team Dynamic Advantages	(11.1) Self-organising/Self-managing Team	Communication professionals know their tasks and responsibilities.	“People are responsible for the outcome themselves. And so we going to work better with in timings. And I think that will increase our quality, creative output for us.” (Participant 2)
(12) Agile Team Dynamic Drawbacks	(12.1) Fragmented Departments	Fragmented departments appear when employees do not have unity in their work.	“It's because it was so fragmented between our departments. You know, we're very strictly. This is where accounts starts and ends. This is where strategy starts and ends. This is where media strategy starts and ends. This is where creative strategy starts and ends. I don't think you can have flexibility without fluidity.” (Participant 6)

Agile Culture Advantages

Interview participants mentioned that agile culture has multiple advantages, such as (9.1) open-minded mindset, (9.2) flexible working hours, (9.3) team bonding experience and (9.4) individual adaptability.

Participants mentioned that in agile culture, communication professionals embrace an open-minded mindset toward new initiatives, novel knowledge and testing ideas. Also, results show that an open-minded mindset can be about being open to feedback and criticism, as mentioned by Participant 5: *“We live in the high pace world at the same time sometimes we cannot catch up with things, but if you have an open mind it's easier for people to tell you something. It's easier to tell you to test, easier to tell to learn something, easier to tell you that you're wrong, and you're right.”* Moreover, it was mentioned that sometimes communication professionals have less flexible personalities. However, findings show that having such a personality does not hinder having an open-minded mindset to react fast to the changing media landscape. Participant 5 summarises this: *“I would say personally their personalities are not that flexible, but in terms of doing the plan I can see that. The charm of them is that they constantly update with the new changes of the platforms, and that's what every media planners have to do.”* Hence, an open-minded mindset in communication strategy planning is about being open to new initiatives, novel knowledge, feedback and testing communication ideas.

Moreover, participants mentioned that one of the advantages of an agile culture is having flexible working hours. Participant 1 illustrates this: *“I would say it's very flexible in terms of how you divide your timings. You can choose that yourself as long as you have something on the deadline.”* The working schedule is flexible and can be adjusted according to a communication professional. Participant 7 confirms that flexibility appears in how one manages time throughout the week: *“We're flexible throughout the week. So let's say I work 12 hours on Monday and that means that I can work*

less hours the next day. So they're putting that from the top.” Thus, flexibility appears in how communication professionals plan their time according to the deadline during agile working.

Furthermore, another advantage is the team bonding experience. In the agile way of working, a team tends to spend a lot of time together, strengthening the team spirit. As explained by Participant 2, *“I think the benefit of agile and also that you have a team working with your team together through all phases, so it also gives a certain bond and it's a certain feeling from how we doing this together because if you working together on a project for over a year or maybe less, but it can happen that we work more than a year, you can really get the sense of a team spirit and you need to build up and you need to be able to because if it's a year, it has its ups and downs.”* Also, Participant 6 mentioned that even challenging times can strengthen the team spirit: *“We also share moments that were like deeply challenging where you have like situations where you're not sure how to, how you deal with it. And this is kind of like a nice, that's learning too.”* Therefore, team bonding can be strengthened during agile projects and even during challenging times.

Besides these advantages, participants mentioned that sometimes some communication professionals have more difficult personalities to work with. Individual adaptability helps adapt to each individual's way of working and thinking. Participant 14 summarises this as *“I think that this could be answered basically by the fact that like we always, everybody works and creates strategies in different ways. I feel like everyone has their own method, let's say like the head of strategy is more of a briefer while creative strategy director is more of a writer. So like, I feel like we don't really have like a proper method in place in terms of how we write strategy but everybody has their own style and it ends up just working for the client.”* Individual adaptability lets communication professionals have a coherent work culture.

Agile Culture Adoption Drawbacks

Interview data showed a connection between (10.1) changes in terms of new hires and (10.2) the need for consistent training. Frequent employee changes create an unequal level of knowledge in agility. Participant 3 explains, *“I've noticed that there is a little bit of time spent on onboarding new people. So the new people are so confused. They don't understand what the process is. So they also make up their own process. So ultimately, there is chaos.”* There is a challenge with onboarding new hires with an agile way of working to preserve the culture. Training every new hire can be time-consuming and costly. However, new employees might work in their own way without agile training, posing a threat to an agile culture. Participant 2 adds to this, *“So for instance, we are getting new people in the office and they start working and if they're not being on boarded in a right way in our own internal process, they're gonna do it their own way.”* Hence, constant hiring requires frequent training to onboard new people in order to preserve an agile organisational culture.

Establishing an agile culture is a team effort. According to the participants, the drawbacks of agile culture adoption include (10.4) the resistance to change from employees, (10.5) the lack of top

management support and (10.6) inefficient accountability of account managers in agile working. Participants mentioned that the idea of switching to agility could feel daunting, especially when people are used to working in traditional ways. Participant 12 summarises this as *“We have the people who have done appetizing certain way for a long time and to try and convince people to follow a singular process even though agile isn't a singular process, the thought of OK now we are switching to agile. I think could be a bit daunting.”* Also, participants mentioned that some communication professionals fear the risk of micromanagement. Participant 3 explains this as *“sometimes they feel like agile working requires to testify what I do every day and I think this is where sometimes advertising agencies, people tend to look away from those techniques because they feel like ohh why someone is checking up on me every day or like I'm adult enough I can do it by myself”*. Dealing with the resistance to change from employees is one of the top-management responsibilities. Participant 2 highlights top management's critical role: *“I think it should be having a cheerleader. You know management needs to believe in it. And if the management believes in agility, then you can do it.”* It puts top management in the role of encourager and ambassador of agile culture. Participants also mentioned that account managers are crucial for adopting agile culture since they are responsible for planning strategist schedules. Participant 14 illustrates this *“I think that account should take it upon themselves to have more of a checklist and to moderate the conversations during the meeting a little bit more.”* Hence, communication professionals see the top management as agile culture ambassadors that manage the employee resistance and account managers as facilitators of the agile working.

Nevertheless, top management and account managers cannot work in an agile way if the (10.4) client is traditional. To have an agile communication strategy planning process, the client has to be involved in an agile way of working too. Participant 12 summarises this *“For you to be truly agile, the client has to be agile too. And with us having so many different clients. That becomes very hard to do because if the client is traditional and we're not, then I don't know how you can truly be doing it. From that perspective and actually getting the client signed off as well, it has to be someone like the CEO. Who has the knowledge relations with all of our clients and have to get the equivalent person involved from the client side as well.”* According to Participant 12, traditional clients also need encouragement from top management to change their way of working. Thus, the role of top management goes beyond encouraging its own employees. To have a fully established agile culture, there is a need for support from top management and account managers and alignment with the client's way of working.

Self-Managing Team and Fragmented Departments

According to communication professionals (11.1) a self-organising and self-managing team is one of the agile team dynamic advantages. On the contrary, such a benefit may lead to (12.1) a fragmented department. In a self-managing team, all the team members know their tasks, and thus, there is bigger trust in whether that task will be accomplished, as participant 10 mentions, *“We are responsible for what we do and that's also recognized. We trust each other that the job is done.”*

However, some participants mentioned that sometimes due to the culture of self-management, functional silos might appear that prevent the knowledge sharing between the departments. Participant 4 illustrates this *“I would say it's a positive thing that everybody knows to do their jobs, but I think in the advertisement, and as we are in a creative industry, it can also sometimes help to have input from other departments that will spark new ideas on the strategy side.”* Hence, there are contradicting answers whether self-managing team dynamic is beneficial or not. Participant 6 shares this confusion *“We're so fragmented that we do really self-govern. I just don't know if that's for the best.”* Some other participants mentioned that it challenges the communication strategy planning process. This can be illustrated by Participant 6 answer, *“I think it really streamlines and segments the strategy, you know I think we could benefit more from an increased involvement in the strategic process from start to finish.”* Most communication professionals showed a positive sentiment towards self-managing team dynamics. However, answers were mixed when the drawback of fragmented departments was considered.

Conclusion

Three areas of interest, namely tools and technologies, processes and structures, and culture and people, resulted in a list of 29 advantages and drawbacks of agile methods. The summarised list of advantages and drawbacks can be found in Appendix C. Some findings were more prominent than others, such as fragmented departments, employee resistance to change, lack of top management support, agile competitive advantage and changes in terms of new hires. The discussion part goes more in-depth with the most prominent findings, research limitations and theoretical and practical implications.

5. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

5.1 DISCUSSION

This research examines communication professional experiences and opinions about the advantages and drawbacks of the agile methodology during communication strategy planning. This section discusses the most prominent findings in terms of which advantages and drawbacks are contradicted, confirmed, extended and appeared to be new to the literature presented in the theoretical framework (see chapter 2).

Starting with a contradiction, this research found that the drawback of agility might be fragmented departments leading to a fragmented strategy. However, this contradicts previous research as an agile way of working is found to minimise functional silos (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021). Also, previous research states that one of the agile aspects is embracing cross-departmental collaboration, see Table 1 (Wipulanusat et al., 2021). This way creates interdisciplinary teams that include employees from various professional backgrounds (Paulus et al., 2011). Nonetheless, this research reveals that some communication professionals think self-management can be a cause of fragmented

departments that prevent knowledge sharing between the departments. Surprisingly, a self-managing team was viewed as an advantage, whereas the mentioned consequence of it, fragmented departments, was viewed negatively. Nevertheless, more research is needed to understand whether the fragmented department drawback is a cause of self-management or a poor agile process planning.

This study confirmed two prominent drawbacks: employee resistance to change and the lack of top management support. Previous research states that these two drawbacks are one of the biggest challenges for agile culture adoption (Kalenda et al., 2018; Zeffass et al., 2018). This study found that resistance to changing the working style can come from the fear of micromanagement, which previous research has also recorded as a drawback (Cohn & Ford, 2003). Additionally, this research extends this drawback's explanation by suggesting that changes in work styles create a daunting feeling. Communication professionals who are used to working in the traditional way may feel worried that it can disturb their way of working. Furthermore, the agile culture embraces empowerment, value creation for its employees and team support (Mergel et al., 2021). Literature suggests that top management's role is crucial in supporting the agile culture (Hoda et al., 2011). This study confirms that the lack of top management support can hinder the agile culture and its adoption. It also confirms that top management's role is empowering and encouraging employees to work in an agile way. This study suggests that top management's support may minimise the employees' resistance to change as it creates relevance for the agile way of working.

Moreover, this study tries to extend the understanding of the competitive advantage of the communication industry since there is little research about it. Previous research suggests that agile methods can maintain an organisation's competitive advantage in environments that need continuous change and reinvention (Appelbaum et al., 2017a). This research extends this by explaining that the communication industry experiences changes on a daily basis, and agile methods might play a critical role in staying ahead of the curve. Agility lets communication professionals be flexible and adaptable to learn and unlearn occurring trends and changing industry requirements quicker than traditional methods. Competitive advantage is created through the ability to experiment, test, and reflect. As a result, this kind of work creates value for the client.

Furthermore, there is a lack of literature analysing the drawback of frequent changes in terms of new hires, especially during the Great Resignation that touches Europe and the US. Great Resignation is a trend of employees quitting their jobs (Carbonaro, 2022). The communication industry is not immune to this trend either. This drawback threatens the adoption of the agile culture since it creates issues with onboarding new hires with the agile way of working. This might appear due to the lack of consistent agile training within the organisation, which hinders agile work processes. Thus, this shows the added relevance of consistent agile training, especially with onboarding the new hires on the agile way of working.

5.2 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study strengthens previous research regarding the advantages and drawbacks of agile methods. Also, this study contributes to a better understanding of the agile advantages and drawbacks for the communication industry. In this section, the three most notable drawbacks encountered during the process of communication strategy planning are discussed with the role of communication. These drawbacks include a lack of top-management support, traditional clients and the role of account managers at the communication agency.

Most communication professionals reported a lack of top management support as one of the drawbacks. This drawback came prominently since previous research shows that management support is essential for self-managing teams to establish and flourish in regards to giving freedom and setting up a culture of trust (Hoda et al., 2011). This research contributes that in the communication industry, especially during communication strategy planning, top management's role is acting as an ambassador or encourager of agility. Top management's responsibility is to believe in agility and inspire others to believe in it too. Inspirational leadership can spark motivation to continue and embrace agility during communication strategy planning. Thus, top management needs to possess communication skills, such as clarity and transparency and be open to receiving and implementing feedback. Transformational leadership seems to fit the narrative since it follows vision, supportive leadership, inspirational communication, intellectual stimulation and personal recognition (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). However, more research is needed to see how transformational leadership affects working in agile methodology. Such results could be beneficial for the top management to re-evaluate their role in agile working adoption and understand the importance of mental support throughout the agile working. Compared to previous research in the scope of communication professionals, this finding can add a new layer to the importance of the top-management support in the communication industry and throughout the communication strategy planning.

Moreover, there is not much research about the agency's relationship between the clients and communication professionals. This research suggests that to have a smooth strategy planning process, the client and the agency have to commit to the agile way of working. Hence, the client must be aware of the process and be a part of it to have a smooth collaboration. From the agency side, it was discovered that communication professionals see account managers as responsible for the communication with the client. That implies that account managers are responsible for ensuring that the client employs agility or would be willing to work in an agile way. According to research findings, account managers at the agency should be at the forefront of facilitating agile strategy planning. Hence, for a successful agile strategy planning, the account manager's responsibility is to plan check-ins with the client and ensure a smooth collaboration between the agency and the client.

Additionally, previous research suggests that agile communication projects must be supported and protected (Zerfass et al., 2018). This research shows that support and protection of agile strategy planning should come from top management. The top management has the credibility and reputation

first to convince the client to employ an agile way of working, and secondly to support agile working throughout the communication strategy planning. This study reveals the importance of clear and transparent communication between the client, account managers and top management at the agency for successful collaboration.

In conclusion, compared to previous studies in terms of top management and traditional clients, this study adds a new perspective to the communication industry since top management, clients and account managers need a transparent and supportive environment and communication to nurture agile advantages during communication strategy planning.

5.3 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this research provide practical implications for the communication industry. As agile communication management is not well studied (van Ruler, 2019), these practical implications might give a new perspective on the agile way of working in the communication industry.

Firstly, agencies or communication departments should acknowledge the critical role of top management and account managers during communication strategy planning. Participants highlighted that the agile way of working starts with top management, who should believe in switching from traditional to agile working. Switching to the agile way of working requires encouragement for successful cultural change. Top management should be responsible for such cultural change and act as an encourager and ambassador of agility. Moreover, this research observed that communication professionals at the agency view account managers as agile facilitators in communication strategy planning. Inefficient accountability of account managers in an agile way of working can lead to chaotic processes. Hence, top management should encourage and advocate for the agile way of working and account managers should facilitate the agile strategy planning.

Secondly, this research shows the importance of putting effort into agile training, consistent use of the agile method and consistent use of agile technology. Agility cannot be productive or efficient if it is used ineffectively. The advantages of agile methods to communication strategy planning might disappear if agility is not taken seriously. Agile training is crucial to inform about the new processes, especially the new hires. Since new hires are usually unaware of the organisation's culture nor its way of working, organisations should pay extra attention to onboarding new employees. Moreover, organisations should commit to an agile method and its technologies to have positive long-term results in strategy planning. Lack of consistent use of agile methods and technologies can be challenging for experiencing agile advantages. Since inconsistent use of a method is hindering the idea of agility. Therefore, consistent agile training puts everyone on the same page regarding the way of working. Thus, communication professionals should consistently use agile methods and technologies to experience long-term advantages.

Thirdly, this research paper benefit clients as much as communication professionals in understanding the experiences and opinions of agile methods during communication strategy planning.

This research shows that agility is a commitment from both sides, the client and the agency. Clients must support the agile way of working to collaborate successfully with the agency. This research shows that agencies need clients' dedication, commitment and time to plan the agile way of working. If a client is reluctant to the agile way of working, this hinders the agile process. This study can be a starting point for the clients to be more aware of the advantages and drawbacks of the agile way of working and evaluate the importance of commitment to the agile way of working.

5.4 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Several limitations were found in this study. In this section, these limitations are reflected upon and discussed with some possible future research directions.

Firstly, this study explored communication professional experiences with agile methodology practises during communication strategy planning. However, not every participant had an experience with agile methods, and their opinions were based on general knowledge about the advantages and drawbacks of agility. These participants were either freshly hired or interning at the organisation. For the data analysis part, results were mainly deduced from participants with prior experience working in an agile way. For this reason, future research could do pre-test interviews at the organisation to ensure that all employees have a prior experience in regards to the researched topic. This might increase the reliability of the study since there would be more certainty with provided data.

Secondly, this research was based on one communication agency. It is hardly possible to make general conclusions about the communication industry based on 14 participants. The sample size of this study can be considered too small to understand the advantages and drawbacks of the agile way of working during the communication strategy planning process. Also, during the data collection process, some issues were encountered in reaching a larger number of participants. Thus, future research should research this topic based on a larger sample size to make more certain conclusions about the communication industry. As this research topic is not widely studied, this study can be taken as an example to further research experiences of communication strategy planning in an agile way.

Thirdly, the method and instrument for this study were chosen to be qualitative methodology with semi-formal interviews since there is little research about agility in the communication industry. The nature of the qualitative methods allows to explore the different experiences and opinions, but it is also prone to subjectivity. This study analysed 14 participant experiences through the interviews. However, on average, 40-minute interviews with participants gave only a first glance into the research topic. Also, some of the participants did not have prior experience with agile methodology. In order to better explore and understand communication professional experiences and get more objective data, future research could make use of a mix of qualitative methods, such as field notes or diaries along the way with interviews. Field notes or participant diaries could give first observations of the agile working advantages and drawbacks that could be further explored during in-depth interviews. This way, the study topic could be explored more profoundly, and new discoveries could be made.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The communication industry poses new challenges, industry changes and global competition. Agile methodologies offer the ability to predict environmental changes and quickly respond to them when they happen. This study examined communication professional experiences and opinions of the advantages and drawbacks of agile methodology during communication strategy planning. Through 14 interviews with communication professionals, the findings of this study resulted in an extensive list of communication professionals' perceived advantages and drawbacks of agility (see summary in Appendix C). Results showed how three areas of agility, namely tools and technologies, processes and structures, and culture and people, influence the communication strategy planning.

This study confirmed the drawbacks of existing research that employees' resistance to change in working styles and lack of top management support can harm the agile culture adoption. Also, this study extended the previous research by suggesting that an agile way of working can create competitive advantage because agility allows communication professionals to quickly learn and unlearn occurring trends and industry requirements. Moreover, this study found that frequent changes in terms of new hires can create issues with onboarding with the agile way of working. This might result in confusion regarding the organisational way of working. Additionally, a finding of fragmented departments was found to contradict the existing literature. This research reports that it might be caused due to self-managing team dynamic. However, this contradiction needs more research.

Theoretical implications suggest the essential role of top management, clients and account managers during the communication strategy planning. Transparent and supportive communication might nurture the advantages of agile communication strategy planning. Practical implications add to the importance of putting effort into agile training, consistent use of the agile method and consistent use of agile technology. Also, practical implications suggest that this research can benefit clients in understanding the experiences and opinions of agile methods during communication strategy planning. Moreover, there is little research analysing the experiences and opinions of communication professionals about agility. Thus, this study can act as a starting point for more thorough analyses of communication professionals' experiences with agility. This study shows an essential role of agile methodologies beyond the software industry and a need for more research in the communication industry.

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7. APPENDICES

7.1 APPENDIX A

Question Guide

Verbal consent

Your consent of voluntary participation in this research is the most essential concern. I ensure that the collected data will be stored safely and securely. If you feel uncomfortable and do not wish to answer any particular questions, I assure you that you can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind. All information from this study will be treated confidentially. The interview will be audio and video recorded only for the purpose of research. Do you consent to voluntarily participate in this research?

Topic/Aim

My topic is Agile Methodology Practices During Communication Strategy Planning. With this research, I aim to examine communication professional experiences and opinions about the advantages and drawbacks of the agile methodology during communication strategy planning.

Ice breaker question:

- How are you doing? How are you feeling today?

Demographics:

- So, tell me, what is your position at the agency and what are your daily tasks?
- How long do you work in this industry? (Experience in communication industry)
- And how long do you work at this agency?

- **General:** What is the role of agile methods during the strategy planning (at your work)?
 - SCRUM, Kanban, Design Thinking?
- **Tools:** Do you practise any agile techniques such as stand-up meetings, iterations/sprints, user stories, retrospective and burndown charts?
 - How would you evaluate their impact on the strategy planning?
 - How do you feel about these agile techniques?
- **Technologies:** What kind of agile project management applications does the company use during strategy planning (e.g., Trello board, Miro, Monday.com, etc.)?
 - What kind of advantages and drawbacks do you see?
 - Do you think technology influences the strategy planning and execution positively/negatively or neutral? Can you give some arguments?
- **Processes:** How would you describe your team's agile strategy planning?
 - Would you evaluate the current way of working as positive, negative or neutral and why?
- **Structure:** How would you describe agency's organisational structure as hierarchical or flat?
 - How do you think the organisational structure supports agile way of working?
- **Culture:** From your previous experiences, does the agency embrace the **culture** of flexibility and adaptability during communication strategy planning?
 - Is top-management involved in cultivating agile culture?

- What challenges do you see of embracing agile culture at the agency?
- Do you think the agency accepts failures and why?
- Is there a transparent culture?
- **People:** Following the previous question about flexibility and adaptability, in your opinion, does the team have a self-organising, self-managing team dynamic?
 - In your opinion, what kind of impact it has on the strategy, positive/negative/neutral?
 - Do you think it has some consequences?
 - Who should be carry/be champions of the agility at the office?

In your opinion, **how do agile methodologies impact the planning of communication strategy?** Positively, negatively or neutrally?

Thank you for this interview! It was a pleasure to talk to you. My last question would be, do you have any questions? Or do you have anything you want to add?

7.2 APPENDIX B

Table 6

Main Theme: Tools & Technologies

Main Category	Sub-Category	Description	Example
(1) Agile Technology Advantages	(1.1) Central Platform	Agile technology can serve as a central platform for a range of use cases, such as communication. It can be used instead of traditional communication platforms.	<p>On another project the creatives said that would have been nice if we had a Trello board because at one point we've been using WhatsApp, email, Teams and all the documents were like scattered throughout different platforms. In all honesty, they weren't in one place, so it was really hard to find stuff. So it was really nerve wracking because, you know, if you didn't read an email, you missed one, then you didn't know what's happening. (Participant 3)</p> <p>I think it would be a nice way to have an official application and not just writing emails to keep track. It's so much easier for the creative team to keep track on what they want to do, when we connect together. Even though the email is clear enough now, but I don't think it's clear for the senior level because I have less emails compared to others so I think it would be easier for them to just comment each other teams. (Participant 5)</p> <p>I think it would be nicer if we if I have a nice experience, maybe just put it in a Trello board or something like this so everyone can access and then like it doesn't matter if you were off one day and you miss these meetings, you will always know what would everyone talked about in the meetings. (Participant 13)</p>
	(1.2) Overview of Division of Labour	Agile technologies can be used for showcasing an overview of labour division, timeline views, calendar views, etc.	<p>But I mean tools like Monday, they would be perfect for all the projects in an agency and it will also prevent people from having to chase people. Because they can just see it in the dashboard like where is it hanging, who's working on it. It's currently under review when you don't have to ask for it, so it yeah, if everyone is willing to use it. Then it would definitely, I think, improve the work. (Participant 4)</p> <p>Especially if you're working on a lot of different projects, it can help you just like keep an overview or like things that you can't forget. (Participant 4)</p> <p>Having all of the digital processes listed with the clear overview, who's doing what and who's responsible for</p>

what, is really actually helpful to eliminate any issues going forward. (Participant 8)

Streamline process of approvals and more importantly, of like a division of labor, of a control of responsibility. (Participant 6)

(1.3) Improved Collaboration

Team cooperation on the agile software when working on a strategy.

It is super easy for team to work in such a thing because everyone can just drop in whatever they want at whatever point, especially in the initial phase of strategy when you're diverging. So, you're creating choices. It's really great. Because then you know everyone can just pick up whatever they want from each other. (Participant 1)

We use Trello occasionally when there's like a project with really tight deadlines and it's like you need to get the team all aligned. (Participant 1)

So at the end of the day, I think biggest advantages having, you know, Trello, Miro board, it helps to have everything in one place and if anyone needs to remind themselves, they'll go back or find a document. (Participant 3)

You have like everything that everyone says, written down and thought out, and it's sometimes nice to just pick quotes from there and just see everyone's thoughts visually. (Participant 10)

Specifically, during the ideation phase it's like we got a million different strategies or insights. Let's put them all down and actually, let's figure out which of these make a story. And that's always good. When I'm communicating with my boss and trying to visual as those in reality. (Participant 12)

I think it's really interesting way of getting all your thoughts down on the page, aligning your thoughts, allowing collaboration on those thoughts. I think that probably be the biggest one in terms of actually narrowing down, multiple thoughts into one a very seamless way. (Participant 12)

(2) Agile Technology Drawback

(2.1) Lack of Commitment to Technology

Employees lack of commitment to using the technology, challenge with continues use of agile technology.

People get excited about something, so there's a lot of talk, a lot of energy, we introduce something and then after two weeks, no ones using it. I've had that multiple times as in exactly with Trello, like everyone got excited. We've all used it for a month and then after a month everyone forgot to use Trello and everyone went back to using email. So that was just annoying. So I would say that if the consistency is the key, I think that's the biggest problem. (Participant 3)

So I don't know why people are so scared of them. I think it's just people are annoyed because it's taking time. Like you need to remember to open it up, send it, you know, upload stuff. (Participant 3)

I think it would help because then it will of course you need to use, you need to use a tool and there's probably a lot of people who have an issue with it because they don't like change and new stuff. (Participant 4)

I think the downside of it is that in order for it to work in the best way possible. I think you need like your entire team to use the same tool so that you can actually or the whole agency even. I don't know why they're not using that. (Participant 4)

(3) Agile
Technique
Advantages

(3.1) Stand-Up
Meetings
Establish
Certainty

Stand-up meetings have a feature to keep everyone on the same page and establish certainty within the team, especially when there are hiccups in the strategy.

I think the biggest challenge there is to actually get people to develop the habit of using it, because if you have a team of 25 people and you introduce a new software, but only four people who have decided to use it are using and that's not helping anybody. So how do you build habit within your team. Yeah, that would be the biggest challenge. (Participant 6)

We were in a strategy session and people like post their thoughts and everything in the end only one of us did it and then the rest just talked. (Participant 10)

I think that's a great thing about having those stand-up meetings because how busy you are, you know like the agency is always busy, but people are really willing to have stand up meeting where people can actually raise a problem, maybe like workflow or the strategy or there was a time about conversion for our campaigns. But then in the meeting we talked about, how is it not yet optimized and we also are flexible to talk together how it's going to be the way to work best, but also still keeping the guidelines for meta. So we ask for support for meta and then we also discuss with the client to see if that's what they want to have optimized optimal results. And I think that's very cool thing. That's an impact even this small thing, small detail. (Participant 5)

Making sure that if there any hiccups or like problems that challenge us that anyone has that we put people, we used the forces that we have to ensure that we solve the problem and also in terms of accounts I think we have stand ups to ensure where the workload is at the moment not maybe to a scrum that you're like checking. (Participant 7)

And so I feel like the kind of the idea, if my understanding of agile is correct, kind of very quick, informal check-ins on thoughts. Is really interesting because it could save me a lot of heartache down the road when I could say right, I'm working on strategies or insights are based off of this, this, this and this. Let's have a 5 minute chat about them. I think that would save me a lot of heartache and actually test thoughts out before they become fully functional strategies. And so I see a humongous amount of value in it. (Participant 12)

I think there are necessary for sure because it's good to hear everybody opinion, everybody's opinions subject was also accounts as an opinion. So I think they're very necessary. (Participant 14)

(3.2) Allowing
to Test and
Experiment
More

Agile methodologies can allow to be more flexible in terms of testing, experimenting and reflecting.

I think this is really nice because it also gives closure and understanding of OK, now we have some time to reflect and understand and you know there are some great things that we've done, but there are some things that haven't worked and we can't keep on repeating them because that's just causing a lot of stress. (Participant 3)

I think the thing to that present how agile we are is to proactively try and test in every in every campaigns and we see them as a learning point and we also can talk and also discuss negotiate with the clients that there would be a small amount of the budget to have the learning point to see. And to test with different hypothesis, for example with different platforms you would want to see which kind of creative assets are working better. Which type of targeting strategy are working better. So I think it's going to be for me the definition it's going to be the flexibility and the willingness to test. (Participant 5)

			<p>I believe that they allow you to test out more thoughts. I believe that they allow you to think a little bit crazier because I can go down the road that could be more crazy, a little bit more risky without having to travel the whole way down it. I believe that you get to a better spot because I get insights and communication for more areas and also that it gives me an opportunity to listen to conversations that I would never have been a part of, but actually could really affect the way that I think about project. So I see it as overwhelmingly positive experience. (Participant 12)</p> <p>I think it's great like for our like for the stimulation of our brains and creativity, because otherwise we'll be, like, stuck to one idea and to procedure. And then like if these things happened like, you know, some things you cannot control happen, then you won't be able to react. (Participant 13)</p>
	(3.3) Competitive Advantage	Implemented agile methodology techniques can help to stay ahead of the curve.	<p>I think definitely in our industry we need to like stay ahead of the curve or make sure brand stay ahead of the curve as well. So I would say yes, there is always a need. For it, and there's always more to learn. So in order to keep on being able to create the campaigns we come up with and do the work we do. I think there's definitely a need and a need that will stay for agile methods. (Participant 4)</p> <p>Agility, it's very needed in advertisement because in advertising and marketing. You know field because I can see, especially when I work for media, I see that every week we have changes in every platforms and even just one year, I feel like last year I've learned something at school or other people told me to do so. But this year everything has changed, so I think agility is very important for us to adapt, like right away and to unlearn. I think that's ability to unlearn from the people you have learned but also yeah to unlearn yourself. (Participant 5)</p> <p>There's too many conflicting timelines. Too much money at stake to not implement it. I think that with the rise of reactive media back in the day was TV and billboards. And it was very easy. They could run on parallel paths. But now we have so many interdependencies, so many different mediums, so many subject matter experts that you have to bring in at any one time. I don't believe the traditional methods holds weight within the advertising world anymore. The world's move forward, advertising's move forward, and the way that we create and work on that needs to reflect the new median of advertising. (Participant 12)</p>
(4) Agile Techniques Drawbacks	(4.1) Lack of Agile Initiation at the Agency	Agile methodologies cannot be implemented without key people initiating them. The lack of agile methodology initiation can be a bummer to a flexible and adaptable way of working.	<p>Well, I mean the thing is, it's funny, like, we're planners are strategists or whatever you wanna call it and we do amazing like planning or strategy for clients. But we lack it for ourselves occasionally and there's kind of traditional way of doing a project with a brief coming in strategy, just thinking about it, briefing it to creative coming up with an idea and then executing that idea. It's not, it's not written anywhere. It's not like manifested somewhere. It's just the way it is. That's why I'm calling it like it. It's a tradition, you know, it's a traditional method. (Participant 1)</p> <p>To make sure that we have, you know that everyone knows what they're doing on each day. This is to be fair, at current work, I think there could be much more improved, as in they don't really use some of the techniques that potentially could be very beneficial (Participant 3)</p> <p>If you went and interviewed the key people in the organization, they would like rationally everyone agrees that it's needed. But then how much effort and focus and</p>

priority is put on that then I would say that's where it just kind of like they would agree with you. They would say yes, it's very important. But then how important is that based on everything else that's happening. I think that's not top of their priority. (Participant 3)

I think too little is put forward in the agency of thinking that way, I think everyone does their own way. There isn't even 1 type of process. It's just everyone's doing their own thing and I think it's very confusing. And also like I've noticed that there is a little bit of time spent on onboarding new people. So the new people are so confused. They don't understand what the process is. So they also make up their own process. So ultimately there is chaos. So hence my kind of negative feedback on the current process, on the techniques, on being productive, I think too much time is wasted. (Participant 3)

I know that in my experience where we talk about process a lot and we talk about process a lot, because I think there's room for us to implement much more than we are and I think it begins maybe with having a formal training on agile methods. I've never received a formal training on agile methods. What I know from it I know contextually. And then I think if you don't have that efficiency in place and that knowledge, then the whole thing is kind of glug down and slowed down and it's inefficient and ultimately expensive. (Participant 6)

I think a lot of companies also say that they do it and they aren't actually implementing it. And so I think it is important that more processes and not rules, but techniques are put into place to actually ensure that it's happening because it's much easier to say that it's taking place in actually making sure that it is. (Participant 11)

A lot of people think you know they know what it is and they think it's being implemented, but they don't actually understand it and the I just think. There needs to be a little bit more clarity to explain exactly what it is and how it will be implemented at the company. So people know the way they working and how it can have a positive impact on the company. (Participant 11)

(4.2) Poorly Planned Stand-Up Meetings

Poorly planned stand-up meetings can end up in less productive way of working.

But of course there are some negative aspects to it, like for example, by trying to make processes more, let's say efficient. We are also adding a bit of extra work that maybe otherwise we wouldn't have had like having too much team meetings. Umm, too much? A team communication that in some cases it's just maybe not necessary or not all team members have to participate in. (Participant 8)

That I would eliminate in some cases, like for example, I would have less stand-ups for team collaboration because I do not believe that every single person in the team always has to discuss one topic. In many cases, topics that are on the agenda are not applicable or relevant for half of the team and then people are just burning time and that while of course sometimes it gives some interesting ideas or interesting perspectives, but I would definitely think that cutting down the amount of times that. The whole team, whole Agile team needs to interact with would help to make the process more efficient. (Participant 8)

I think that there might be ways to make these stand up meetings a little bit more precise just to make sure that we are always covering the right amount. The right amount like exactly what we need to talk about. Sometimes these meetings are a bit flimsy. And we get lost a little bit. So I

think there would like we would benefit for a little bit more organization from that side. It would be much more productive. (Participant 14)

Table 7

Main Theme: Processes & Structure

Main Category	Sub-Category	Description	Example
(5) Agile Process Advantages	(5.1) Source of Inspiration for Creativity	Agile strategy creation process may spark inspiration to be more creative.	<p>Repeatable methods cause predictable outcomes and if you're predictable in marketing you're dead. So in strategy you need to come up with new stuff every day. You need to be agile in that sense. (Participant 1)</p> <p>I know how sometimes when you're stuck or you know the different techniques help aim with the process being productive, but also kind of help make you think about a problem in a different way or look at a problem in a different way and I think that's also very useful because if you've been doing things for over 10 years and you know we have people that have worked in the advertising agency even longer then you kind of become very repetitive and then you stop questioning the status quo, and that's where I think some of the techniques help push you a little bit. (Participant 3)</p> <p>I would probably say kind of inspired because we had meetings, for example, the scrums because we were the first strategists and inspiration can come from anywhere. Like literally you could be a cleaning person in an agency, says something. So at the end of the day, I always say that it's very nice for strategists to be surrounded by other people because that they inspire us and they give us ideas. So I felt more inspired when I had scrums. For example, because someone said something that I wouldn't have thought of. So for me that was very inspirational. (Participant 3)</p> <p>I think Agile is very important within strategy because we, as strategists, have to essentially, we've got to come up with the best answer and to do that, it's imperative that you have multiple sources feeding into whether that be sources from external factors, but also kind of stakeholders within the agency and oftentimes if you do utilize kind of the set and forget type methodology. (Participant 12)</p>
	(5.2) More Control	Agile methods may give more control over the process of strategy planning.	<p>And I think when you are working in an agile way, you can control the process more. You know when something people are flagging in an earlier stage that they can't do the work in time or that they don't have the right skills for it because you make every step visible with the post-its and if you physically pull off the posts it also gives a bit of relief. Because, hey, we're getting there. We're getting somewhere. So I think that's the best thing of agility. (Participant 2)</p> <p>I like agile more because I think you have more control over the process, over costs, over everything and you align with other people in earlier stages because you know what the different stakeholders needs to do because you defined them already in an earlier stage, you're already discussed that everybody is aware every step of the way. (Participant 2)</p> <p>I think it's needed in terms of a process perspective to ensure back planning and communication towards the clients or when something can be delivered. (Participant 7)</p> <p>I do think there is a need to ensure that we manage to produce the best possible work without also burning out our people and our resources. (Participant 8)</p>

(5.3) Clear Work Structure and Timelines

Agile methodologies are based on having a clear timeline of work and structure to work.

So I can only say that if it is working because I'm resource planner and make sure that everything is planned and also if things are not being done in time I also need to find the solution to get it planned in and I found out that I need to organize less. Yeah, well issues you know, because if there's an issue, I need to make sure that it's solved and we have allocated people who can actually continue working and I mean when we work in an agile way that it is way more steady. So it makes my life easier as a resource planning. It makes also the lives of the creators better and easier, because they know exactly what to do and they don't depend on information from that person, because everybody's in the team. (Participant 2)

Everybody knows that we need to do conceptive development, but nobody's talking or thinking about what you need to get there. So the thinking process you start more to think about how you want to organize your projects being handled during the whole phase, from strategy department to Creative Department to production department that everybody knows exactly what needs to be done and why we're doing it and how we are doing it. (Participant 2)

I think the end of the day everyone knows what they're doing then, because I think the biggest confusion is when you have a lot of roles and responsibilities, egos flying high in agencies and I think it's with every human being is that you kind of if there's a large group of people working on one project, then there is always that feeling that someone else is gonna take care of it. And if you don't clearly assign jobs and responsibilities, then check if people are actually moving forward. Then it always happens that on a call suddenly someone goes like ohh I thought you were doing this or I thought this person was doing this and nothing has happened. So I think that is the biggest benefit of having these agile techniques is that there is a clear divide between the work and roles and responsibilities and people actually know what they're doing. (Participant 3)

I had it at the same agency but in another branch and it was for one of our biggest clients. So we had to use Scrum. We had scrum meetings every day just to make sure that all the right people and we've used Slack and one more that was Trello boards, to make sure that we have, you know that everyone knows what they're doing on each day. This is to be fair, at current work, I think there could be much more improved, as in they don't really use some of the techniques that potentially could be very beneficial. (Participant 3)

Definitely in a very positive way, because it gives structure and timelines to a lot of processes. I think especially in such fast paced environment such as advertising, there are a lot of times it feels that you're in a factory generating different strategies and it can be really difficult because it involves actually intellectual work. And sometimes it's very difficult to jump from one thing to another and produce high level output. Structuring your workload and structuring it together with your colleagues and making sure that there is actually space and there is team support to produce such outcomes is super important. (Participant 8)

I think it has a positive impact if you know what's being agreed to. If the process is clear, if you give people time to adjust to it. I think it's good because you do keep each other in the loop there. Everyone's more involved, you have deadlines which creative respond to very well. (Participant 10)

(5.4) Productivity

Agile processes are short and well-defined,

I think in terms of productivity, like naturally bang out the results quite quickly. (Participant 10)

this may lead to a more productive way of working.

In my opinion, if you work in an agile way, it's very productive because the lines are short and you know exactly what to do. You know when you need to finish, and because of the stand ups you have, you also are being asked, hey, you need to do that's that and how much time do you need. And then you put on the sticker on the postage, you say OK you need to write the debrief and you need four days. So it's now 15th and then you need to finish it at the 19th. The next time when we have a stand up, you say hey did you finish it actually and that's the role of the Scrum master. Did you finish this? Yes or no. If you said yes. OK, I get it off the board. And if he or she says no, I say ohh why not, can you explain what's the problem and when can you finish it? Done. So if you are actually, physically going through the tasks of someone and when it needs to be finished, it increases your productivity because you will know in an earlier stage if something goes wrong. (Participant 2)

The number one thing is productivity. I think the agency burned a lot of money, a lot of time people feel angry because they're not productive, there isn't a process in place. Then they work longer hours and that's no one wants to work after hours. So ultimately, I would say number one is productivity and in getting inspired or getting a view of different people because you include them in in the process. So but productivity is number one and I would highly recommend it for agencies to look into it because that saves money and time. (Participant 3)

I've done trainings on design thinking. So I know how sometimes when you're stuck or you know the different techniques help aim with the process being productive, but also kind of help make you think about a problem in a different way or look at a problem in a different way and I think that's also very useful because if you've been doing things for over 10 years and you know we have people that have worked in the advertising agency even longer then you kind of become very repetitive and then you stop questioning the status quo, and that's where I think some of the techniques help push you a little bit. (Participant 3)

(5.5) Efficiency Agile methods may result in efficient processes in terms of costs, time and results.

Because I think that because of all the questions you need to answer and all the time you need to put in the pre work, when you start a job. It's not a 50 minute, sometimes we took one hour and a half, maybe 2 hours. To answer all these questions and people in the beginning were very annoyed, but in the end, they understood the assignment much better. And they also understood where it could go wrong. So, they need to focus on certain points and they need to be sharp on certain points and they need to be communicating with each other in a much better way. I think in the end, it will save costs and otherwise we would never have done it before. (Participant 2)

Positive impact. Because I think it helps you like prioritizing. Prioritizing ideas off with your colleagues. Like, yeah, very positive impact. Get the work done quicker and achieve higher results. (Participant 4)

It does make the work like helps you to work in a more efficient manner and to get to like a certain point quicker. So you should get done with certain work sooner. (Participant 4)

So we have our trigger consider convert campaigns and we do them once per quarter and for those that kind of implemented and set up and structured over time and slowly because we know we have the time for them, but we have ad hoc campaigns that come in kind of impromptu and then they'll say we need this live in three days. We need this live in four days. We need this live tomorrow and I think having an agile process in those

			situations is super beneficial because it goes much faster when you have less time always. (Participant 6)
			It became so much easier to actually understand what's going on in every single project and input effectively in those in those meetings, rather than having to chase someone for an answer or find out about something after it already happened. And so effectiveness went up a huge amount. There was a small but loud crowd at the beginning who works completely against the agile mindsets. But their concerns were quickly quelled once they found that calendar actually freeing up to do more and more effective and efficient work. (Participant 12)
(6) Agile Process Drawbacks	(6.1) Poor Agile Process Planning	Not putting effort in organising agile process plan may lead to unproductive processes.	I mean, technically speaking, they should happen at the beginning of the project in all honesty, because again, I think if you map it out and understand what are the different things that you can do during the process. So if it doesn't happen at the beginning, then it's really hard to inject it in the middle or at the end and also the end is very nerve wracking and stressful. So that's where we really like Sprint and there is little room for kind of like, OK look let's inject a little bit of this thinking. I would say the beginning. (Participant 3)
			Our work setup and just having more of a proper, you know like plan right now it's a bit like up in the air and every account manager kind of does things their own way. So we don't have a proper schedule or let's say, even if we had like, yeah, OK, we got Float program now, but it still doesn't work properly. So I think it should just maybe like account could start thinking about some agile strategies that we could implement a little bit more in our daily lives. (Participant 14)
(7) Flat Organisational Structure Advantages	(7.1) Feeling of Comfort	Flat organisational structure may create a feeling of comfort to speak up, try new things and be flexible.	I think a flat structure makes people feel more comfortable and speak up more and try like if people have more sense of being able and being allowed to try certain things or say certain things, which will probably. (Participant 4)
			I think having a flat style of working it helps everyone be more flexible and it helps everyone feel more comfortable, work together better. (Participant 11)
			If you all work together and you all have respect for each other you don't have this hierarchical way of working where someone maybe who feels not good enough or feels intimidated. I don't think that's a good way of working, so I think having a flat style of working it helps everyone be more flexible and it helps everyone feel more comfortable, work together better. (Participant 11)
(8) Flat Organisational Structure Drawbacks	(8.1) Unequal Division of Responsibilities	Flat organisational structure can result for some positions in unequal responsibility division.	We've had this discussion last week that because the structure is flat and we're all in silos. Technically speaking, head of strategy shouldn't be working on everyday clients, because he's chief strategy officer. Like his tasks should be big stuff, organizational, making sure the team runs smoothly and he should be only in contact with me and another strategy director because we're directors. So we should be reporting to him what's happening on client. (Participant 3)

Table 8

Main Theme: Culture & People

Main Category	Sub-Category	Description	Example
(9) Agile Culture Advantages	(9.1) Open Minded Mindset	Open-minded mindset towards testing, new	We live in the high pace world at the same time sometimes we cannot catch up with things, but if you have an open mind it's easier for people to tell you something. It's easier to tell you to test, easier to tell to

	knowledge and initiatives.	<p>learn something, easier to tell you that you're wrong, and you're right. (Participant 5)</p> <p>One example is that uh, we now have side board members. Which is what Members but younger version, which means they want to. I think they want to present something as a culture and also as flatter as possible, where people can reach out to people that are more reachable, that are more talkable. (Participant 5)</p> <p>I would say personally their personalities are not that flexible, but in terms of doing the plan I can see that. The charm of them is that they constantly update with the new changes of the platforms, and that's what every media planners have to do. And even though sometimes we feel like, yeah, we hate changes, we hate to do different things and we hate to have testings. But every week I can observe for my team that we share optimal practice every week, so I think that's a very cool thing, and I, and I would say that they're really willing to learn from those tests. (Participant 5)</p> <p>I know that the agency recently implemented something called a sideboard, which I'm a member of, and it's a collection of individuals who are junior members. That get to showcase points of interest points of concern to management. So to have like that direct hotline to say hey we see a problem or hey we see a point of inspiration. We need to focus on this and I know we started with a focus on transparency, with a focus on morale, with a focus on people need to want to come in and feel great about what they do and it was taken. (Participant 6)</p>
(9.2) Flexible Working Hours	In agile culture employees can manage their own time.	<p>I would say it's very flexible in terms of how you divide your timings. You can choose that yourself as long as you have something on the deadline. (Participant 1)</p> <p>We're flexible throughout the week. So let's say I work 12 hours on Monday and that means that I can work less hours the next day. So they're putting that from the top. (Participant 7)</p> <p>I guess that they also said like if you write your hours, it's up to you. Just reflect it as realistic as possible. If you were one day for 10 hours, then the next day, actually you can work a bit less, but reflects your day like realistically in the hour registration system. And as you're like in charge of it yourself, actually you do have to send meetings and everything but it's up to you like how as long as you do your job and you finish your projects and it's up to you like how you do it. (Participant 10)</p>
(9.3) Team Bonding Experience	Agile processes may bring the team closer, creating a stronger team spirit.	<p>We get set up hours as to I'm expected to do so much work on this client, but I could do that whenever I wanted. And I know that I'm responsible for that. No one, no one checks in my requests. (Participant 12)</p> <p>I think the benefit of agile and also that you have a team working with your team together through all phases, so it also gives a certain bond and it's a certain feeling from how we doing this together because if you working together on a project for over a year or maybe less, but it can happen that we work more than a year, you can really get the sense of a team spirit and you need to build up and you need to be able to because if it's a year, it has its ups and downs. (Participant 2)</p>

We also share moments that were like deeply challenging where you have like situations where you're not sure how to, how you deal with it. And this is kind of like a nice, that's learning too. (Participant 6)

In my experience, in the last three years, we've never had the situation when we would say, oh, we can't do it and would not find a way around it, a compromise or a different way of working, et cetera. So I think it's primarily, yeah, the team spirit, so to say the will of every single member in the team to contribute to the overall success. (Participant 8)

(9.4) Individual adaptability

Agile organisational culture can be adaptable to various changes, crisis situations or different personalities.

I think that we're adaptable, quite adaptable. If you're not adaptable in marketing or an advertising I don't know if you will survive for long. And in a crisis, we're part of a huge network, which helps because then you can just reach out to other colleagues that went through the same crisis before and they can help you with that. (Participant 1)

So a lot of the times are from my experience basically every time you have to quickly adjust your ways of working and your response. So definitely I think overall we're also working in that way. (Participant 8)

I think there's a formula in place in terms of sign off process and so on and so forth. But depending on the ask depending on who's working on it, we are very flexible as to how that works. We don't have the same cast working on every single project and the way that I create strategies is very different to how my boss would or how someone. That's on the same level as me, but not me would do it, and the agency seems very open to that. And again, I think it's very important to be able to have those flexibilities because. Every ask is different, but I think it'd be too formulaic with it. You fall into a trap of trying to fit everything to it into a framework that doesn't necessarily frameworks are stuff. And our world is not stiff. (Participant 12)

I think in our daily task we have some things we don't consider and that might happen and when they happen, we need to react. So yeah, I think we can adapt and be flexible at the same time. (Participant 13)

I think that this could be answered basically by the fact that like we always, everybody works and creates strategies in different ways. I feel like everyone has their own method, let's say like the head of strategy is more of a briefer while creative strategy director is more of a writer. So like, I feel like we don't really have like a proper method in place in terms of how we write strategy but everybody has their own style and it ends up just working for the client. (Participant 14)

(10) Agile Culture Adoption Drawbacks

(10.1) Changes in Terms of New Hires

Big changes in new hires or employees leaving can lead to issues about onboarding with the agile way of working.

We still are using it, but in a different way, because a lot of people went away. That's the downsides to it, you know, because we have a lot of people leaving and coming in and you can't educate them every time on agility because it's not something we learn in school. (Participant 2)

I think too little is put forward in the agency of thinking that way, I think everyone does their own way. There isn't even 1 type of process. It's just everyone's doing their own thing and I think it's very confusing. And also like I've noticed that there is a little bit of time spent on onboarding new people. So the new people are so

		<p>confused. They don't understand what the process is. So they also make up their own process. So ultimately there is chaos. (Participant 3)</p>
(10.2) The Need of Consistent Training	<p>To preserve agile culture a constant training might be needed, which for some may come across as a drawback.</p>	<p>I just remember I did another scrum for another client, but it went almost exact same way. We kicked off with Scrum. We had the goals, like the higher goals and the lower goals. This was kicked off by a resource planner and then it should have been taken on by the account team because they are responsible for having like the project in check, but then it didn't happen. I'm thinking that maybe our account people in the office are also like a bit inexperienced with Scrum. (Participant 1)</p>
		<p>People always want to work the way they see, how it should be organized. So for instance, we are getting new people in the office and they start working and if they're not being on boarded in a right way in our own internal process, they're gonna do it their own way. (Participant 2)</p>
		<p>I would say we're not set up for being agile, but we are doing it to ensure customer satisfaction. (Participant 7)</p>
		<p>Naturally, I'm a bit higher up, so I'm in the senior region, for me already easier to like self manage how I have to do things. I know what's expected if I don't ask for help. I can imagine if you're a bit like lower in the chain, if the I don't know how to phrase that, but if you're a bit younger, are you just starting out then that's you need a bit more guidance. (Participant 10)</p>
(10.3) Resistance to Changes from Employees	<p>The fear of changes and experimenting, better sticking to traditional methods can create challenges to implementing agile culture.</p>	<p>It's kinda like people here are used to working specific way and then our resource planner tried to bring in the scrum thing. Well, yeah, officially it's just you have a kick off meeting. So we did that but then at some point you start communicating quickly on Teams program, you start communicating on emails, you walk into each other in the office and you're like, oh, you do you wanna do the brief now? OK, let's do quickly now, you know, and then so like, little things get in the way of this fixed process because no one takes charge of it. (Participant 1)</p>
		<p>I think so the problem is, as I said, advertising agencies that consists of a lot of creative people and they have their egos. think sometimes they feel like agile working requires to testify what I do every day and I think this is where sometimes an advertising agencies, people tend to look away from those techniques because they feel like ohh why someone is checking up on me every day or like I'm adult enough I can do it by myself. So I think this is where sometimes people take it the wrong way as in it's like checking up rather than making sure that the process is smooth. (Participant 3)</p>
		<p>We have the people who have done appetizing certain way for a long time and to try and convince people to follow a singular process even though agile isn't a singular process, the thought of OK now we are switching to agile. I think could be a bit daunting. I think there's lots of different changes happening within the world of advertising. And it does seem like just like another thing that we would have to deal with on top of trying to handle clients from day to day. (Participant 12)</p>
		<p>I know that when we made the switch within my previous agency. Which again, was the same agency, just in a different country. It was rough at first and there</p>

		<p>was huge resistance to it via these. Why these meetings coming in that that this, this is stupid man, I'm never going to have time to do anything and I would. (Participant 12)</p>
(10.4) Traditional Clients	<p>Working in agile goes both ways, agency and client sides have to agree on this way of working. Sometimes clients are more traditional and less likely to work in agile way.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, not all the clients want that. So that's just the restriction. (Participant 2)</p> <p>But it doesn't mean that it is a different way of working and it depends on the client that you have. So if the client does not fully bought into it then it can be difficult to have one client bought into it and not the other one, because then how can you apply the way of working. So I think that's the biggest challenge to overcome if you have different clients. Working in different ways and then we as an agency planning our resources in. (Participant 7)</p> <p>So let's say some clients are more agile and more aware of the concept, while the others are more bureaucratic, less dynamic and that of course also reflects on the way we work with the clients. So in my experience, I've been working in the past with highly bureaucratic companies that would, let's say, not really on board with us on this agility idea, while the others would be more open to that. (Participant 8)</p> <p>That's not from my side, but from the other side, from the client side, you need dedication. You need commitment. You need their time. You need to plan and check-ins, because if there's such a pressure cooker situation, it doesn't need like it needs to be resolved quickly. If there's any challenge, if there's any question. And if the client takes a long time debating it, you already run out of time. You need to be able to create the environment to make quick decisions. And so as long as that is there, then I think you're right. (Participant 10)</p> <p>For you to be truly agile, client has to be agile too. And with us having so many different clients. That becomes very hard to do because if the client traditional and we're not, then I don't know how you can truly be doing it. From that perspective and actually getting the client signed off as well, it has to be someone like the CEO. Who has the knowledge relations with all of our clients and have to get the equivalent person involved from client side as well. (Participant 12)</p>
(10.5) Lack of Top Management Support	<p>The role of top management during the agile cultural change.</p>	<p>I think it should be having a cheerleader. You know management needs to believe in it. And if the management believes in agility, then you can do it. (Participant 2)</p> <p>Maybe you called leadership, maybe the one upper can encourage more. From the junior level to encourage them to tell their ideas or to tell them whatever kind of strategy. Maybe it's not applicable yet, but I think it's the encouragement and it can be encouraged by them explaining the context. More simply, or get the junior people more involved, because I see I talked to some people in the agency or other people and even your executable or your internship. You basically not yet have the context of everything, and so it's very hard for them to actually. Tell something that they can help. So I think that's the only just a mental state of how the leader can encouraged people. (Participant 5)</p>

Probably department heads. I think it can't come from anyone else. And I think it should be reinforced by team workshops and I don't think you can slap a training on board and be like hey, watch this two hour video on agility. All trainings like they're gonna get bored and they're not gonna pay attention. (Participant 6)

I think it is something that should come from the top so CEO, it is something that's coming from the top. However, it's something that every team leader, every senior has to embrace and reflect in their way of working to ensure that the full company is. Applying it, if I think the CEO sets the or the management team would make sure that you set the company up to ensure that you can work agile, but then every senior, every team member would have to implement it. (Participant 7)

We wanted to our business was coming up for review. And it was imperative that we showcased that they could get them off of their money so essentially agile was the way that we wanted to showcase it. That was the case. So from an operations perspective, yeah, it was the CCO, not the CEO. As well, just to be clear. So that was a very, very important to them. They were also the biggest client in the agency and so. It couldn't have been more important to be able to nail that I do think where so the CEO here is slightly smaller agency. I think it needs again, it needs to be driven by her but there will be she. She won't be the one that's implementing. I think that the accounts will be the ones that are the true champion of agile. (Participant 12)

I think it's really important to have leaders within agile that have strong personalities and have huge emotional buy in from employees to get them on board. Because it's a cultural shift that you're looking to make rather than anything else, it's going to change the way that we work. The interrupt with each other. What's expected of each other and anytime that you try and shift the culture. Move it, move. The ship becomes very hard. (Participant 12)

(10.6) Inefficient
Accountability of
Account Managers in
Agile Working

As project managers, account manager role is important for agile cultural adoption. They are responsible for planning strategist schedules.

Our resource planner initiated the scrum, but resource planner is not in charge with the project and in the end that person is only in charge of having everyone's Diaries and making sure people get planned in for stuff. I think the account leads are the ones that are responsible for Scrum. (Participant 1)

I think it's the problem of the responsibility of who is responsible for creating the process, because technically speaking as a strategy director, it's the account people who should be caring about that but that's not done by them. (Participant 3)

I think it should be embraced by everyone in the office because otherwise it's not working, but probably at the forefront should be the accounts team. That's that would be my first response, but at the same time, of course, again, everyone should embrace it. (Participant 8)

I'd want to see that push through operations and then led by the head of account management. Because it's their job to organise, to structure, to make things work, and I don't think anyone else in the agency would be equipped to be able to do such a job. (Participant 12)

(11) Agile Team
Dynamic
Advantages

(11.1) Self-
organising/Self-
managing Team

Employees
know their
tasks and
responsibilities
and can
function
without micro-
management.

I think that account should take it upon themselves to have more of a checklist and to moderate the conversations during the meeting a little bit more. It doesn't have to be accounted, can also be us, but there has to be like someone that has a proper role of just making sure that everything gets done. Umm, so I think that would be my main improvement. (Participant 14)

People are responsible for the outcome themselves. And so we going to work better with in timings. And I think that will increase our quality, creative output for us. I think also when the client will be involved as a product owner, then you also have the benefit of clients bonding. (Participant 2)

I think most of them know what to do and they will just do it. There's always these like few people and you have them everywhere that wait for task. But overall, people just know to do their jobs. (Participant 4)

Everyone is self aware and everyone managed to know what they need to do and what they can't because we got a point when we didn't have one of the member working for a long while. But at the same time she is aware of what she missed and she has known the information. And then we can catch up very easily and quickly. So I think it's positive. (Participant 5)

Each of us in the team are very self aware of what they are not good and what they are good. And that's why I think it's a very good thing that we embrace culturally and also personally, that we can say that we don't know. (Participant 5)

We are responsible for what we do and that's also recognized. We trust each other that the job is done. (Participant 10)

I think agility has a positive impact on the agency and what they produce and I think the way people work together at the company and I think the way people also self organized and self manage at the company, I think the dynamic and the agile working technique, I think it really it has a positive impact. (Participant 11)

I think it's positive because everyone is just understands what they need to get done and what they need to do. But also having respect for what other people also need to get done. But there is a sense of trust that if someone in your team tells you to do something they believe that the person's going to be able to get it done and get it done well. And because they are self organized and they will be able to manage their own things and no one, they needs to be micromanaged. (Participant 11)

It's not a straight road. Strategy isn't there's dead ends. There's all sorts of different things, and I think. If you're not self manage, and if you I watched too closely from that perspective. I feel like you never gonna get to your solution. You'll only get someone else's solution. That's not how strategy works. At the end of the day my job is to convince my boss that my answer is correct. And I can't do that with them holding my hand. it is impossible because I'm just gonna do a worse job than he would have done. (Participant 12)

I think coming to the conclusion that you actually don't always need to report. It's just about having the opportunity to report if you need to, was huge once we

got into that routine. Of doing that all the time when it came down to it, where we had to be making very quick decisions and informing pieces of work that are gonna last like long, long time and it was invaluable. (Participant 12)

Everybody kind of is on their own projects, but then maybe the manager gives feedback and just has this quality check. But I work on projects that my colleague doesn't work on. And yeah, I like to also kind of find my own works and do every like do some things by myself. So yeah, I think we're quite independent from that point of view. (Participant 14)

(12) Agile Team
Dynamic
Drawbacks

(12.1) Fragmented
Departments

Fragmented departments are the ones where employees do not have unity in the work they do.

I would say it's a positive thing that everybody knows to do their jobs, but I think in advertisement and as we are in a creative industry, it can also sometimes help to have input from other departments that will spark new ideas on the strategy side. (Participant 4)

I think it really streamlines and segments the strategy, you know I think we could benefit more from an increased involvement in the strategic process from start to finish. (Participant 6)

We're so fragmented that we do really self govern. I just don't know if that's for the best. (Participant 6)

I think from like a company culture standpoint and a leadership standpoint, the emphasis is always been on flexibility. But I think that gets lost a little bit in the way that we actually do things. It's because it was so fragmented between our departments. You know, we're very strictly. This is where accounts starts and ends. This is where strategy starts and ends. This is where media strategy starts and ends. This is where creative strategy starts and ends. I don't think you can have flexibility without fluidity. You know, without liquidity. (Participant 6)

7.3 APPENDIX C

Table 9

Summary of the advantages and drawbacks of agile methodology

	Tools and Technologies	Processes and Structures	Culture and People
(1) Agile Technology Advantages	(1.1) Central platform for efficient and quick communication (1.2) Better overview of division of labour (1.3) Improved Collaboration		
(2) Agile Technology Drawbacks	(2.1) Lack of Commitment to Technology, failing to form a habit		
(3) Agile Technique Advantages	(3.1) Stand-up meetings establish certainty and usually resolve questions or problems (3.2) Allowing to Test and Experiment More		

	(3.3) Competitive advantage to learn and unlearn occurring trends and adapt to them quickly	
(4) Agile Techniques Drawbacks	(4.1) Lack of agile initiation at the agency due to unwillingness to change the way of working (4.2) Poorly planned stand-up meetings cause additional hours of work and wasted time	
(5) Agile Process Advantages		(5.1) Source of inspiration for creativity to think about a problem from another way (5.2) More control over the work process due to less bureaucracy (5.3) Clear Work Structure and Timelines (5.4) Productivity due to short work cycles (5.5) Efficiency in terms of cost, time and results
(6) Agile Process Drawbacks		(6.1) Poor agile process planning lead to unproductive work and lower productivity
(7) Flat Organisational Structure Advantages		(7.1) Feeling of comfort to share ideas, thoughts and test ideas
(8) Flat Organisational Structure Drawbacks		(8.1) Senior communication professionals may encounter the unequal division of responsibilities
(9) Agile Culture Advantages		(9.1) Open minded mindset where testing, learning and adapting are part of the culture (9.2) Flexible working hours in terms of how you manage them (9.3) Team Bonding Experience (9.4) Individual adaptability to adapt to each individual's way of working and thinking
(10) Agile Culture Adoption Drawbacks		(10.1) Frequent changes in terms of new hires can cause confusion about the working style (10.2) Lack of consistent training creates knowledge inequality (10.3) Employee resistance to change due to fear of micromanagement (10.4) Traditional clients resisting to work in agile way (10.5) Lack of Top Management Support

(11) Agile Team
Dynamic Advantages

(12) Agile Team
Dynamic Drawbacks

(10.6) Inefficient Accountability
of Account Managers in Agile
Working

(11.1) Self-organising/Self-
managing team, which knows
their tasks and are responsible for
the outcome themselves

(12.1) Fragmented departments
might cause fragmented strategy

7.4 APPENDIX D

Study Log

Table 10

Relevant terms

Concepts	Related terms	Smaller terms	Broader terms
Agile methodology	Agility, agile processes, agile working	Agile methods, SCRUM, communicative SCRUM	Modern working, Contemporary project management
Agile strategy planning	Strategy planning, strategy project management	Modern communication strategy planning	Agility in Marketing, communication strategy planning
Agile project management	Project planning, agile methods	Agile planning, agile working	Project management, modern project management

Table 11

Search log

Date	Database	Search terms	Search hits	Notes
19.03.2022	Google Scholar	Agile methodology communication strategy	181.000	Too broad terms, however, it allowed to find the first papers.
19.03.2022	Google Scholar	Agile communication strategy	255.000	With this term I found a researcher (van Ruler), who is one of the few researchers in communication science examining agility.
24.03.2022	Scopus	Agile project management	4.110	Too broad of a term, but found some information regarding advantages and drawbacks.
24.03.2022	Google Scholar	Agility advantages and drawbacks	25.900	I noticed that Google Scholar gives me more options. This search helped me find papers for theoretical framework.
28.03.2022	Google Scholar	Agile methods advantages and drawbacks	32.100	Was helpful for my theoretical framework.

05.04.2022	Google Scholar	Agile methodology	416.000	General search about the agile methods to explain SCRUM, Design Thinking and Kanban.
09.04.2022	Google Scholar	Communication strategy and agility	149.000	With this search term I found a couple of valuable articles for explaining strategy evolution.
28.05.2022	Google Scholar	Agile methodology advantages and challenges	110.000	I had to update my theoretical framework. This search term helped me find information on advantages and challenges.
