Gamification in new customer acquisition of a digital marketing service provider

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Gamification in new customer acquisition
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Due to digitalization and globalization, the buying behavior has changed in the business-to-business context and customers are more independent, proactive and demanding than before. In the past, sellers were the main source of information. Now marketing is becoming a bigger part of b-to-b sales. Inbound marketing has changed marketing from "push" to "pull" – with focus on offering useful, interesting and entertaining contents for potential customers to find. In addition, gamification has rapidly become a trend in marketing and one of the most effective and efficient tools in online marketing for achieving customer interest, engagement and loyalty. It has been claimed, "The future of marketing is in games".

This Master's Thesis study was done for a start-up company offering digital marketing services and the development work was to design a Digital Marketing Buyer Profile Test that could be used in new customer acquisition of this Service Provider. The research aim in this study is *to evaluate gamification in new customer acquisition when selling digital marketing services in the business-to-business context.*

Designing the Digital Buyer Profile Test followed the Service Design process of the UK Design Council: *Discover, Define, Develop,* and *Deliver*. The Service Design methods and tools were applied along the process. Desktop research, benchmarking, workshopping and prototyping were the main methods. The three focus areas of desktop research were based on the research questions and focus was on studying b-to-b sales process, customer and trends; digital marketing channels, planning and implementation; and gamification as a marketing asset.

A workshop to define the Service Provider's business goals was organized and methods like Business Model Canvas, SWOT matrix and Journey map were used. The process of designing the Buyer Profile Test was iterative, proceeding from the paper prototype to the digital prototype, which was tested online with test persons representing potential customers. As an evaluation method, a Stickdorn's framework of desirability for digital solutions was chosen. To measure and discuss the utility and pleasurability dimensions of desirability, a framework introduced by Laine to evaluate contents in b-to-b marketing was modified for this study.

Based on the theoretical and empirical finding in this study, three main research outcomes can be defined. First, this study confirms the claim that gamification can be applied to meet both the company's and the customer's goals and interests in the b-to-b context. Secondly, a gamifyed marketing solution can be an effective and engaging touchpoint at the very early phase of a buyer journey. Finally, this study confirms viewpoint that gamification meets very well the demands of the contemporary and rapidly changed b-to-b sales and marketing landscape.

Keywords: b-to-b sales, digital marketing, gamification, service design, prototyping

Contents

1   Introduction

A recent study, launched in 2019 and conducted by Fonecta among the Finnish marketing executives, reveals that many companies are struggling with the challenges of digitalization. 24 % of the Finnish companies feel that they lack the adequate knowhow and skills to take advantage of the possibilities in digital marketing. This figure has doubled in three years from the previous study done in 2015. (Alkula 2019)

Digital marketing in the global competition now requires up-to-date expertise and constant development of your strategy and tools. Basic solutions such as an own web site or store with some social media visibility and search engine optimization just isn't enough any more when global competitors move on using the latest solutions and technology e.g. automatisation and personalization.

Lack of time and the skill level of the persons in charge of marketing are the main obstacles in the effective use of digital marketing according to the respondents of this study. More and more alternatives and technologies are offered and it is difficult to keep up with them and to evaluate the different possibilities.

According to another study (Yrittajät 2018), done by two Finnish marketing agencies, OMD Finland and ToinenPHD, lacking knowledge and skills of digital marketing are also among the main challenges for the Finnish organisations - together with out-dated ways of working, organized marketing operations and a lack of resources in the changing business environment.

In the study, it was revealled that too much focus is placed at the very end of the buying process of and potential customer. Sales (86 %) and customer satisfaction (79 %) were considered by the Finnish marketing executives as the most important measurements of marketing, whereas nurturing leads (43 %) and efficiency of marketing (29 %) are considered less important.

Business Director Max Söderholm from OMD Finland is of the opinion that it has not been understood that all the phases and actions along the selling process and the buyer's journey support sales. He demands a whole new approach from the Finnish companies – to develop and measure all actions along the marketing and sales process.

These both studies are clear evidences on the fact that there is a clear and growing demand in Finnish companies to choose and find a service provider, partner for they digital marketing activities. Some companies need training or consultancy on the specific digital marketing

tools when some, often smaller companies, even consider outsourcing all their marketing activities.

However, despite of the existing demand, buying – or selling – digital marketing services is not simple. We talk about business-to-business services and service marketing when finding a suitable partner and creating a trustful relationship is often challenging and time consuming – for both buyer and seller of these services.

This Master's Thesis is done as a development work for a new start-up company (founded in December 2018) offering digital marketing services. The challenges of a new company and in this specific field are many. The brand awareness is low and to stand out and differentiate oneself from the competitors in the field is hard – also because the brand identity and profile is still evolving. New customer acquisition and selling processes in the business-to-business context is complex - it requires time and resources, many stages and a lot of work. And as a provider of digital marketing services, the company perceives that their own marketing activities should be not only digital but also stand out as innovative and vanguard – as an outstanding example implementing the effective digital marketing tools and methods.

1.1   Aim and purpose of the study

The purpose of this study (*why is the research conducted?*) is:

to create a Digital Marketing Buyer Profile Test to support new customer acquisition of a digital marketing service provider. From now on, the start-up company will be called the "Digital Marketing Service Provider" or "Service Provider" in the study.

The test is created *to assist the Service Provider in it's new customer acquisition*. From the Service provider's point of view, the test should have three core functions. First, the test could be used as a campaign element in the Service Provider's own digital marketing, at the company's web page and/or as a social media marketing campaign and thus bring more visibility and brand awareness for the Service Provider. Secondly, thanks to it's gamification nature, the test and its results could ease contacting the unknown potential buyer and give a better starting point for a dialogue with him/her. And finally, the test would serve as an early phase in the buyer's journey - leading hopefully to a long-lasting and beneficial customer relationship.

In this Master's thesis it is my ultimate research aim (*what is being researched?*) is:
to evaluate gamification in new customer acquisition when selling digital marketing services in the business-to-business context.

The aim of the research will be reached through examining the three Research Questions:

RQ 1) *How b-to-b services are sold: what are the key phases, considerations and recent developments in b-to-b marketing and selling?*

RQ 2) *What are digital marketing services and the key information and insights needed for a successful execution?*

RQ 3) *How can gamification be used in marketing and new customer aquisition?*

The purpose, aim and the research questions – as well as the main research methods are visualized in the figure below.
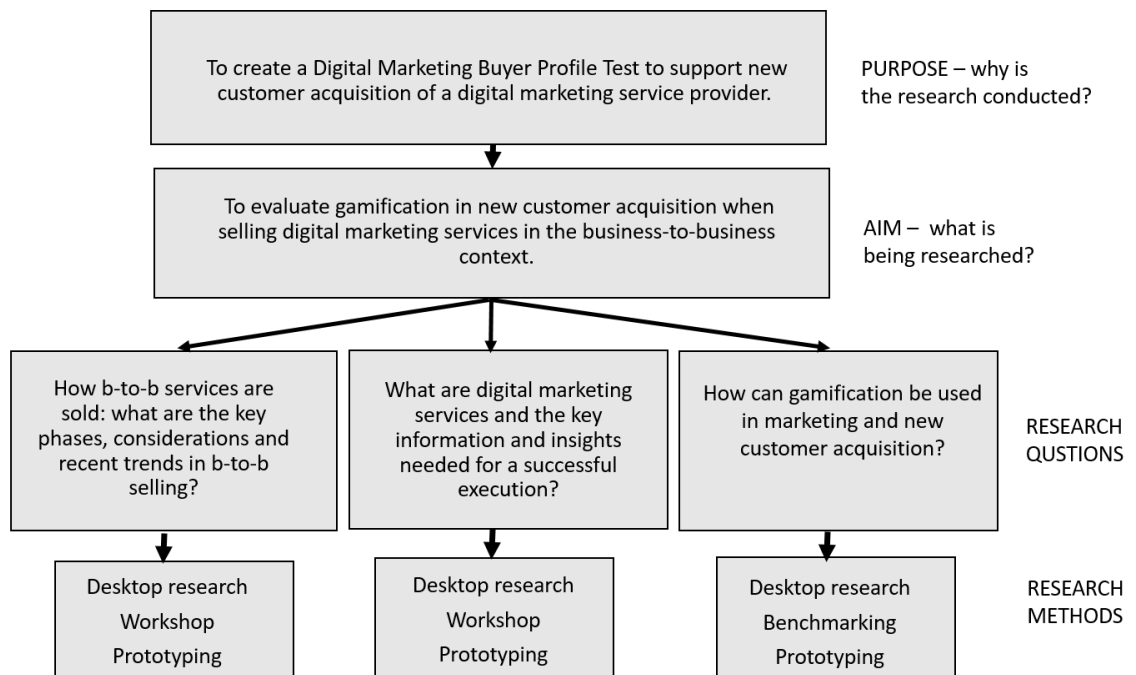
Figure 1: The purpose, aim and research questions and methods in the study

1.2   The structure of the study

In the literature review (Chapters 2, 3 and 4) the core concepts and the theoretical framework for the study will be introduced. The theoretical background for the Research Question 1 will be discussed in Chapter 2 *Understanding marketing and selling business-to-business services*. A deeper understanding of digital marketing services and of the key factors influencing the successful execution of digital marketing is the main goal in Chapter 3 – with a special focus on inbound and content marketing. The last chapter of the theoretical framework, Chapter 4 *Gamification as a marketing asset,* will introduce theoretical background and previous studies on the use of gamification in marketing.

In Chapter 5, Design thinking philosophy and the Service Design process will be shortly intraduced and the SD process of this study will be described. In Subchapters 5.3 - 5.6 the main phases of the Service Design process of the study will described in detail - together with all the methods and tools applied at various phases of the project.

In Chapter 6, the empirical results of the study will be first described ant then the key findings, combining both theoretical and empirical research, will be introduced.

Finally, in Chapter 7 the final conclusions of the study and the suggestions for further actions regarding the development task are made. Also ideas for further research around the main topics of the study are shortly discussed.

2   Understanding marketing and selling business-to-business services

When we talk about selling digital marketing services, which is the core business of the Service Provider of this study, we talk about marketing, selling and buying business-to-business services. Business-to-business or B2B (later in this study "b-to-b") marketing and selling means that both seller and buyer are companies or organisations (Ojasalo & Ojasalo 2010, 24). B-to-b marketing is sometimes referred as "business", "industrial" or "professional" marketing and selling (Hall 2017, 4; Berkovi 2014)

According to Ojasalo & Ojasalo, selling and buying in b-to-b environment is often professional and multidimensional, person-to person sales efforts play a significant role and building long-lasting customer relationships are important. The demand of products or services vary often strongly and is non-continuous, which brings along the pressure to adjust the seller's capacity and resources with the demand. (Ojasalo & Ojasalo 2010, 26)

2.1 The process of marketing and selling business-to-business services

In their book Ojasalo & Ojasalo (2010, 33) introduce a *B-to-B Service Marketing Model*, which is based on Grönroos' three-phased model introduced in 1979 in an *Industrial Marketing Management*. This process model includes three main phases: *the Prospecting phase; the Purchasing Phase; and the Consumtion Phase*. The model is visualized in Figure 2 below.

Prospecting phase	Purchasing phase	Consumtion phase
Focus on the arousal of interest among potential customers towards the company and it's services	Focus on converting leads into paying customers	Focus on additional sales and on building a customer relationship
Conventional marketing	*Conventional marketing + interactive marketing*	*Interactive marketing*
Giving promises	*Giving promises*	*Fulfilling promises*

Figure 2: The phases of b-to-b service marketing process (Ojasalo & Ojasalo 2010, 33)

In the Prospecting Phase, the seller of b-to-b services wants to be aware and recognized among the potential customers as a service provider that they might want or need to cooperate with. For that the seller needs to establish a tempting image - a brand. If the image or brand is not tempting or relevant, sales efforts or advertising cannot fix the problem. In this phase there are many options to build the seller's awareness among them advertising, PR and sales promotion, personal selling and event marketing.

In the Purchase Phase, the main goal is to convert the interest among the potential customers into sales. In this phase the sales efforts and personal contacts play a crucial role but all the personnel involved, technical solutions, service processes and sometimes physical premises of the seller's company come important factors for the success.

In the Consumption Phase, the most important goal is to ensure the repurchasing of the service. The goal is to have – instead of a single purchase – a continuous and long-lasting customer relationship. In this phase, the key factors for success are the process and outcome of the service itself – together with the personal contact and dialogue with the buyer.

As new customer acquisition and the early stages of b-to-b selling process is at focus in this study, a closer look at the first stage, the Prospecting Phase, is taken.

Finding great leads that end up in sales is a challenging process. Therefore, Seidman is of the opinion that intelligent organisations spend as much time to disqualify bad prospects as they do to qualify the good ones. Three most common ways of generating sales leads are generating referrals, cold calling and generating them from digital or print resources. (Seidman 2012, 120-121)

When a service provider is offered an opportunity to pitch for and win some work at an important prospect, it is the real test of the ability to engage with a client and build a mutually beneficial relationship. This early stage is challenging as both the client and the service provider are getting to know each other and many interactions happen on the internet. (Berkovi 2014, 201)

According to Berkovi, prospecting requires skills in planning targeting contacting, listening questioning and meetings. He introduces *the 4 P's of Prospecting* visualized in Figure 3.
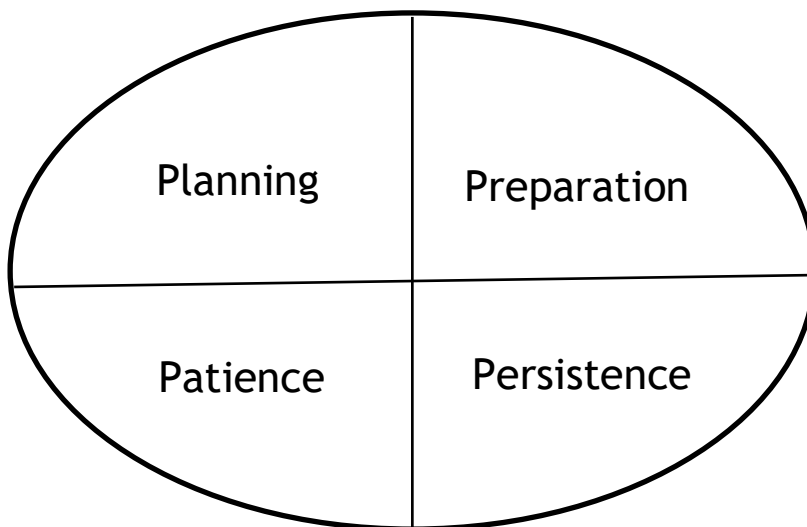
Figure 3: The 4 P's of Prospecting (Berkovi 2014, 202)

This 4 P's of Prospecting model is to demonstrate the four core elements that best prospecting practice needs: 1) Planning – knowing which prospects are to be contacted, by whom, when and how; 2) Preparation – conducting basic desk research and consulting with colleagues to understand likely business issues; 3) Patience – understanding that strong relationships are built over a long period of time; and 4) Persistence – the ability to maintain the interest in all those responsible for attracting and securing prospects. (Berkovi 2014, 202)

2.2   B-to-b selling as problem solving or value-based selling

Thull (2010, 72) is of the opinion that the most successful sales professionals recognize that a sale is the result of the customer making a decision to change – and their main task is to navigate the customer through a decision making process.

Shoultz and Doerr introduce a three step model for closing successful sales deals: *Connect, Convince* and *Collaborate*. Successful sales people connect customer needs and their company´prodcust or services, but also connect with people. The best seller also manage to convince the customer about the maximum return, minimum risk and that the seller is the best choice among all options. They also manage to make the buyer believe that – instead of selling – they collaborate with the them in order to find the best solution for their peoblems and needs. (Shoutz & Doerr 2014, 5-7)

According to Ojasalo & Ojasalo, *defining and providing a solution to a Client's problem* is a vital part of b-to-b marketing (Ojasalo & Ojasalo 2010, 68). In most cases, the problem solving process follows the process introduced by Osborne in 1963 (Ojasalo & Ojasalo 2010, 71): 1) Defining and analyzing the problem; 2) Ideation of solutions for the problem 3) Evaluating and prioritizing the ideas; and finally, 4) Implementing the chosen solution.

However, it is very important that one avoid the classical mistake of solving the wrong problem. Proving an excellent solution for a wrong problem is not customer-centric service marketing and will not lead to a long-lasting customer relationship.

To be able to come up with a suitable solution, skills in four categories are required from the service provider. The core four skills defined by Ojasalo and Ojasalo, are visualized in the following Figure 3.
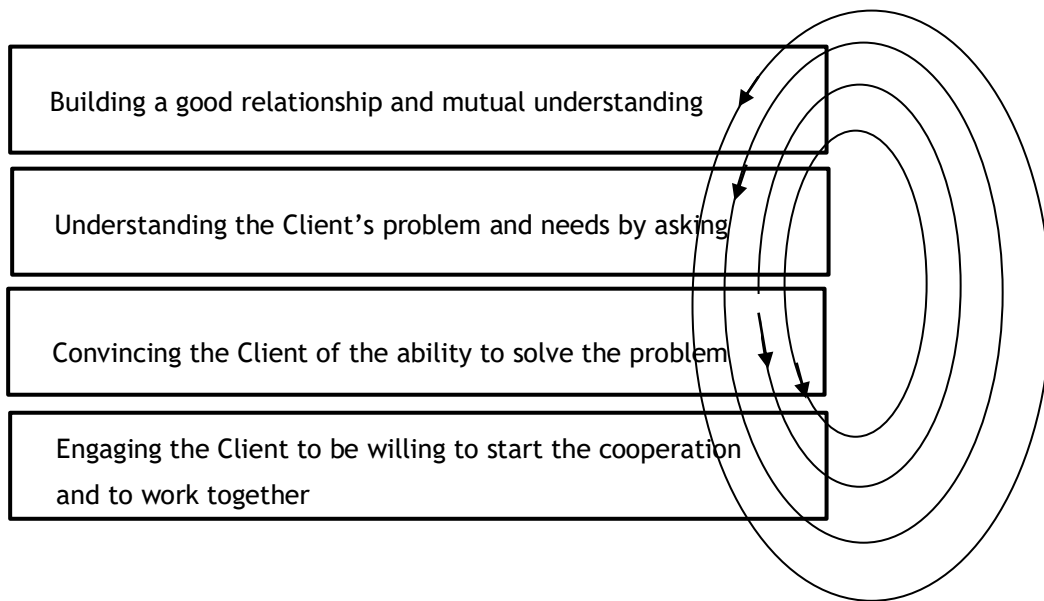
Figure 4: Central skills and actions when selling b-to-b services with a problem solving approach (Ojasalo & Ojasalo 2010, 69)

In the sales research, many other selling behaviours can be identified. Terho et al. (2012) have identified the following: Adaptive selling; Agility selling; Consultative selling; Cusomer-oriented selling; Partnering-oriented behaviours; and Relationship selling.

Terho et al. themselves introduce a value-based selling model that they have conceptualized through a profound research with sales managers, and which they claim to be a unique differing from other sales-related concepts.(Terho et al. 2012). Many contemporary authors writing about the sales techniques also agree that successful b-to-b sales and marketing comes from an understanding of value creation exchange. (Brennan et al.2014, 58)

The first dimension of the model by Terho et al. is *understanding the customer's business model and identifying the key drivers of customer's operations and earning logic*.

The second dimension of the value-based selling model centers on *the identification of specific problems and development of solutions that bring measurable benefits to the customer*. Thus value-oriented sales people strive to "actively identify and craft offerings that have

The third dimension of the model centers *on communication of the value proposition to the customer*. (Terho et al. 2012)

2.3   Understanding the professional buyer in the b-to-b context

The purchase of b-to-b services can be quite complex for both parties involved. It is essential for b-to-b marketers to understand and segment prospective buyers in ways that allow them to establish individual value, develop relevant messaging and react to the prospect's behavior and level of engagement (Kerner 2010).

The decision to buy relies to the great extent on the eventual development of trust between supplier and provider (Berkovi 2014, 32). At the early stage of considering the purchase, the people who will be delivering the service, the reputation and quality of the service and also value for money will be all considered carefully by the person or persons with buying authority.

For the service provider, one of the preliminary tasks is to identify these persons in charge of the buying process and purchasing decisions. A number of people at different levels and with different interests and agendas can be involved. (Berkovi 2014, 32)

The initial contact may come from an enquiry or referral – in the beginning this often involves one person in each organisation. As discussions proceed, more people will be involved and mutual understanding of each other's company, business, capabilities and credentials deepen.

A number of tools are used by many professional services firm to better understand how prospect organize their purchasing; these include buyer profiling, decision-maker analysis and mapping (Berkovi 2014,35)

For creating and understanding your different b-to-b market segments, Miller (2012) recommends to analyse five characters introduced by Bononam and Shaphiro in 1984.

1) Demographics include factors such as the Client's industry, company size, location, age, and where the company stands in its lifecycle. 2) *Operating variables* include elements such as the company's use of specific technologies e.g. various digital media. *3) Purchasing approaches* take into account the purchasing function within the Client's company, the internal power structure, buyer-seller relationship, purchasing policies and criteria etc. 4) *Situational factors* are both immediate and changing – including the urgency of specific order, the size of an order, and the like. *5) Buyer's personal characteristics* is based on the characteristics of specific individuals – that person's character, approach to purchasing, likes and dislikes, and so forth. (Miller 2012, 32-33)

These hierarcial characteristics can further be divided into organizational and buyer-related characteristics – macro and micro-level characteristics. *Organisational characteristics* define the type of company to which one is selling, in terms of company size, location, special needs

related to the specific field of industry, type of institution, business model, benefit segmentation, decision-making stage and ongoing business potential. *Buyer characteristics* involves understading the individual components of decision making and is more subjective approach, based more on personalities than on hard facts.

To get to know your customer better, Cherry advices to understand the difference between *explicit* and *implicit needs*. Explicit needs are the ones that the customers expresses when asked what they are looking for. Implicit needs are the driving force behind of what we do each day and are important to understand also when dealing with to b-to-b customers. These can be divided into five categories (Cherry 20016, 101-102):

- *Success:* the need to feel a sense or accomplishment and achievement that motivates to strive towards goals.
- *Inpedence*: the need to feel some measurement of control at work- making a decision on his/her own, makes one feel in charge of his/her own destiny.
- *Recognition*: the need to feel valued as worker asn to feel that your opinion matter.
- *Security*: the two-folded need to feel that your job is not taken away from you - and the desire to save your face and not look stupid.
- *Stimulation:* the need to feel challenged at the job and to feel excited and stimulated instead of bored.

2.4   Recent trends and developments in the b-to-b service marketing and sales

According to Lemmens et al. (2014), in the 1990's the focus in b-to-b selling was on building the customer relationships with help of new software applications such as Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, together with the internet. It was realized that sales processes had to be broken down into separate distinct phases with a specific set of sales activities from a "lead " to a "closed deal". (Lemmens et al 2014, 12)

At the moment four major trends impacting sales organisations can be identified: globalization; Internet; efficiency; and ethics and regulation. (Lemmens et al 2014, 14-20)

Globalisation means, among other things, fewer but larger customers, centralization of purchasing and a rationalization in the numbers of suppliers. *The Internet* has empowered customers: they are much more aware of different choices and suppliers and more involved in the purchasing process. They have much less need for a face to face contact with the sales people whose role as an information provider is disappearing – excatly the same remark as Laine has made.

The growing demand for *effiency* brings along the reduction of sales forces while maintaining sales renvenue targets. Internal work processes are automated and data provided by the systems guide the sales efforts instead of personal contacts and preferences.

The rise of business ethics, corporate responsibility and new legal regulations are also forcing the sales people to analyse their methods of selling. Sales activities are systematically documented and customer satisfaction is being measured, audited and analysed on a regular basis.

2.4.1 From sales process to co-creation process

In his book (Sales is Broken – The New Era of B2B Sales) Laine writes that customers, markets and the operational environment in business-to business sales have changed dramatically in the recent times. (Laine 2015, 9) The buying behavior has changed, the ability to buy has risen to a new level and the buyers are more proactive and self-imposed than ever. They want their problems to be solved fast and efficiently, sometimes even avoiding unnecessary contacts with the service provider or seller. This leads to a challenge that the contact with the customers often stays very superficial and adequate customer understanding is lacking. And at the same time, the customers' demands towards the sales personnel and their organization, expertise and solutions are growing.

Proactive customers often not only identify but already define the right solutions and even the possible partners or service providers for their problems themselves. (Laine 2015, 10) Thus the buying process proceeds far without the seller or service provider having a change to influence or to be part of it. In many cases, the seller's only task will be passively to receive quotes and answering them. In the worst cases this ends up in a sales conversation where the buyer is far more advanced in his/her buying journey than the sellers – and both end up frustrated. According to Laine, all these changes and challenges require a whole new approach towards b-to-b sales. He visualizes the most relevant changes in the b-to-b customer attitude and behavior in the following Figure 5.

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┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│                     │      │                     │
│  Independency &     │      │  Purchasing         │
│  Proactivity        │      │  power              │
│              ┌──────┴──────┴──────┐              │
└──────────────┤                    ├──────────────┘
               │     B-to-B         │
┌──────────────┤     Customer       ├──────────────┐
│              │                    │              │
│  Needs,      └──────┬──────┬──────┘              │
│  expectations &     │      │  Buying process &   │
│  requirements       │      │  behaviour          │
│                     │      │                     │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘
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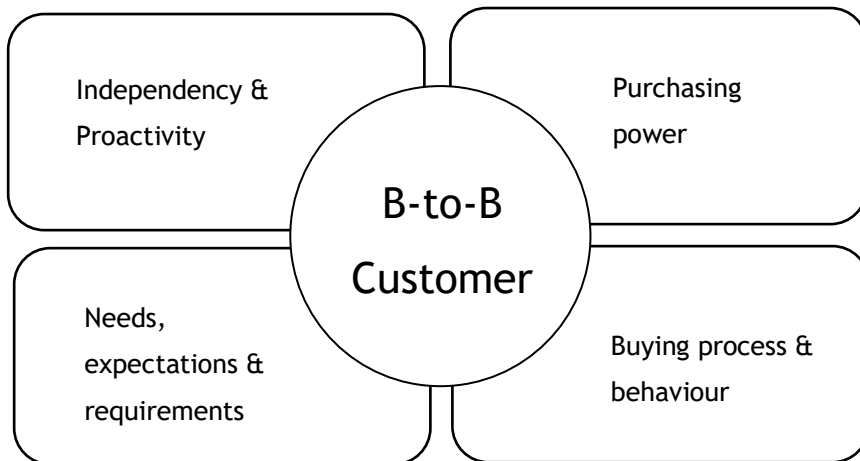
Figure 5: The Major changes in the b-to-b customer attitude and behaviour (Laine 2015, 117)

Lemmens et al have identified in their interviews five major trend that will effect the b-to-b sales in the future. (Lemmens et al. 2014, 22) The first trend is the growing importance of that customer will play in developing the value proposition – which leads the sales process to evolve into co-creation process. The second trend is the need to build and maintain an eco-system of partners which is needed to co-create new value proposition. The third trend is the growing importance of knowledge management in sales, which means that knowledge and know-how will become more important in sales than products.

The fourth trend is social media which will play an important role in helping the sales staff to co-create, partner and manage knowledge. The fifth and final trend is the switch from selling products or solutions to the actual business service rendered by these products. (Lemmets et al 2014, 22-31)

2.4.2 The evolution of b-to-b buying models

 Steward et al. (2019) have reviewed 124 publications between 1956 and 2018 on B-to-b buying models and/or b-to-b buying processes in order to analyse how b-to-b buying process models have developed over the times. In the introduction of their article, they also refer to the recent changes in the purchasing process and to recent surveys: 67 % of b-to-b customers complete 57 % of the buying process before they contact supplier representative and over 80 % of b-to-b customers access online channels late in the purchasing process for information.

 Steward et al uncovered seven major themes across the b-to-b buying process research during the sixty years: transactions, situations, influences, responses, relationships, networks, and journeys. The earliest models on the b-to-b buying process often had an assumption that customer firms utilize systematic, highly structured, and analytical procedures when buying

products and services. Over time, models began to determine how different situations, influences, responses and relationships affected the buying process. Now some contemporary conceptualizations of customer journey, e.g.by Makkonen, Olkkonen and Halinen (2012), even state that "it is practically impossible to follow a systematic and linear decision making process in real life organizational management"

Steward et al. predict that consumer expectations for ease in personal buying is creeping into the industrial arena which offers suppliers new opportunities to engage their customers in a more sophisticated way. They recommend that "During the buying process, suppliers must engage with buyers with more meaningful information that not only differentiates their services from competitors, but also that illustrates the lower risk of engagement and higher return from the partnership." (Steward et al 2019)

2.4.3 Marketing is becoming a bigger part of b-to-b sales

In his LinkedIn article "The New marketing & Sales Funnel", Richie Bello (2016) also claims that as business-to-business buyers are taking more control of the purchasing journey, they seem enter and exit the sales pipeline at various points in the buying process. Therefore, the old sales funnel model, in which everyone enters the sales process at the top of the funnel and follows a similar buying experience, is no longer relevant.

According to Bello, "the new sales funnel is made up a complex web of individual buyer paths intersecting at the various sales and marketing touch points." Business-to-business sales are are undergoing major change as sales roles are morphing; marketing is becoming a bigger part of sales; formal sales processes are no longer enough; and enablement tools are more important than ever. Bello visualizes the growing importance of marketing in b-to-b sales in the following Figure 6.
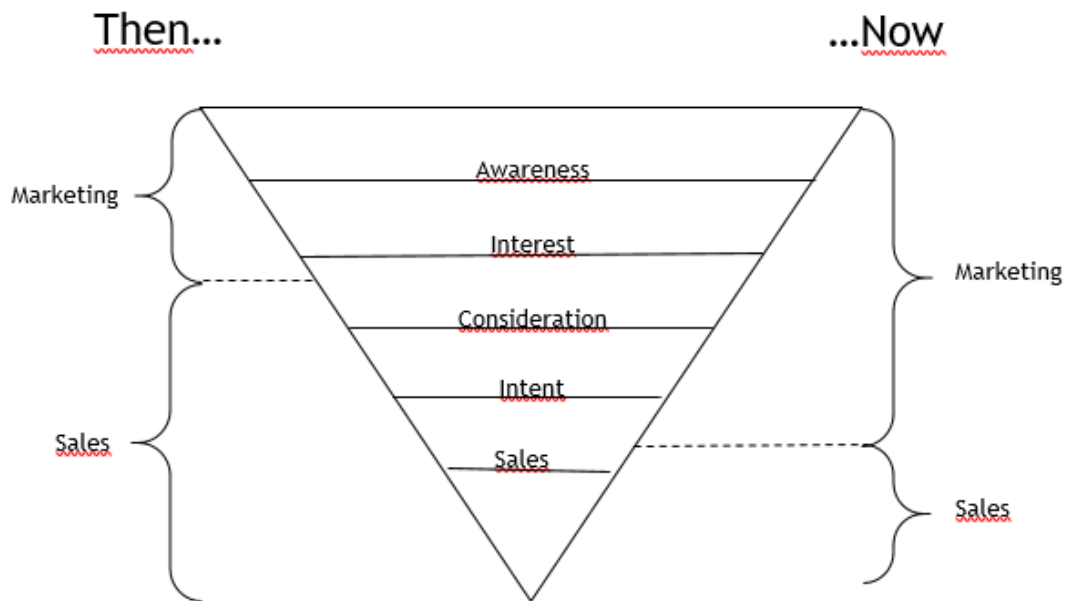
Figure 6: The new marketing and sales funnel (Bello 2016)

In the past, sellers were the main source of information about the company and products/services. As described earlier, more and more of that information is available for the buyer in the Internet or via other channels. The shift in the sales activities is shifting from awareness building, interest and consideration phases to final solution building and negotiation.

According to Bello, if changes are needed in the role and attitude of the sales forces, also the marketers need to consider the complete end-to-end buying experience and enable buyers to move through the buying process on their own terms and at their own pace by providing meaningful and tempting content. A recent report by Aberdeen proves this concept worthwhile following since the Best-in-Class companies are 69 % more likely than others to align marketing content with key strages of the sales process.

Bello is of the opinion that as selling becomes more complex, sellers need tools that help simplify the complexity and still meet buyer expectations. With these tools sellers could easily and quickly understand where buyers are at their buying journey and help them customize an approach relevant to the situation (Bello 2016).

2.4.4. From reactive sales to proactive sales

All the changes in b-to-b markets and buyer attitude and behavior, discussed in Chapter 2.4 require a whole new approach towards b-to-b sales. As a solution to these new challenges and demands, Laine (2015, 66) suggests of a *Proactive Selling process* instead of the reactive one when selling process is often started with a Client's initiative. The phases of this Proactive Selling Process are described in Figure 7.
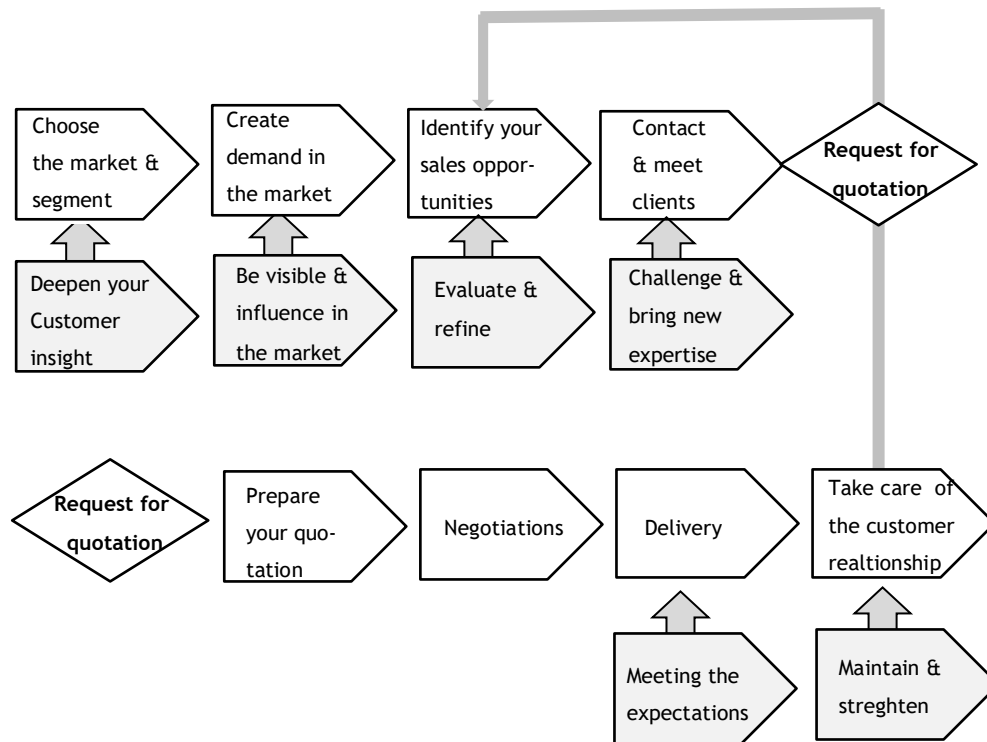
Figure 7: The proactive sales process (Laine 2015, 66)

All the way along the selling process Laine emphasis the importance of customer insight. He claims that too often the sales forces have too little or no understanding of their customers, their behavior, goals and needs. Collecting relevant information both on prospective and current customers should be the whole organisations's interest and responsibility. Gaining customer insight helps to focus marketing and selling activities, identify sale opportunities and to create the right value proposition – even for a more expensive product or service. (Laine 2015, 74)

However, the idea of proactive selling is not new or a concept created by Laine. Miller talks about proactive selling in his book "ProActive Selling – Control the Process – Win the Sale in 2003. He emphasis proactive thinking of the sales professionals who think always one step ahead, and therefore control the buy/sell process. (Miller 2003, V). Laine's and Miller's views

meet also in the way that successful sales people act regarding the customer insight. Miller summarizes it: "They are proactive, they ask - they think like a customer." (Miller 2003, V)

3 The key factors for successful digital marketing planning and execution

Having a deeper understanding of digital marketing fundamentals, including available tools and techniques, is essential in the context of this study. It is important from two points of view: first, digital marketing is the core service offered and sold by the Service Provider; and secondly, in its own marketing, selling and new customer acquisition, digital marketing is a very central tool for the Service Provider. As a conclusion from the previous chapter, b-to-b sales are nowadays more and more marketing activities. To build brand awareness and to differentiate your services and value proposition from those of your competitors, digital presence and marketing is the core of the Service Provider's business success.

In this chapter, an understanding of the digital marketing as a function and as a service is the main goal. A special attention will be taken in inbound marketing as a philosophy and method for getting leads and supporting selling process. We will also take a closer look at content marketing as, from the marketing point of view, the Digital Buyer Profile Test can be seen as a form of content marketing and also because content marketing has been defined by the Service Provider as the company's core competences beside inbound marketing.

3.1 The 5 Ds of digital marketing

Digital marketing is transforming how businesses and other organisations communicate with their audiences. The 5Ds of digital marketing (digital devices, digital platforms, digital media, digital data and digital technology) allows the marketers to get closer to the audiences than ever before – digital marketing today is about many more types of audience interaction than just websites (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, xiii, 5)

The audiences today interact with businesses and organisations using a combination of different *digital devices* such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, tvs, gaming devices and other connected devices forming the Internet of Things (IoT). Most interaction on these devices are through a browser or apps from *digital platforms* or online services such Facebook, Instagram, Google, YouTube, Apple, Amazon or Microsoft.

Different communication channels for reaching and engaging audiences are also available. *Digital media* include advertising, email and messaging, search engines and social networks. *Digital data* collected by the marketers help them to analyse their customers' needs, prefer-

ences and behavior and to target their different audiences with different messages or via different channels. *Digital technology* can be used to create interactive experiences from websites and mobile apps to in-store kiosks and email campaigns.

To succeed in the future, organisations need marketers, strategists, and agencies with up-to-date knowledge of how to integrate each of these "5Ds of digital" into their marketing communications. Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019, 5-7)

3.2   The key types of digital media channels and marketing

To assist with digital marketing planning, Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019, 28) recom-menddiving digital media channels and digital communication tools into six main groups. These categories are introduced in Figure 8.
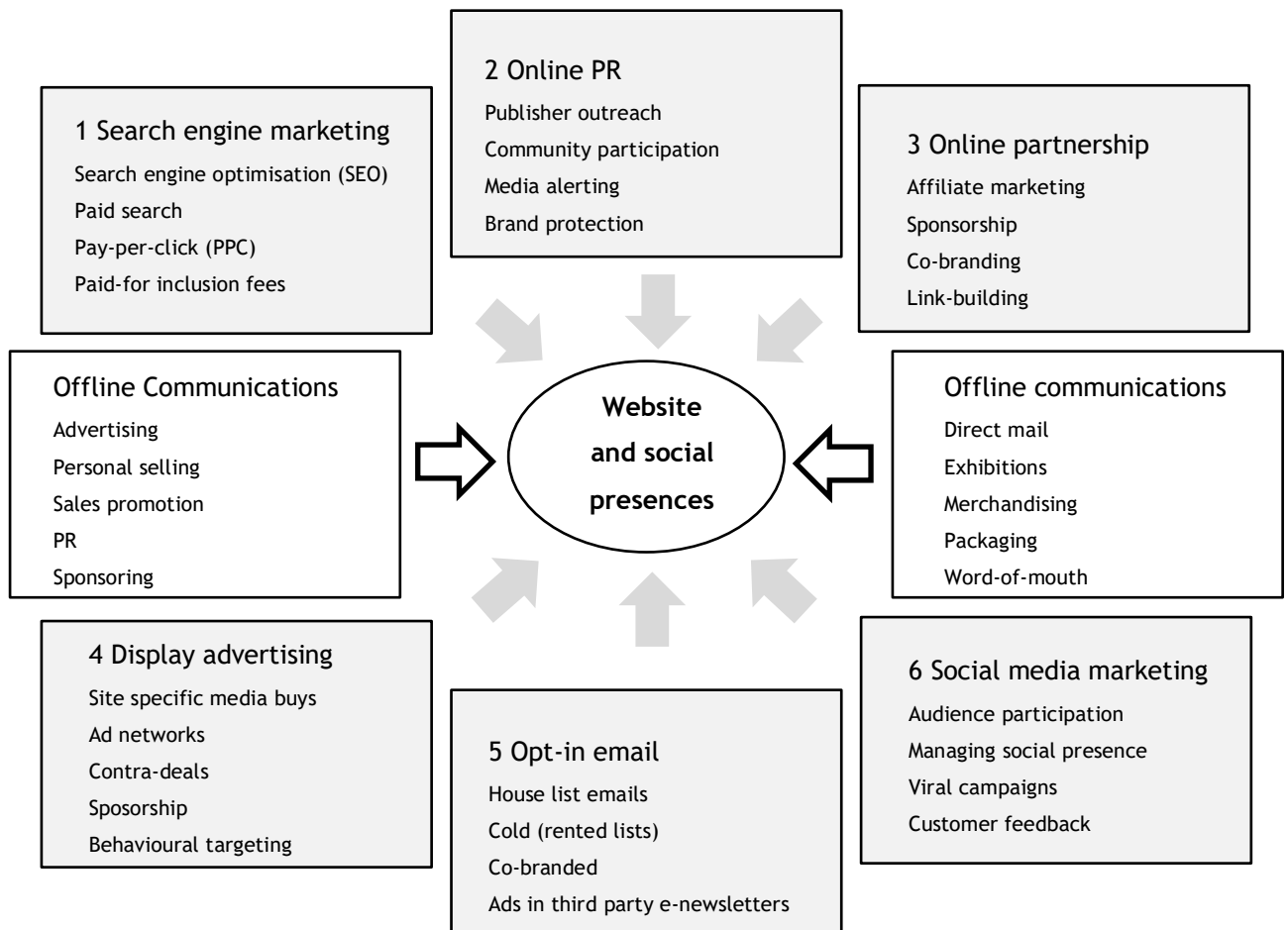

Figure 8: Six categories of digital communications tools or media channels
            (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 28)

This framework includes the offline marketing channels and activities. The focus in this chapter will be in digital media channels and marketing but it is important to notice that a mix of

both traditional offline and digital online marketing tools and channels is usually the best mix for most organisations. Digital communications and marketing tools and channels at the framework are shortly described below (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 28- 29):

Search engine marketing (SEM) consists of two key techniques: paid placements or sponsored links using pay-per-click, and placements in organic listings using search engine optimization (SEO) when no charge is made from clicks.

Online PR aims at maximizing positive visibility and mentions of the brand or company or products on social networks, blogs, podcasts or feeds that are likely to be visited by the target audience. Online PR also includes responding to negative comments and maintaining a social media news center or blog.

Online partnerships are long-term agreements to promote the brand/company/services on third-party websites or via email communications. It can include link building, affiliate marketing, and aggregators such as price comparison sites.

Display advertising includes online ads like banners or rich media ads that decrease thebrand-awareness or clicks to webpages.

Opt-in mail marketing means placing ads or advertorials in third-party online newsletters or the use of own in-house list for sending an own e-newsletter to the existing clients or to the registered subscribers of the newsletter.

Social media marketing means precence and advertising within social networks and communities like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or Instagram. Beside the social media channels, it involves also starting and participating customer conversations on a company's own web site, blogs and forums.

In comparison to traditional communication and marketing channels, digital marketing has many advantages. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick list the six most important ones: interactivity, intelligence, individualization, integration; and industry reconstruction.

Interactivity means that digital marketing can respond to the customer iniatives to seek information and experience, and it allows two-way communication, gathering, and storaging the response of the individual. *Intelligence* means that digital marketing is relatively low-cost method for collecting marketing data and insight. *Individualisation* allows the messages and marketing activities to be tailored to the particular individual, and at low costs in comparison to traditional media.

Integration means that new and more options are offered to reach the customer via multiple digital marketing channels –and for the customer to reach the company. The internet can be

used to support a multichannel customer journey. For example, the website can have a direct response or callback functions to build into it or live chat can be offered as a preliminary service.

Industry reconstruction is a possibility enabled by new digital channels. It allows to remove intermediates such as distributors or brokers from the supply chain and contact the customers directly - or to create a completely new structure of intermediates between customers and suppliers. Digital marketing channels and tools also introduce the possibility to expand to the global markets without local sales or customer service force and offers thus *independence of location*. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 29-34)

3.3   Building a successful digital marketing strategy

Building a digital marketing strategy can not be delivered effectively if built independently of business or marketing strategy (Kingsnorth 2019, 6). Thus the digital marketing strategy should be developed within the framework of your business including your industry, company structure and culture, your brand and goals. (Kingsnorth 2019, 37).

To fit your digital strategy to your business model is crusial (Kingsnorth 2019, 38). It would be mistake to create an aggressive e-commerce strategy for a relationship-based b-to-b business or to lead with a pure content and social media strategy for a sales-focused retailer.

Ryan (2016, 24-25) defines five key components for a strong foundation of the digital marketing strategy.

1) Know your business: is your business ready for digital marketing? Are your products/services suited to digital marketing? Do you have the right technology/skills/infrastructure? How does digital marketing fit into the existing business processes and do these processes need to change? And is the staff ready to accommodate those changes?

2) Know the competition: who are your main competitors in the digital market? What are they doing right and what are they doing wrong? What are they doing not at all – and is there an opportunity for you? How can you differentiate your offering from theirs?

3) Know your customers: who are your customers and what do they want from you? How do the customers use digital technology or channels - and how can you exploit that knowledge to engage your customers?

4) Know what you want to achieve: what do you want to get out of digital marketing? Have you set clear, measurable and achievable goals? Are you looking to generate online sales, create a source of targeted sales leads, improve your brand awareness, all of the above or something complete different?

5) Know how you are doing: do you measure your digital marketing activities? Do you track what happens online and compare your progress against set goals and key performance indicators (KPIs). How is your digital campaign progressing? And are some digital delivering more traffic than others? (Ryan 2016, 24-25)

Parkin (2010) introduces eight steps model to develop and implement a successful digital marketing strategy. These steps are:

1. Vision – Clarify your mission and vision

2. SWOT – Scan your environment

3. Priorities – Set your priorities

4. Goals – Set your objectives

5. Obstacles – Identify your obstacles

6. Strategies – Create your strategies

7. Plans – Create your operational plans and budgets

8. Projects – Develop and manage your project plans

In his framework to develop digital marketing plans and strategies Hall (2017, 116) emphasis the importance of goal definition as well. Before implementing a digital marketing mix, based on the business goals, it is important to evaluate options against budget, resources available, internal skill and capabilities. And like Ryan, Hall recalls for a proper analyse and review stage with digital measures, tracking, analysis and optimizing.

3.4 Customer journey and inbound marketing

Digital technology, channels and marketing tools have fast multiplied the ways on how consumers come into contact with a brand and for organisations how to deliver enchancing experiences of the brand. At the same time, when digital solutions make contacts with potential customers easier, they have made it more challenging. Customers are "multi-media taskers" who use multiple devices at the same time, and if they don't like the contents that they encounter they just quit, skip or unsubscribe. Therefore, a map of customer journey to understand where consumers engage with the brand should be the first step in designing digital marketing. Understanding the customer journey helps the organisation to decide on operations needed to deliver the brand promise, to decide which touchpoints genuinely differentiate the brand - and which not. (Adamson 2009, 128)

Any online customer journey goes through a number of different stages, starting with a lack of awareness all the way to the desired action, e.g. a purchase, and to post-purchase loyalty – or lack of it. (Rowles 2018, 29)

There are many visualizations of the digital marketing customer journey. A traditional sales funnel is demonstrated below in Figure 9.
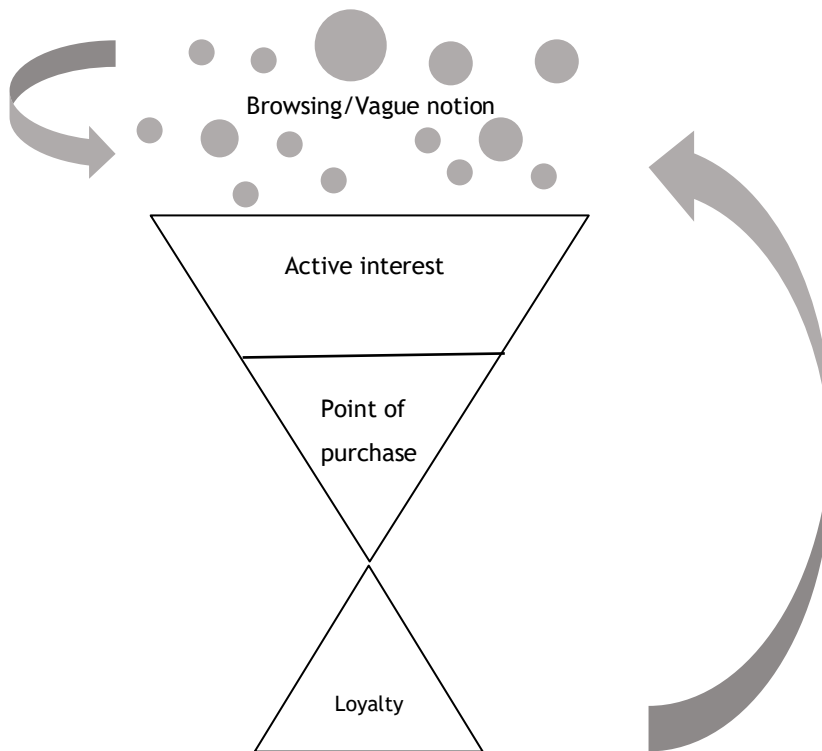
Figure 9: The traditional sales funnel (Rowles 2018, 29)

Just when the thesis work process began, The Service Provider became an official partner of HubSpot - an American developer and marketer of software products for marketing, sales, and customer service. In the Finnish markets, Hubspot has 48 licenced partners (Hubspot 2020) and is a leading technology in marketing Automation category with a market share of over 30 %. (Datanyze 2020)

Hubspot, established in 2006, has launched a business and marketing methodology called Inbound marketing that "attracts customers by creating valuable content and experience tailored to them" (Hubspot 2020).

According to Brian Halligan, a co-founder of Hubspot, *outbound marketing* is a traditional method of marketing when a marketer reaches out to people to see if they are interested in a product or service. Seeking to obstruct potential customers includes activities such as trade

shows, seminars and cold calling. (Halligan 2019). Instead, Halligan advices to do *inbound marketing* where the organization helps itself "get found" by people already learning about and shopping in the industry. In order to that, the organisation's website should be built as a "hub" for the industry that attract visitors naturally through search engine, blogging, and social media.

In the inbound philosophy, all marketing, sales and customer service activites are divided to three major phases: *Attract, Delight* and *Engage*. Instead of a linear process, this customer journey is visualized in a form of a "flywheel", visualized in Figure 10. The main foundation for the idea is that it is not enough to attract people to the wesite but to continue to help, support, and empower them also after they become a customer. (Hubspot 2020)
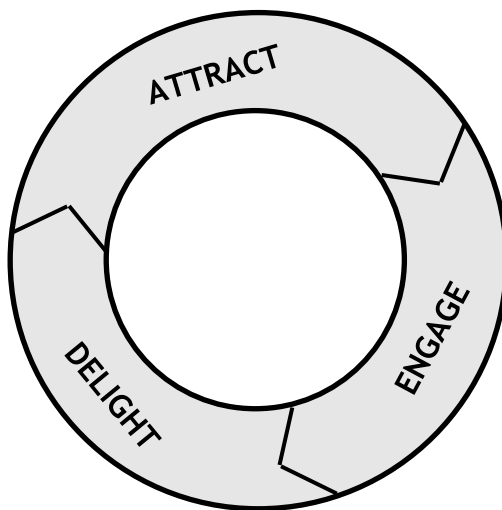
Figure 10: Hubspot inbound marketing flywheel (Hubspot 2020)

Hubspot introduces different strategies for the different stages of wheel. Attracting strategies include e.g. blog articles, content offers, and social media. A SEO (Search Engine optimization) strategy is also very essential for success at this stage. In the engage stage, the organisation has to ensure to communicate and deal with the leads and customers in a way that they want a long-lasting relationship with the organisation. Specific strategies could be how to handle and manage inbound sales calls and solution selling process. Delighting inbound strategies take care that customers are happy and satisfied, and encourage them by e.g. chatbots, surveys and by outstanding customer service, to become a brand advocate and promoter.

Hupspot also advises to map the customer journey. That helps to plan and decide also for the right strategies to attract, engage and delight the target customers. By understanding how a customer interacts with a business – with key events, motivations and key components for the

user's experience - you can understand how to structure your touchpoints to create the most effective and efficient process for your customers. (Agius 2019)

In the philosophy of inbound marketing, pulling your target audience to the website using blogs, Google and Social Media is just not enough. These visitors need to converted into leads and paying customers.

"Conversion" is the art and science of encouraging site visitors to further engage with your business. This is done by encouraging them to take some sort of action: filling out a form, subscribing to a newsletter. If site visitors are attracted to your site because of the attracting content, it will require an equally attracting and compelling call-to-actions to convert them into qualified leads. (Halligan & Shah 2014, 110)

Halligan and Shah share a VEPA model for evaluating the four key qualities of a "killer" call-to-action (Halligan & Shah 2014, 110-112):

- *Valuable:* the users should be given helpful information that enable them to do their jobs better or help them become more valuable for the employer.
- *Easy to use:* calls-to-action should be clear and simple and should indicate what action to take ant the result of the action.
- *Prominent:* to encourage conversion, each web page should have a call-to-action and the offer should stand out with the right placement, big enough fonts and highlighted with color.
- *Action oriented:* the call-to-action should begin with a verb and tell what action to take.

According to Halligan and Shah, people have become skeptical about sharing their contact information, so there must be an obvious perception of value to overcome this skepticism. It is also important to understand that site visitors are in different phases of the buyer journey and that they do not enter the site from home page but via a referral from Google or via a blog or a social media campaign.

The giveaway or offers - such as a webinar, white papers or reports, an e-book, a 30-minute expert consultation or a free class, demo or trial offer – are recommended but Halligan and S suggest to experiment with various types to see which generates the best conversion rates. (Halligan & Shah 2014, 111)

3.5 Content marketing at the heart of digital and inbound marketing

The era of digital marketing has brought along new methods, approaches as well as terms and definitions to marketing, *Content marketing* as one of the most popular ones. Actually, content marketing is nothing new – it has been used since the dawn of cave paintings. John Deere and its customer magazine The Farrow in 1895, educating farmers on the latest technology in farming, has given the credit to be the first content marketing initiative. (Lieb 2012, xvi)

Content and Content Marketing are contemporary but broad terms which no one actually seem to agree on. Dzamic & Kirby (2011) examined over 70 definitions for their book – from very broad definitions to framework and conceptual approaches and from "just marketing" definition approaches to definition approaches based on narrative or aesthetic feel. They end up asking if defining content is a waste of time and defining that content could be almost anything: memes, new hijacks, blogs, vlogs, infographics, FAQs, customer service videos, brand magazines, events – and even ads. (Dzamic & Kirby 2018, 1-9)

Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) write that "content marketing should be at the heart of digital marketing for all types of brands, because content fuels all the main digital marketing channels we use to communicate with our audiences. Search, social media, conversation rate optimisation and email marketing all require content that helps a brand increase its visibility, engage its audience and drive leads and sales" (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 375).

Handley & Chapman (2011) suggest at least four objectives to produce online contents: to attract new customers; to raise awareness about your company and create buzz about it; to share more information about your company online to make easier for people to find it; or to foster your community and encourage them to share their experience on you to others.

It is important to note that content marketing is different from traditional marketing and advertising. Using content to sell is not selling, advertising or push marketing – it is a pull strategy where contents are there when consumer need you and seek you with relevant, educational, helpful, compelling, engaging, or entertaining information (Lieb 2012, 19). Thus, content marketing is also a very central concept in inbound marketing philosophy and language. In order to make the flywheel spin, one should produce lots of useful, remarkable content.

According to Halligan and Shah (2014) remarkable content should be created for two main reasons. It attracts links from other web sites pointing to your website, and these links not only send you qualified visitors but signal Google that the web site is worthy of ranking for keywords in your market. Second, remarkable contents is easily and quickly spread on social media sites and reach your audiences fast and effectively. (Halligan & Shah 2014, 23).

Savar suggests three fundamental pillars on which all critical decisions in content marketing should be based on: 1) *Inspirations*: ensuring that content is relevant and meaningful; 2) *Distribution:* understanding how to best publish content; and 3) *Scorekeeping:* quantifying success to determine wheather to expand, maintain, or decrease individual tactics or actions (Savar 2013, 169)

Content can be produced and distributed in many formats. Hubspot has published a picture with a list of different content formats in their blog. (McGill 2019) In this picture x, one can find 44 different ideas for different content forms – quizzes being one suggestion among them.

Picture 1 List of content formats introduced in a Hubspot blog (McGill 2019)

3.6   Content marketing in the b-to-b context

According to Hall (2017,2) a b-to-b marketing audience excepts more detailed and richer information and different forms of content to help them in their decision making. B-to-b customers are becoming more selective, more demanding and vocal about how they want to be angaged by potential service providers. (Hall 2017, 108)

A b-to-b buyer research by Demandbase in 2015 gave a lot of evidence on the argument that b-to-b marketing is getting more complex and buyers more sophisticated. 53 % of b-to-b buyers said that social media playes a role in their decisionmaking. 52 % had viewed two to four pieces of content and almost 1/3 had got familiar five to seven pieces of content before decisionmaking. (Hall 2017, 4)

One of the most common arguments when comparing b-to-b with b-to-c (business to consumers) markets, is that consumers buying for themselves are more emotional whereas b-to-b buyers make their decisions purely on rational basis. Hall, among others, does not agree with that. Small business owners and individuals even in large organisations make often decisions emotionally influenced. (Hall 2017, 3)

Handley and Chapman emphasis that content should be always interesting, informative or entertaining. But in the b-to-b context they advice to put special attention to the Content Rule: *Do something unexpected*. (Handley & Chapman 2011, 129)

Avinash Kaushik, a Digital Marketing Evangelsit for Google, has introduced a *See, Think, Do, Care framework* for designing actions and relevant contents for different stages of customer journey. (Rowles 2018, 30-31).

In Table 1 Rowles demonstrates different online tools and contents for a b-to-b organisation that sells online digital marketing courses. *The see/browse content* is of broad general interest to the target audience. *The think/active interest content* is contected to what the organisation sells, and *the do/point of purchase content* is the key product offering. *The see/browse contents* can be used at the care/loyalty stage as Table 1 demonstrates.

Stage	Action/contents
See (Browse)	7 top Facebook tips for social success
Think (Active interest)	Complete guide to bridging the digital marketing skills gap
Do (Point of purchase)	Online digital marketing courses
Care (Loyalty)	7 top Facebook tips for social success

Table 1: Action and content mapping with a Kaushik's customer journey framework
(Rowles 2018, 31)

Customer insight is also a foundation for successfully creating demand in the market, especially in the b-to-b context. According to Laine, one should consider in which channels the organisation can create demand and influence it's b-to-b customers. A special consideration should also be placed in the contents in the chosen channels – in the eyes of the prospective client the contents should build trust, confidence and expert image and also be interesting and thought-provoking. The main goal is to get and stay in so-called "Top-of-mind" of the potential customer (Laine 2015, 75-76)

In order to evaluate and consider if the contents are relevant and activating in the client's perspective, Laine has developed a tool to evaluate marketing contents in the b-to-b context. This tool is introduced in Figure 11.

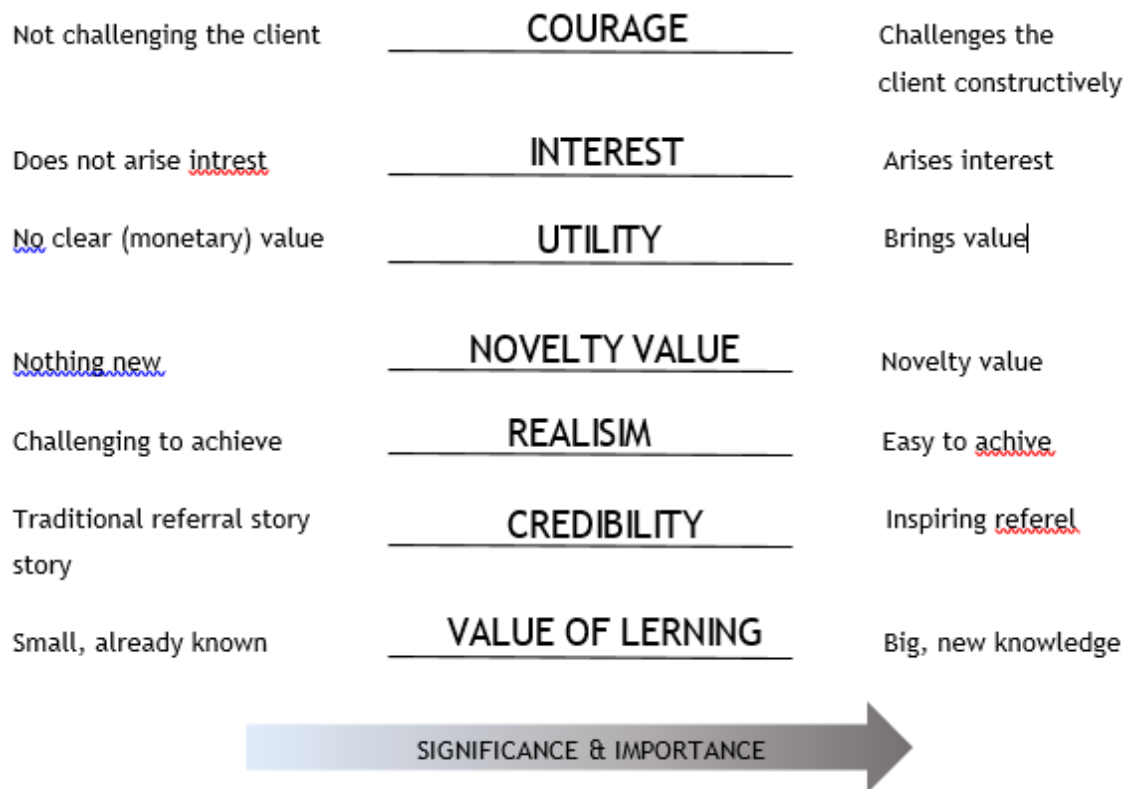| Not challenging the client	COURAGE	Challenges the client constructively
Does not arise intrest	INTEREST	Arises interest
No clear (monetary) value	UTILITY	Brings value
Nothing new	NOVELTY VALUE	Novelty value
Challenging to achieve	REALISIM	Easy to achive
Traditional referral story story	CREDIBILITY	Inspiring referel
Small, already known	VALUE OF LERNING	Big, new knowledge

SIGNIFICANCE & IMPORTANCE

Figure 11: A tool to evaluate b-to-b marketing and selling contents (Laine 2015, 77)

4   Gamification as a marketing asset

A Digital Marketing Buyer Profile Test to be designed as a development task will be a gamifi-cation application for the Service Provider's marketing. Therefore, in this chapter a closer look will be taken at gamification as a concept and especially at its use and possibilities in digital marketing.

Gamification can be described as *the use of game thinking and game mechanics in non-game context to engage users in solving problems* ((Boinodiris & Fingar 2014, 14). According to a widely accepted, and a very similar, definition by Deterding et al in 2011, *Gamification is the use of game-play mechanics for non-game application*. This definition also includes the distin-tion between "serious game" that are designed for non-entertainment purposes from "gami-fied" applications that incorporate some and not all of the game design elements (Sigala 2015). Gamification can also be defined as an application of game mechanics and psychology to drive a set of specific desired behaviors by the user. (Cramer 2014)

Gamification, videogames, and rewards programs get often mixed up and they are similar in some ways: they engage "players" voluntarily; they use game mechanisms such as points and

levels; they are interactive; and they encourage progression to move players to the next level. However, the differences are more important – the ways that they engage people and also the purposes behind them are different. *Games* primarily engage players by entertaining them. *Reward programs* engage plays by rewarding them, and *gamification* engage players on emotional level to motivate them. (Burke 2014, 27-28)

Gamification has become a fast-emerging practice in the business world. Organisations adapt gaming techniques and game-style rewards in order to increase customer engagement. (Yang et al. 2016) Companies have been employing gamification technique for years but over the past few years, digital marketers have started to realize that gamification can take their campaigns to new levels (Cramer 2014). Gamification has rapidly become a trend in marketing and one of the most effective and efficient tools in online marketing for user engagement and loyalty. (Noorbehbahani et al. 2019) It is fast becoming an integral part of any good multifaceted marketing strategy (Cramer 2014).

Zichermann and Linder (2010, 6) write about "game-centric revolution of advertising and marketing" and claim: "The future of marketing is games". Marketers can create a game for relatively little money and know, almost instantly, whether it's working or not. The statistics and analytics driven nature of gamification means its success - or lack thereof - is quickly quantifiable. "If people aren't playing, then it isn't working" (Cramer 2014).

From the perspective of service marketing, gamification can be defined as "*a process of enhancing a service with affordances for gameful experiences in order to support user's overall value creation*" (Huotari & Hamari 2017, 19). This conceptualization of gamification is rooted in service dominant logic, introduced by Vargo & Lusch in 2014, which suggests that customers are the creators of value, and the company can merely provide affordances for the customer to experience gamefulness. This conceptualization of gamification states that eventually the customer determines whether they are engaged in gameful experiences and whether consequently the perceived value of the service is increased. (Hsu & Chen 2018)

According to Burke, many companies are more enamored with the trend of gamification rather than the business impact that it will have. Thus, gamification has itself become the objective. (Burke 2014, 97) Therefore, the first important step one is to define the business outcome and success metrics of the company. Burke's advice is: "Do not invert in any trend or technology - including gamification - without first identifying the business outcomes you expect to achieve." (Burke 2014, 97) These outcomes should be realistic, achievable, explicitly stated, and should include success metrics.

4.1 Marketing concepts and research related to gamification

In their study on the effects of gamification on desirable consumer behaviors, Hsu and Chen (2018) have defined three marketing concepts related to the gamification context: 1) engagement, 3) brand loyalty, and 3) brand awareness.

Engagement means the psychological investment of the consumer in the participating process (i.e., cognitive engagement), the development of emotional connections between the brand and the consumer while fulfilling the activities (i.e., emotional engagement), and the participation and the involvement of consumers in consumer markets and positive attitudes of the consumers during the gamification marketing activities (i.e., behavioral engagement)

Brand loyalty can be divided into two classes: attitudinal and behavioral. Attitudinal brand loyalty is a psychological construct, which means that means that customers recommend the product to other customers. Behavioral brand loyalty is a way of behaving, such as making repeated purchases.

Brand awareness is related to consumers' ability to recall or recognize a brand. Brand awareness means a basic level of brand knowledge when brand knowledge comprises brand awareness and brand image (consumers' perceptions and associations for the brand).

Noorbehani et al. (2019) summarize the ten main areas of research on the use of gamification in marketing in their research article. They conclude that the most studies on the topic have been conducted on the gamification benefits and on how to use gamification especially in tourism marketing. Huotari and Hamari (2012; 2017) and Conaway and Garay (2014) have done research on defining gamification from service marketing perspective and Yang et al.(2017) on gamification on the intention of engagement and brand attitude.

4.2 Benefits and outcomes of the application of gamification in digital marketing

Noorbehbahani et al. (2019) list some of the advantages of using gamification for marketing purposes: increasing site visits, boosting the impact of advertising, increasing sales, obtaining background information from users, and collecting primary data.

Gamification can improve the psychological responses to marketing through user engagement and transferring persuasion knowledge to the customer. Therefore, Van Reijmersdal et al. (2012) recommend gamification especially when there is user resistance to brand acceptance and to response to marketing efforts. Gamification techniques can then increase the performance of marketing through interactions and entertainment.

In their review of the articles and research papers written on the application of gamification in marketing in 2011-2018, Noorbehbahani et al. conclude that enchanting customer experience is the most important advantage of applying gamification in marketing. Gamification improves customer engagement with mobile marketing programs and marketing websites. It increases the impact of advertising and creates value for the brand.

Noorbehbahani et al. also give a list of benefits of applying gamification in digital marketing based on their research review. The benefits of gamification that had been studied include:

- increasing psychological response to advertising;
- increasing brand recall, expand brand awareness and positive attitude toward the brand;
- improving customer experience;
- creating competitive advantage;
- enabling interactive brand design;
- increasing the impact of mobile marketing;
- encouraging customer engagement with marketing activities; and
- Increasing interaction with the website.

4.3 Customer value creation and motivational user experience in gamification

In most studies, the influence of gamification on improving the customer's positive attitude towards brand and co-creating value has been brought up. (Noorbehbahani et al. 2019) Huotari & Hamari (2017) summarize the main goal of using gamification in marketing as *customer value creation*.

Customers' perceptions of value regarding a product or service experience can be based both on the evaluation of functional or economic benefits as well as emotional outcomes i.e. excitement, fun, pleasure or a sense of well-being. Thus, in their research, Hsu and Chen (2018) consider *utilitarian* and *hedonic value* as the major value dimensions for explaining customers' experiences in online context and explaining the experience of gamification marketing activities. Both the utilitarian and hedonic value of experience of GMAs will positively influence *customer satisfaction* and this satisfaction is to lead to *Brand love*. When satisfaction is viewed as a transaction-specific outcome, brand love is the consequence of a customer's long-term relationship with the brand. Ultimately, the three desirable consumer behavior outcomes of gamification marketing activities are *brand loyalty, positive word of mouth* and *resistance to negative information*.

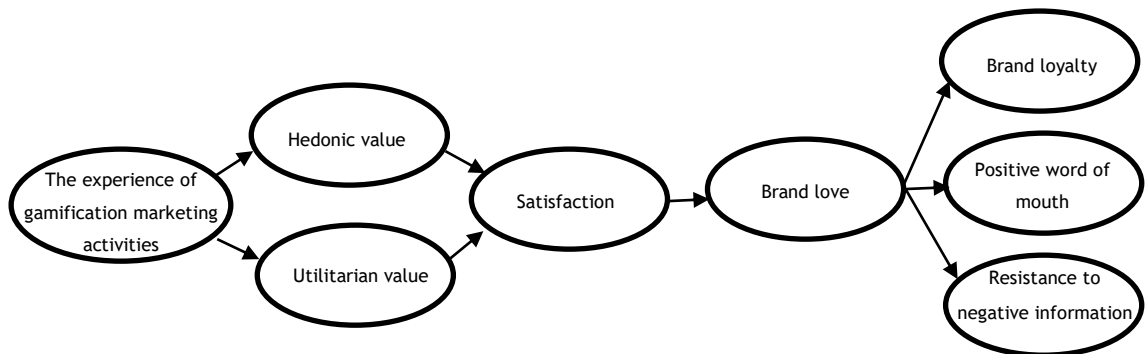The framework introduced by Hsu and Chen is visualized in Figure 12.

Figure 12: The experience of gamification marketing activities by Hsu and Chen (2018)

Wolf et al. (2020) introduce a user-centered perspective to demonstrate that promoting specific experiences in gamified services can be a powerful approach. Wolf claims that the motivational power of games is the main idea behind gamification. Genuinely motivational user experiences occurring during the use of gamified services can effectively drive firm-beneficial user behavior - besides motivating personal goal achievement. Based on their research, Wolf et al. claim that the motivational experiences are actually the key for understanding the firm consequences of gamifying services. These motivational user experiences are *self-development, social connectedness, expressive freedom,* and *social comparison.*

Self-development refers to managing and mastering one´s everyday life with useful abilities and valued skills. The dimension relates to perceiving achievement, being challenged, and making process – satisfying the need for competence. *Social connectedness* refers to forming interpersonal attachments and having social interaction and cooperation, creating a feeling of belonging. *Expressive freedom* is the ability to act according to one's own interest and having the choice of perception and self-expression. It creates the feeling of autonomy and creates self-expression experiences. Social comparison refers to the desire to benchmark one's own abilities and accomplishments with those of other people (Wolf et al. 2020, 355)

Figure 13 introduces the conceptual model of motivational user experiences and firm-beneficial outcomes of gamified services by Wolf et al.
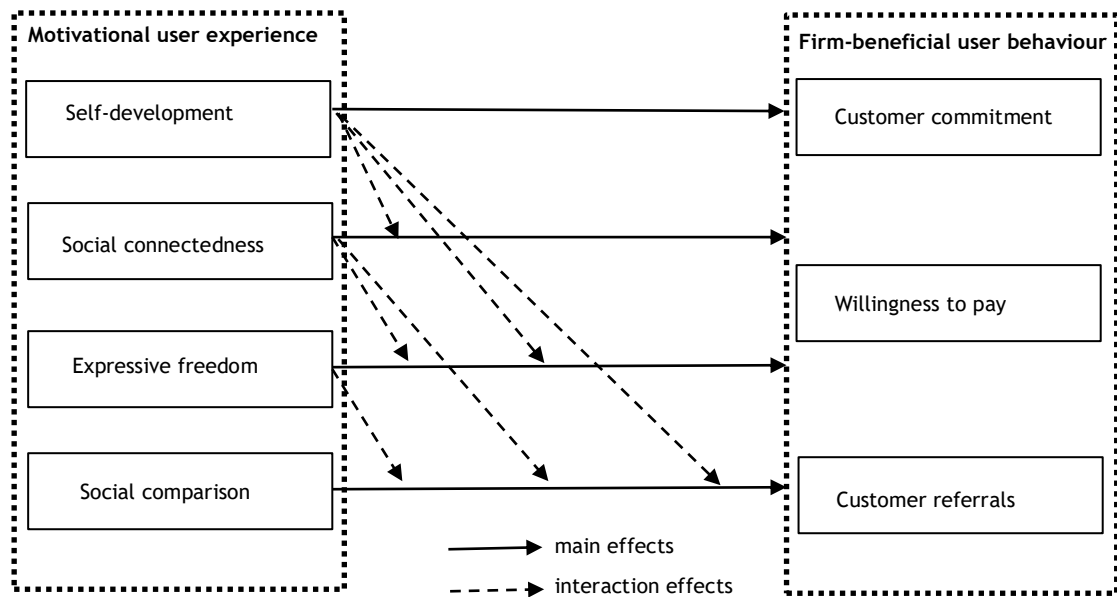
Figure 13: Conceptual model of motivational user experience and firm beneficial outcomes of gamified services (Wolf et al.2020, 356)

In real-life, experiencing a gamified service or solution can associate with more than one experience at the same time, e.g. competition, status, achievement, and challenge. Among the different experiences that Wolf et al. studied, self-development has the strongest effect on business outcomes. Self-development as a motivational experience drives strongly all three aspects of firm performance: (Customer commitment; Willingness to pay; and Customer referrals. Thus, including self-development as a core aspect in a gamified solution equally benefits the service user and the service provider.

Some experiences, like social comparison and social connectedness or expressive freedom, might even impair with firm-beneficial user behavior. Wolf et. al also found out that the interaction of different motivational experiences have also an impact on firm-favorable behavior. Experiencing social comparison together with social connectedness or expressive freedom negatively influence the firm-beneficial behavior. However, experiencing self-development and any other of three motivational experiences leads to improve the desired business outcomes. (Wolf et al. 2020, 361)

4.4   A Player-centric approach and process for designing games

Burke (2014, 89) argues that in a gamified solution, the player experience is designed as a journey. By design, he means *experience design* but not technical or user experience design.

In a player experience design process, Burke (2014, 90) defines the core steps or stages, incorporating the experience of service design thinkers:

1) Set business outcomes and success metrics
2) Study target audience
3) Define player goals
4) Determine the player engagement model
5) Define the play space and plan the journey
6) Choose the game economy
7) Play test and iterate

4.4.1 Defining the goals and the scope of the gamified experience

According to Burke, it is important to use a process of discovery when designing a gamified experience. It is vital to have a deep understanding of both business and player goals, which enables the designer to compose a solution rather than decompose the problem.

It also important to define clear business objectives for the gamification project. They must be realistic, achievable, and explicit and include metrics for success. Understanding the player and what engages him/her at emotional level is crucial to identify. Since goals are not always rational, they are not always easy to identify. For a better understanding of the customer, Burke recommends exploring the target audience by observing the audience, collecting data and to do interviews and to spend time with the audience. Creating player *personas* that represent the most typical personalities and goals of players, is a powerful and effective tool and method for identifying the player goals and motivations. Personas help to avoid abstract discussions and to realize the different goals and motivations of the target audience. (Burke 2014, 101-102)

The area of overlap between defined business outcomes and discover player goals is *the sweet spot of gamification* as visualized in Figure 14 below. This area of overlap defines the opportunity space for engaging players to achieve their goals and for the company to achieve theirs.
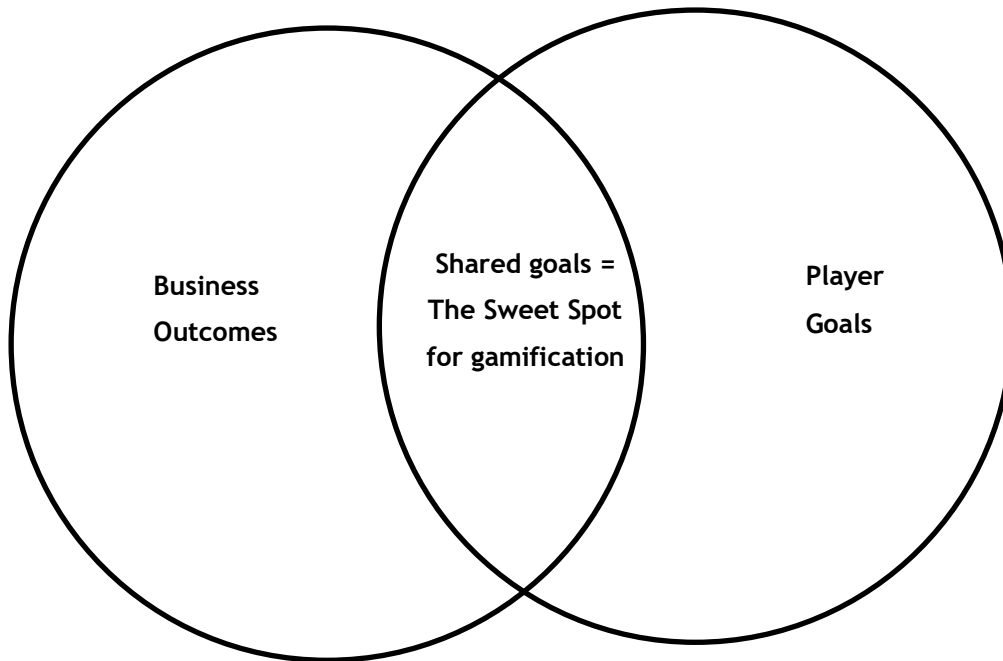
Figure 14: Defining gamification scope by Burke (Burke 2014, 106)

4.4.2   Designing the engagement model, the play space and the game economy

After defining the scope and "the sweet spot" of the gamified solution, the next step is to de-cisions how to structure the gamified solution. The player engagement model, below in Figure 15, describes how the player will interact with the solution. Each of the parameters of the model have a huge impact on the way that players interact with the solution. (Burke 2014, 113-114)

Collaborative/Competetive parameter defines the level of competetiveness. According to Burke, here many people mix up games with gamification, thinking that games are always competitive, whereas in gamification this is often a wrong assumption.

Intrisic/Extrinsic parameter defines the reward that the player gets. In gamified solutions re-wards are mostly intrinsic, i.e. intangible, since solutions with tangible rewards are reward programs. However, sometimes prices, like movie tickets, are offered as an extra incentive.

Multiplayer/Solitary parameter determines how many players must and can be involved: is the solution to support multiple players or just between the player and the game.

Campaign/Endless parameter determines the length of the solution. Instead of being endless, what many people assume of gamified applications, but when the goal is e.g. to learn a new specific skill, the solution should have a natural end.

Emergent/Scripted parameter define if the solution is emergent where the outcome is un-
known or scripted when the outcome is known in advance.

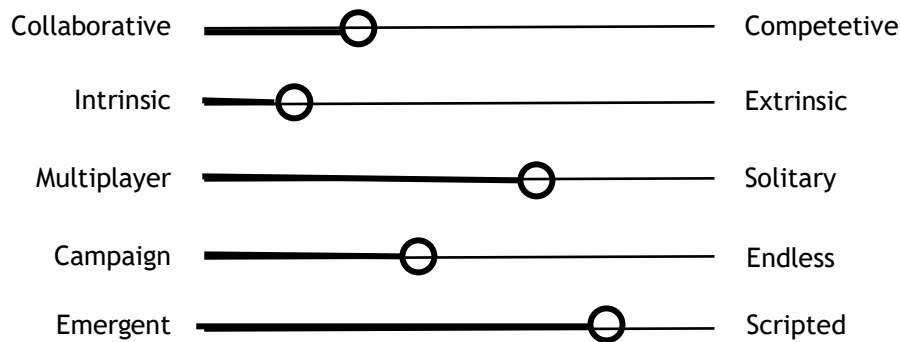| Collaborative | ——⊙——————— | Competetive |
Intrinsic	—⊙———————	Extrinsic
Multiplayer	————⊙———	Solitary
Campaign	———⊙————	Endless
Emergent	—————⊙——	Scripted

Figure 15: Player engagement model by Burke (Burke 2014, 110)

Designers of gamified experience must also determine the play space and the player journey.
The play space is the virtual environment where the players engage with the game – and pos-
sibly with other players. The player journey is the path that takes the player through the so-
lutions. It can take them to advanced levels, when it is important to balance challenge and
skills in order to maintain engagement. (Burke 2014, 115)

All games, reward programs, and gamification solutions have in-game economy, which is typi-
cally, not an economy based in money. This in-game economy consists of all the incentives
and rewards that the player gets for performing tasks, completing challenges and achieving
goals. According to Burke, there are four basic currencies in game economies: *fun, things, so-
cial capital* and *self-esteem.*

The extinction is made here again between games – fun being the primary currency, with re-
ward programs – with things being the primary currency and with social capital and self-es-
teem being the primary rewards of gamified solutions. (Burke 2014, 118) In a game economy,
Social capital can be badges, likes, friends, groups, status, reviews and/or gifting. Players can
be motivated with recognition within their social circles and in networks like Facebook, Twit-
ter, or LinkedIn. *Self-esteem* can be mastery, conquest, access, progression, leadership, prize
or/and levels. Gamified solutions provide players with challenges, give constant feedback,
recognize achievement, access to exclusive services, or badges of achievement.

4.4.3 Testing and iterating the solution and the player experience

Burke writes that often people think that a gamification solution with preconceived idea is like designing a video game with long development cycle. In the contrary, in gamification, the product is never final but continues to evolve long after the launch. According to Burke the initial launch of a gamified solution should include just enough features to engage the audience and to meet the business objectives.(Burke 2014, 124)

From the the first day of the launch, the game designer will start to learn new more about the audience and how they interact with the solution. Even though, a profound examination has been done on the motivational aspects and triggers, it is hard to predict what will ultimately motivate people. Burke suggest to use a pilot group of players to test the solution and collect data on all player interactions with the solution.This allows to develop gmification solutions iteratively and to tune it over time for an even better player experience and engagement. (Burke 2014, 124-125)

5 Developing the digital marketing buyer profile test by applying Service Design methods

Service Design is a new holistic, multi-disciplinary, integrative field. As customer-centricity being the core of Service Design Thinking, its helps to innovate or improve services by making them more useful, usable or desirable for customers.

Service Design Thinking offers organisations a very different way of approaching the way we think of the relationship between organisations and clients. It is the design of the overall experience of a service as well as the design of the process and strategy to provide that service. (Moritz 2015, 8)

Service Design Thinking can be applied in many ways in business development. This can be done at the strategic level, systems level and at the customer-interface. Most often Service Design methods are applied at the customer-interface to innovate and develop services – or certain parts of a service – with the aim to improve the customer experience or certain touchpoints along the customer journey. (Koivisto et al. 2019, 56)

Koivisto et al. (2019) have defined five typical development areas where Service Design can be utilized: 1) Developing the service process and touchpoint along the process; 2) Developing services and service portfolio; 3) Developing service marketing, communications and sales; 4) Developing internal functions and processes in the organization; and 5) Developing the company's business model. (Koivisto et al. 2019, 57)

Designing a Digital Marketing Buyer Profile Test is developing the Service Provider's service process and a specific, early touch point at the very early stage of the customer journey or buying process. It is also very much developing service marketing, communications and sales.

By applying Service Design thinking and methods totally new processes can be created, existing processes can be improved or new touchpoints or elements can be added to existing processes. This often ends up changing the routines and behavior patterns of both the company staff and their customers. (Koivisto et al. 2019, 57)

When developing marketing, communications and/or sales functions and activities, the brand, sales channels, marketing and sales methods, marketing materials, pricing methods and sales processes are in the centre of development. Goals for the Service Design process can then be to rise demand for the service, improve the awareness or customer loyalty for the service or to differentiate the service brand. The aim of applying Service Design is to make the customer aware of the service and to understand its content, to experience buying easy and to demonstrate the customer the value of using the service and of becoming a loyal customer. (Koivisto et al. 2019, 59-60)

5.1   Service Design process

Service Design (later SD) literature has defined various SD processes, of which the double diamond model, originating from the design process by the UK Design Council, being the basis of most of the process models. (Yu 2017, 28)

The double-diamond framework consists of four D-phases: *Discover, Define, Develop,* and *Deliver*. The Discover phase includes exploring inspiration, user needs, and initial ideas. In the Define phase, design problems are defined and a design brief is generated. The Develop phase is about creating and refining solutions and prototyping them, and finally in the Deliver phase service solutions are finalized and launched. (Yu 2017, 28)

Figure 16 by Yu (2017) introduces and compares the different SD processes. Stickdorn & Schneider (2012) define the SD process stages as *exploration, creation, reflection,* and *implementation*; according to Stigliani & Fayard (2010), the SD process consists of *a research phase, a definition phase, a development phase* and *a delivery phase*; and Meroni & Sangiorgi (2011) simplify the SD process also as four activities*: analyzing, generating, developing,* and prototyping.

Planning/Design		Develop/Deliver	

Technology Strategy Boars & Design Council (2015)

Discover · Define · Brief · Develop · Deliver

Curedale (2013)

Defining &vison · Knowing people & contexts · Framing insights · Exploring ideas · Prototyping and iterating · Implementing outcomes

Meroni & Sangiorgi (2011)

Analysing · Generating · Developing · Prototyping

Stickdorn & Schneider (2010)

Exploration · Creation · Reflection · Implementation

Stigliani & Fayard (2010)

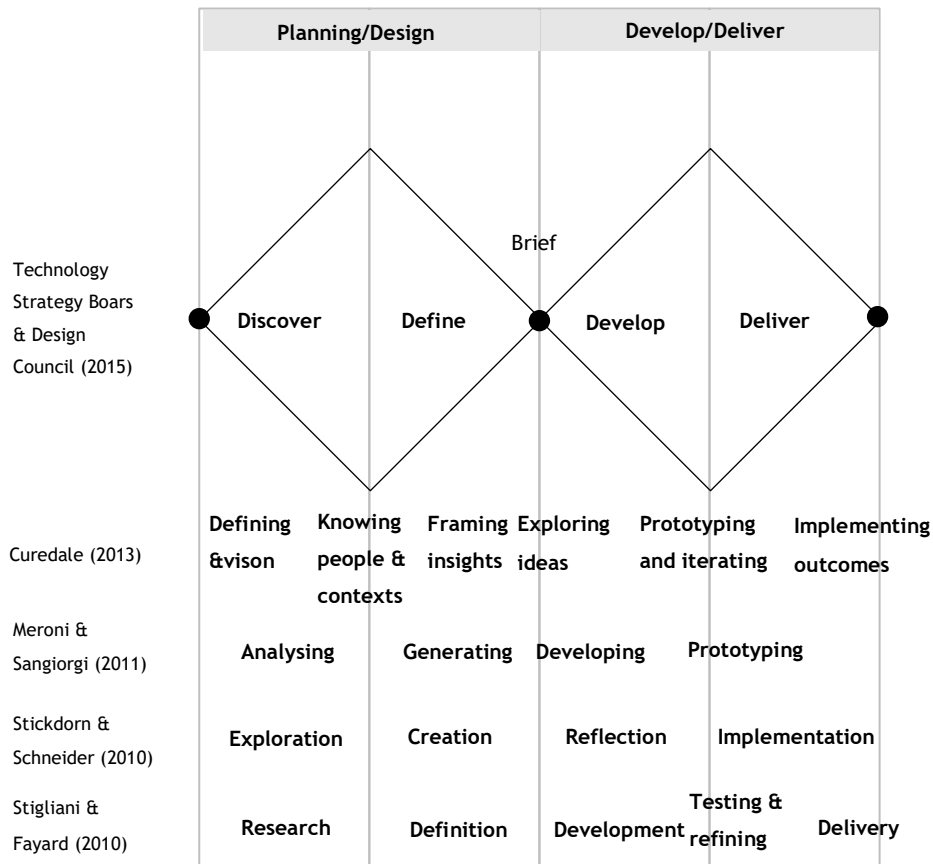Research · Definition · Development · Testing & refining · Delivery

Figure 16: Service Design process frameworks (Yu 2017)

However, whatever process model one prefers, it is important to realize that the SD process is never linear. The adaptive and iterative nature makes design processes hard to visualize – and many visualizations suggest a linear structure since it is easier to understand. Some define the process with circles to illustrate the iterations but according to Stickdorn, the process never goes in circles either (Stickdorn 2018, 90)

Because there is no generally implied sequence, Stickdorn & at. have stopped talking about "phases" or "stages" but introduce only core "actions" instead. In their book, This is Service Design Doing! (2018) these core actions defined as *research, ideating, prototyping* and *implementation*.

One is able to choose the most relevant actions and tools for the particular designing process – you might have to go back from prototyping to ideating or even do more research – but in the process you never really go back but constantly move forward and adapt.

5.2   Service Design process in this study

Service Design Thinking approach is applied to this study. Thus, designing the Digital Buyer Profile Test will follow the SD process and Service Design methods and tools are used along the process.

The Service Design process and actions of this study are described by using the process model names of the UK Design Council: *Discover, Define, Develop,* and *Deliver*. It is probably the most common and popular model to describe service design project and therefore chosen for this study.

The process is visualized with phases or actions proceeding only forward – in practice the design process was iterative by nature meaning that different actions at every stage were sometimes taken simultaneously or steps backward were taken e.g. to desktop research.

The process phases, including methods and tools applied at each stage of the process, are visualized in the Figure 17. and described in more detail in the following chapters 5.3. - 5.6.
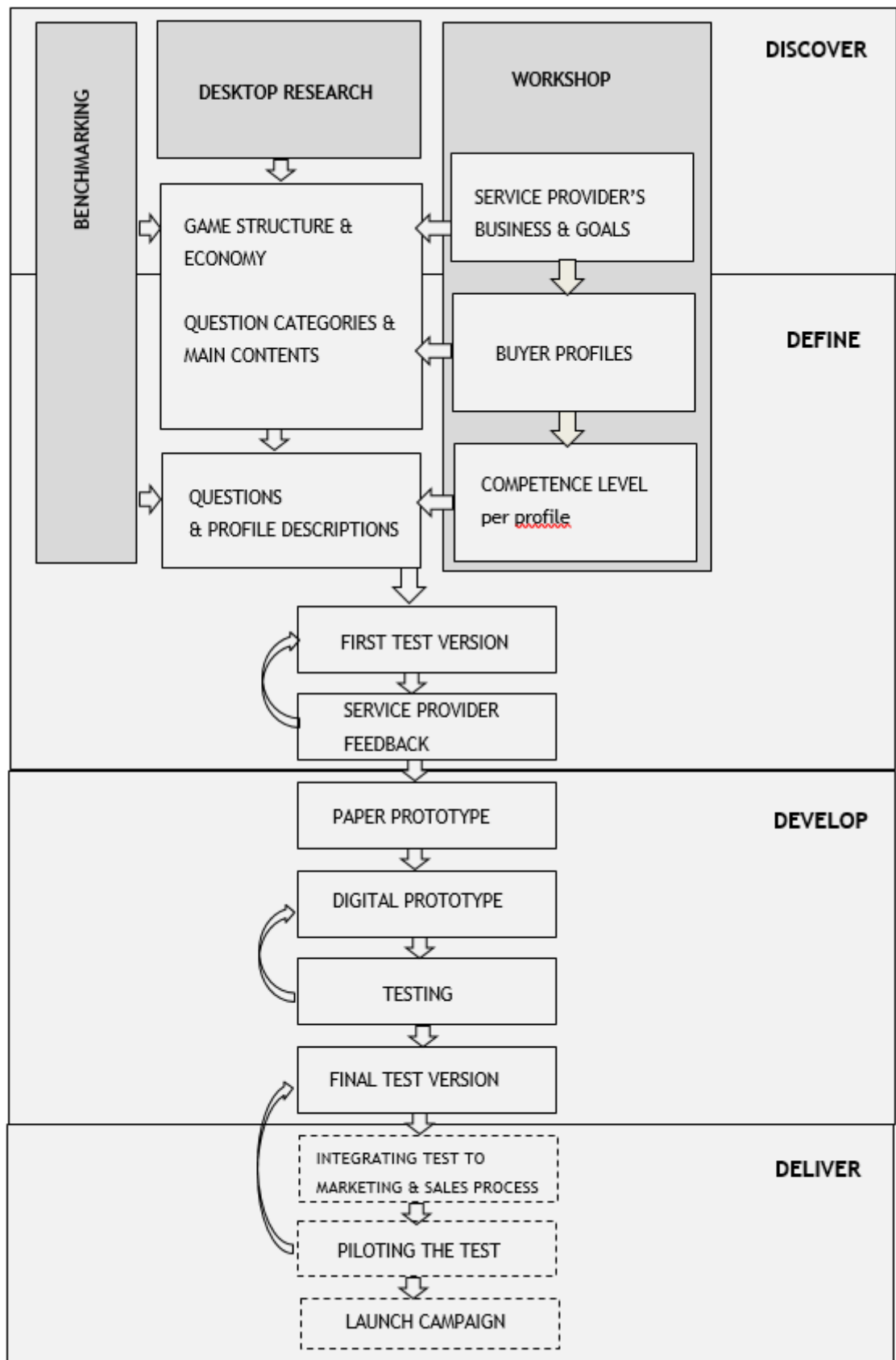
Figure 17: Service Design process of the development work and master thesis study

5.3 Discover: Desk-top research, benchmarking and workshoping

In the Discovery phase, the designer is searching for new opportunities, new markets, new information, new trends, and new insights (Tschimmel 2012, 9).

Stickdorn et al. (2018) divide *desktop research* into two phases: *preparatory research* and *secondary research*. Preparatory research is described as the researcher's own preparation before starting the actual research or fieldwork. Secondary research is the collection, synthesis, and summary of existing research.

Preparatory research means "digging deeper" into the client's perspective of the research question: context, perceptions, internal conflicts, or interplays that may appear. It is less about finding right answers and more about finding the right questions to ask in the actual research (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 14). Initial interviews in the organization offer a good starting point. The aim is also to get to know more about the industry, competitors, similar products or services. Prep research can also include screening social media posts or hashtags, reading general-interest magazines, or listening to podcasts and watching conference talks. (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 14-15).

Secondary research can be both qualitative and quantitative date, from internal or external sources. To conduct secondary research, the designer should search for a specific topic or research question using online search engines or research platforms. The main purpose of is to check whether research regarding research question already exists, to formulate the research question more precisely, and to avoid "reinventing the wheel". (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 17)

5.3.1 Preparatory research in this study

The preparatory research phase in this study lasted much longer that suggested by Sticdorn at al. since the first contacts and the first meeting with CEO of the Service Provider took place almost a year before the actual thesis work begun. For approximately six months, an email correspondence took place and some phone calls were made to define the right focus and theme for the development work and for this thesis.

During this time the initial ideas of co-creating the digital marketing service portfolio were neglected and the focus shifted more on the process of new customer acquisition. Finally, the idea of developing an online test to support the new customer acquisition process was brought up. This was considered as an interesting and contemporary topic and the thesis process could proceed.

During the preparatory research phase, the thesis author got familiar with the Service Provider also through the web pages and with some internal information including buyer personas

created earlier. The LinkedIn feed and the regular blog posts of the Service Provider were followed. The field of digital marketing and existing competition were also studied both in Finland and globally. This was done through benchmarking web pages and social media presence of the digital marketing service providers and by joining a numerous email lists, downloading different online reports, white papers and free guidebooks and by watching webinars by the different and/or competing service providers.

5.3.2 Secondary research in this study

As the very first step in the secondary research phase (often called "desk research"), Stickdorn et al. advise to define the research question or topic. This was also done in this study. The aim and purpose of the study as well as the three main research questions were described in the Chapter 1. The three central research question defined in Chapter 1 formed also the three different focus areas for the secondary or desktop research.

As Stickdorn et al. (2018) advises potential sources were then identified and also the reliability of the sources were evaluated. Since gamification as a marketing asset is quite new as a phenomenon, most of the references in this field were scientific articles. The theoretical background in b-to-b sales and marketing and also in digital marketing included more contemporary literature – international and also some Finnish. Altogether, most of the research sources were less than 10 years old – many of them quite recently written. A special attention was paid to the fact that the articles would be peer-reviewed but that goal was not always met. Track of resources were kept during this research phase and all along the thesis work with RefWorks online service.

5.3.3 Benchmarking different digital marketing tests

Benchmarking is used both for learning from others and for developing one's own operations. In order to design services or solutions that would be successful in the market, service designers should know both the operations of one's own organisation but also the business environment that services or solutions will be designed for. Benchmarking is used for that purpose, meaning researching, observing, compering, evaluating and to be interested in other organisations' similar solutions and actions. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 138)

According to Tuulaniemi, internet is a good and fast source for benchmarking. It was also the main source for benchmarking in this study. If the market situation and competition in offering digital marketing services was the focus in the preliminary research phase, benchmarking in the secondary research phase focused on the different tests available online for testing your digital marketing skills level. The master thesis author discovered dozens of different tests online and finally did herself ten different online tests. The links to the tests can be found in Appendix 1.

All of the tests measured the skill level of an individual tester more than the skill level of an organization. Larger tests providing a certificate, e.g. Google AdWords test and HubSpot tests, were not included in benchmarking. The tests had 10-60 questions each and altogether 112 questions were answered and evaluated by the thesis author. 74 of the questions were selected to be evaluated in the workshop by the Service Provider representatives.

5.3.4 Workshopping: Service Provider's business, services and goals

According to Tuulaniemi, in the very beginning of the project, before the research phase, mutual understanding between the company and the service designer about the goals for the project should be defined in a brief. A good brief contains the following elements (Tuulaniemi 2018, 132-133):

- the main goal of the design project

- the primary and secondary target groups for the solution or service to be designed

- already existing information about the target groups

- the business goals of the solution

- the service portfolio of the company

- the vision, mission and business strategy of the company

- the market situation and demand for the services or for similar services

- the scope, length and the phases of the project

- the budget of the project

- overview of the project

- necessary background information for the project.

It was clear that, despite of the preliminary research, the master thesis author was missing this kind of a brief and did not have an adequate understanding of the Service Provider's organization, vision, mission, business or branding goals or of its current new customer acquisition and sales processes. A digital buyer profile test to suit the marketing and sales process of the Service Provider could not be designed without a deeper understanding of these fundamentals.

As discussed in Chapter 3.3 *Building a successful digital marketing strategy*, "digital market-ing strategy should be developed within the framework of your business including your indus-try, company structure and culture, your brand and goals (Kingsnorth 2017). In addition, in Chapter 4 the key message was that the business goals of the organization for a new gamified solution must be defined before proceeding any further in the designing process (Burke 2014).

Therefore, at an early stage of this thesis project, a workshop was organized for the repre-sentatives of the organization. The workshop consisted of two main goals: 1) to deepen the understanding of the Service Provider's organisation, core functions and business goals, and 2) to define the specific wishes and/or prerequisites set by the Service Provider for the test to be designed. From the service process point of view, The first goal of the workshop falls into Discover-phase and the second goal is part of the Define-phase as visualized in Figure 17.

The workshop for 2,5 hours took place in the premises of the Service Provider, in a confer-ence room. Both full-time employees, CEO and Digital Producer, of the Service Provider at-tended the workshop. The language of the workshop and all the materials was Finnish.

 A very experienced facilitator Piritta Kantojärvi writes in her book on workshop facilitation (2017) that if you want the workshop to be successful and the participants to co-create and work together, the way you start the workshop is crucial. She brings up the three core ele-ments of a successful start: creating the feeling of security, being present and motivating the participants to work to the right direction (Kantojärvi 2017, 47).

According to Kantojärvi security is created by getting to each other and by introducing the fa-cilitators. Physical environment has a big influence for the feeling of being present. Motivat-ing the participants can be done by focusing on the objectives of the workshop: sharing the common goals, expectations, telling the common rules and ways of working and documenting the workshop.

As a warm-up exercise, to get to know each other and to leave others thoughts and task be-hind, inspirational cards (Tukiainen 2018) with pictures and promises for self-development were used for a short exercise. Some 30 picture cards with a short promise or "power sen-tence" were spred on the table. Each participant, including the thesis author as facilitator, chose one to three cards, which described best her current feelings and/or goals for year 2020 which had just begun. Then the participants opened up their choices to others and a short chat about the challenges and wishes for the New Year took place. After the warm-up exercise, the agenda – both for the workshop and the project – and the goals for the workshop were introduced and shortly discussed.

The amount of participants for the workshop set some challenges for choosing the tools and facilitating the workshop. Also the limited amount of time for the workshop was a challenge

and encouraged the thesis author to choose tools and methods that are easy and fast to explain and instruct, and tools that could be done in small group. The thesis author did not know the workshop premises or its equipment in advance, so that had to be taken into account as well. All the workshop canvases and templates were prepare in advance and they would work as well on the table as at the wall. Luckily, the conference room was suitable for the workshop and the atmosphere stayed safe and peaceful throughout the workshop.

To deepen the understanding of the Service Provider's organisation, business and goals, two main tools were used in the workshop: Business Model Canvas and SWOT.

5.3.4.1 Business Model Canvas

Alex Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur first introduced Business Model Canvas (BMC) in their book *Business Model Generation* in 2010. BMC canvas is a powerful, visual tool for the ideation and development of business models. It can be used alone or in a group and it works very well in workshops, helping fast and easy to point out the most central operations of the organization. With a BMC canvas one can realize and concretize how the company creates value for its customer. (Koivisto 2018, 175)

The key benefit of using Business Model Canvas is that it brings clarity to an organisation's core aims and provides an up-to-date "snapshot" of an organization. (Stickdorn et al. 2010 , 211) According to Liikkanen (2019), BMC works especially well in a beginning of a project when not all of the participants are aware of the key operations and goals of the project organisation

In practice, Business Model Canvas is divided into nine blocks or compartments, which each help to name and develop the core functions of the company. The BMC Canvas used in the workshop was a Finnish translation of the canvas made by Lassi A Liikkanen, Lead Product Designer at Qvisk and Adjunct professor of human-centered design, based on the canvas introduced by Juha Tuulaniemi in his book Palvelumuotoilu in 2011 (Liikkanen 2019). The nine blocks and the main questions for the each block in a BMC canvas are:

- Partners (In Finnish*: kumppanit*)
- Key functions (*ydintoiminnot*)
- Key resources (*resurssit*)
- Value Proposal (*arvolupaus*)
- Customer relationship (*asiakassuhde*)
- Channels (*kanavat*)
- Customer segments (*asiakasryhmä*)

- Cost structure (*kulurakenne*)
- Revenue streams (*tulovirrat*)

In Picture 2 the BMC of the Service Provider can been seen as filled in at the workshop. Two fields at the bottom of the template, Cost structure and Revenue streams, are left empty at purpouse. Due to the tight schedule, it was decided in advance to focus on the core services, functions, customer relationships and channels for building and maintaining the customer relationships.
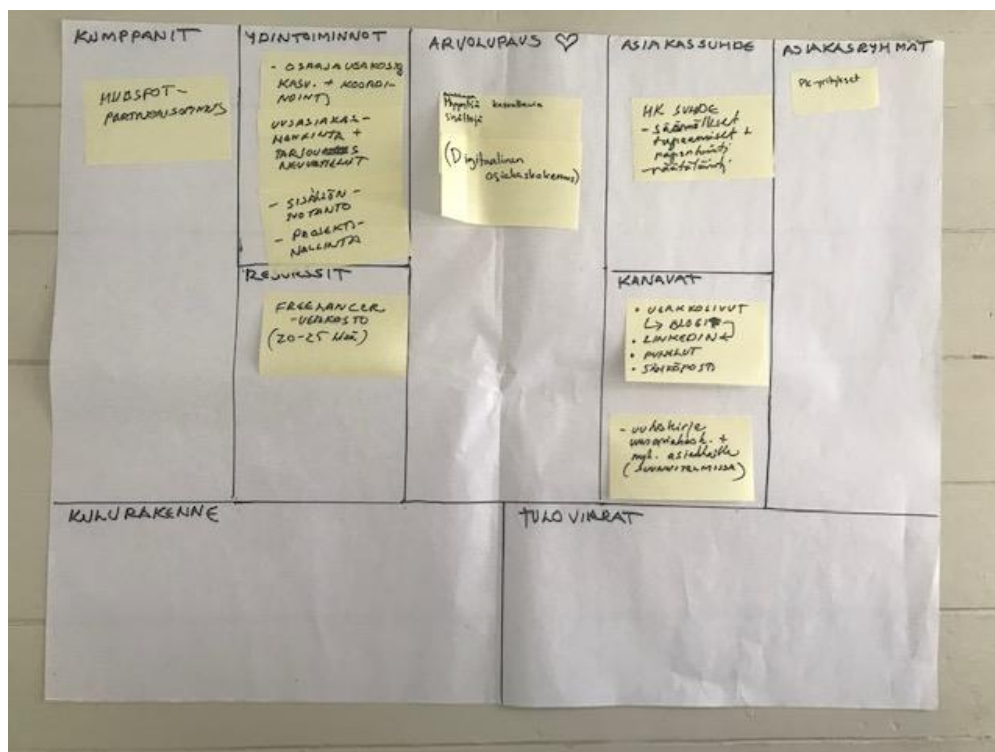

Picture 2: Business Model Canvas as filled in the Service Provider workshop (Kaarlehto 2020)

5.3.4.2   SWOT analysis

The SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis is a tool for analyzing an organization and its environments. *Internal factors* cover strengths and weakness that helpful or harmful for achieving set goals. These can be personnel, finance, manufacturing capabilities and capacity etc. They often include all or some of the 4P´s (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion). *External factors* reveal opportunities and threats that are helpful or harmful external conditions to achieve the objectives. These factors include macroeconomic matters, technological change, legislation, socio-cultural changes, and changes in the marketplace or in competition. All these factors put in a matrix permit to define the risks and benefits for future development and innovation at an organization. (Alix & Vallespir 2009, 647)

SWOT matrix or grid is an effective and a very commonly used tool in all kinds of workshops and development projects. It was developed as early as in 1965 by Alfred Humprey at Stanford (Curedale 2016, 185), is usually familiar for all, and needs no long instructions and the workshop participants can instantly start working on it. That was one of the main reasons that this tool was chosen for this workshop which due to the limited time had to be as efficient as possible. In Chapter 3.3. SWOT has also be defined as one of the early steps by Rowles (2018) in developing and implementing a successful digital marketing strategy.

On the next page, in Picture 3, the SWOT matrix of the Service Provider can been seen as filled in at the workshop.
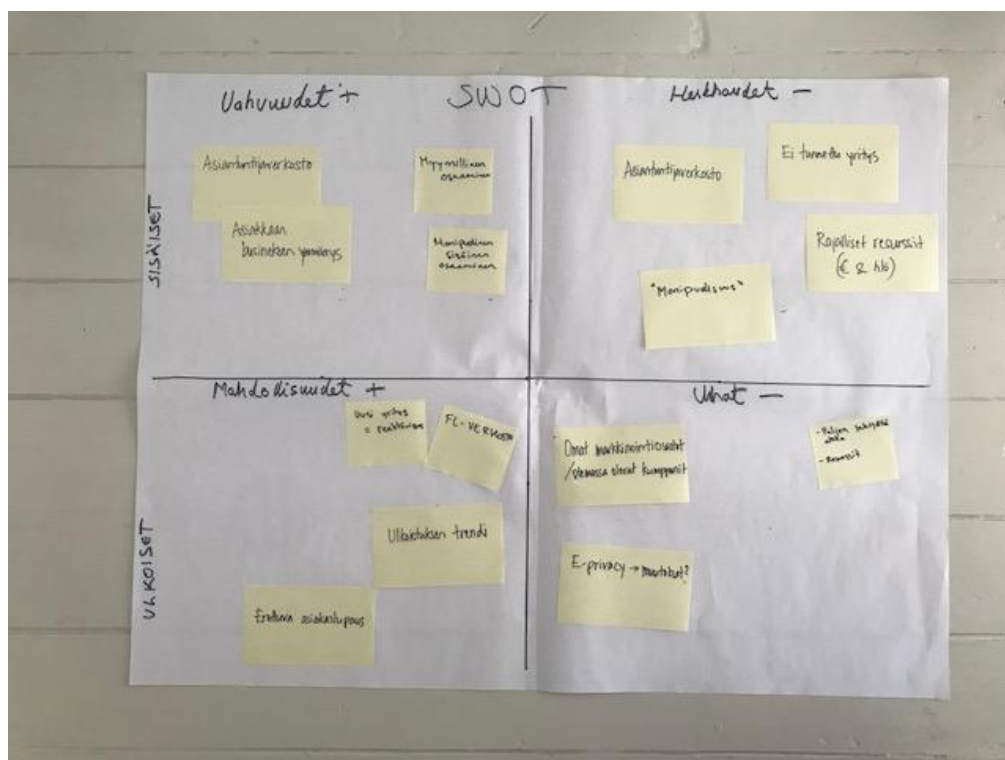
Picture 3: The SWOT matrix of the Service Provider as filled at the workshop (Kaarlehto 2020)

5.4   Define: Workshopping and creating the first version of the test

In the Define phase of the design process, the designer reviews and narrows down the insights and the project's main challenge is established.(designcouncil.org.uk) The initial development of project ideas is done, and the designer must engage with the wider context of the identified opportunity (Tschimmel 2012, 9).

As described earlier in Chapter 5.3.4, the workshop consisted of two main goals: 1) to deepen the understanding of the Service Provider's organisation, core functions and business goals, and 2) to define the specific wishes and/or prerequisites set by the Service Provider for the

test to be designed. From the service process point of view, the first goal of the workshop falls into Discover phase and the second goal is part of the Define phase. In the Define phase, the many key decisions about the test are made concerning its structure, game economy and content. The question categories are defined and the first versions of the individual questions and the profile descriptions are made. The first version of the test – the paper prototype - is modified based on the Service Provider feedback. For the process flow, see Figure 18.
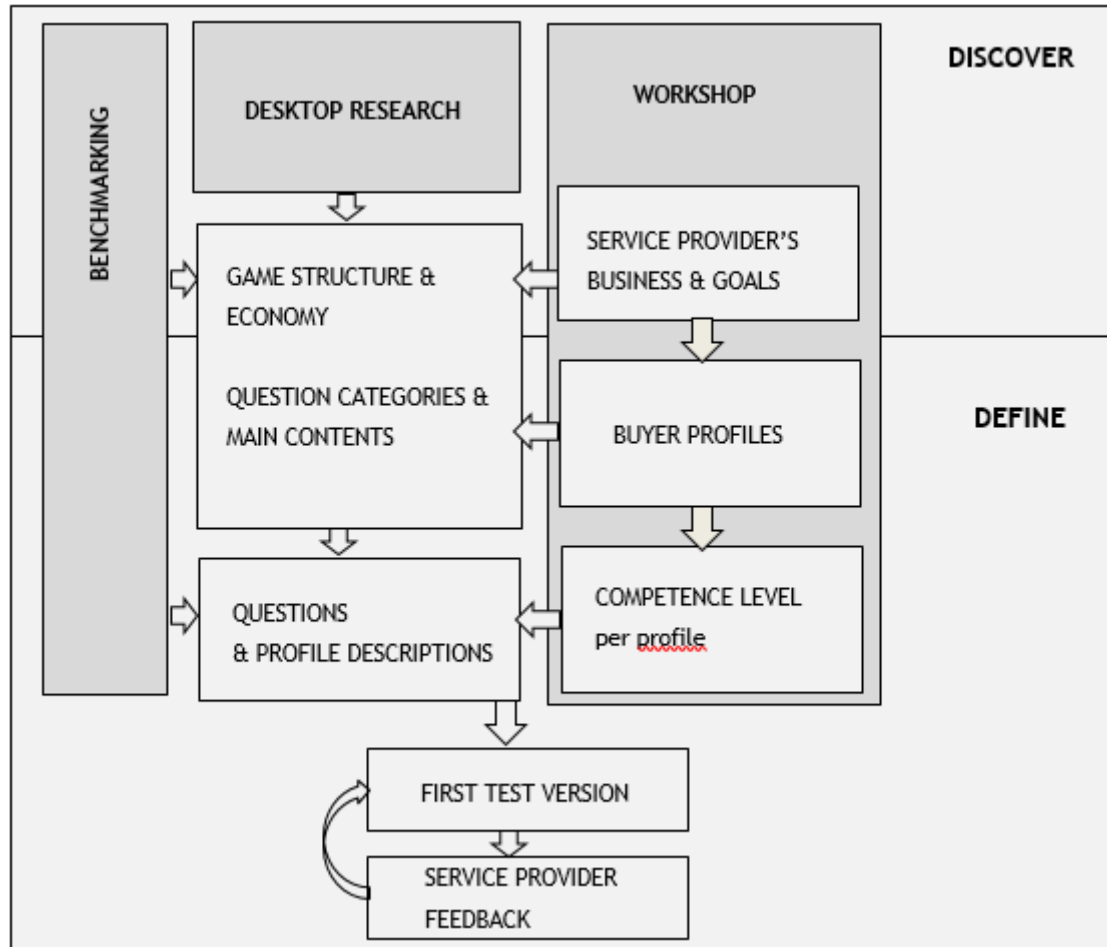

Figure 18: Discover and Define phases of the development work and study

5.4.1 Workshopping: Service Provider's sales process and buyer profiles

The original idea for a workshop exercise was to prioritize the already existing customer personas of the Service Provider and to sketch a digital marketing buyer journey for one to three most important personas – as advised e.g. by Burke (2014) and discussed in Chapter 4.6.1. The Service Provider had already earlier identified and made templates for six different buyer personas.

However, during the workshop the focus of the test altered. It was discussed and then decided that for the Service Provider it would be much more helpful to have test results that indicate the buyer company's general level in in digital marketing skills, resources and experience – instead of that of an individual buyer or persona.

During the workshop, it was also found out that the sales process itself is very much the same regardless of the buyer persona or oragnisation that is contacted. Therefore and because of the change of the perspective, "buyer journey" exercise was altered to "sales journey" exercise.

5.4.1.1   Sales Journey

In Service Design, different kind of journey maps are commonly used – in various phases of the SD process and from a different perspective – focus on a single moment, day or interaction or on the lifetime customer experience. Journey maps are diagrams that allow a designer to understand the element of a customer experience from the customer point of view. (Curedale 2016, 254). As described, in this workshop the point of view was altered from customer to the service provider and thus in this workshop journey mapping the perspective also altered. Journey mapping was used in order to understand the sales process and the most important touchpoints and information needed from the potential customer at each touchpoint from the Service Provider's perspective.

The workshop participants started to build their sales journey by defining the very first touchpoints for a potential customer to get into contact with the Service Provider. This could be either online or by a personal contact. Then the participants would add all the next touchpoints in their sales process as headlines in the sales journey. Beneath the main touchpoints or phases, they were asked to list the most important questions or information that they would need about the potential customer in order to manage the phase successfully and to be able to proceed to the next phase of the process. In Picture 4 on the next page, the Sales Journey/Process can been seen as completed in the workshop.
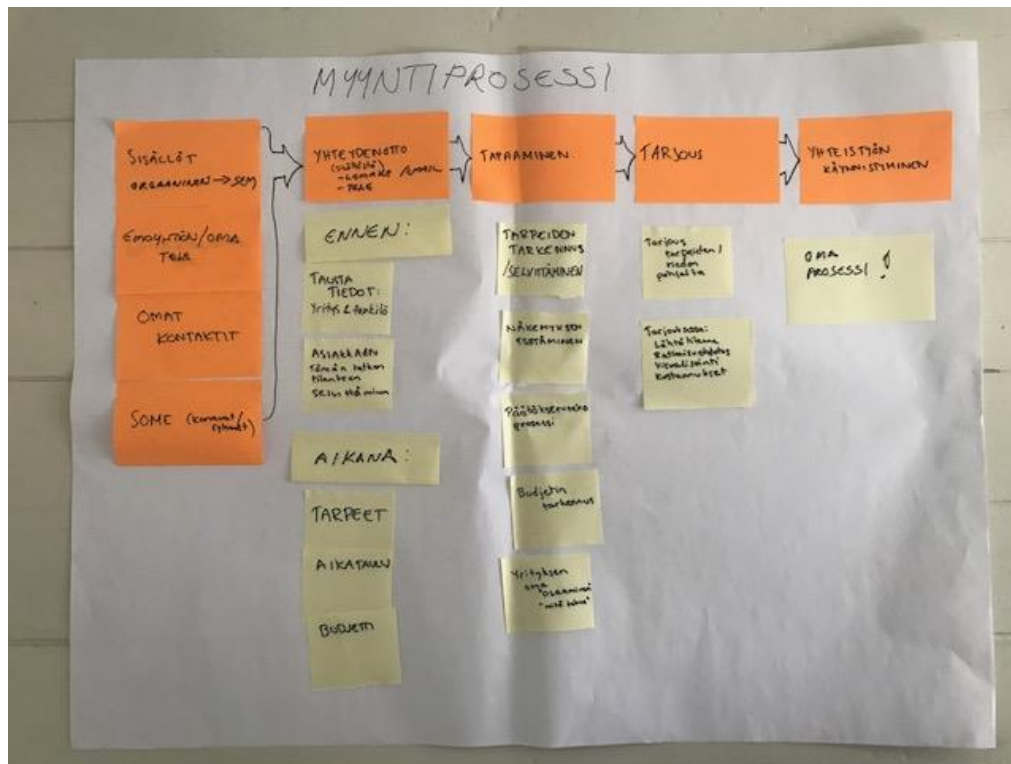
Picture 4: The Sales Journey of the Service Provider as filled at the workshop (Kaarlehto 2020)

5.4.1.2   Defining Digital Marketing Buyer Profile skills level

It was discussed and then decided that three different skills levels would be suitable for the test results and for buyer profiles – at least to start and to prototype with. The different levels or profiles were given preliminary names at the workshop: Level I: Beginner ("*Aloittelija*" in Finnish); level II: Some skills ("*Osaamista*" in Finnish); and level III: Virtuous ("*Virtuoosi*" in Finnish).

As a next step, a task given to the workshop participants was to evaluate the different skills levels of these three profile categories. In this exercise, an important aspect was also to define the possible digital marketing solutions and services that the Service Provider could offer for a potential client at this particular skills and competence level.

The workshop participants were asked to analyse and describe each buyer profile from three points of view:

-    What are the skill level and/or needs in digital marketing at this level?

- What are the most common needs and/or problems in digital marketing for an organization at this level?

- What kind of services and/or solutions the Service Provider could offer to an organization or company at this level?

In Picture 5, one can see the template filled in to define competence, needs and digital marketing solutions for a Digital Marketing Buyer Profile "Expert". Similar templates were done also for the buyer profiles "Beginner" and "Virtuous".
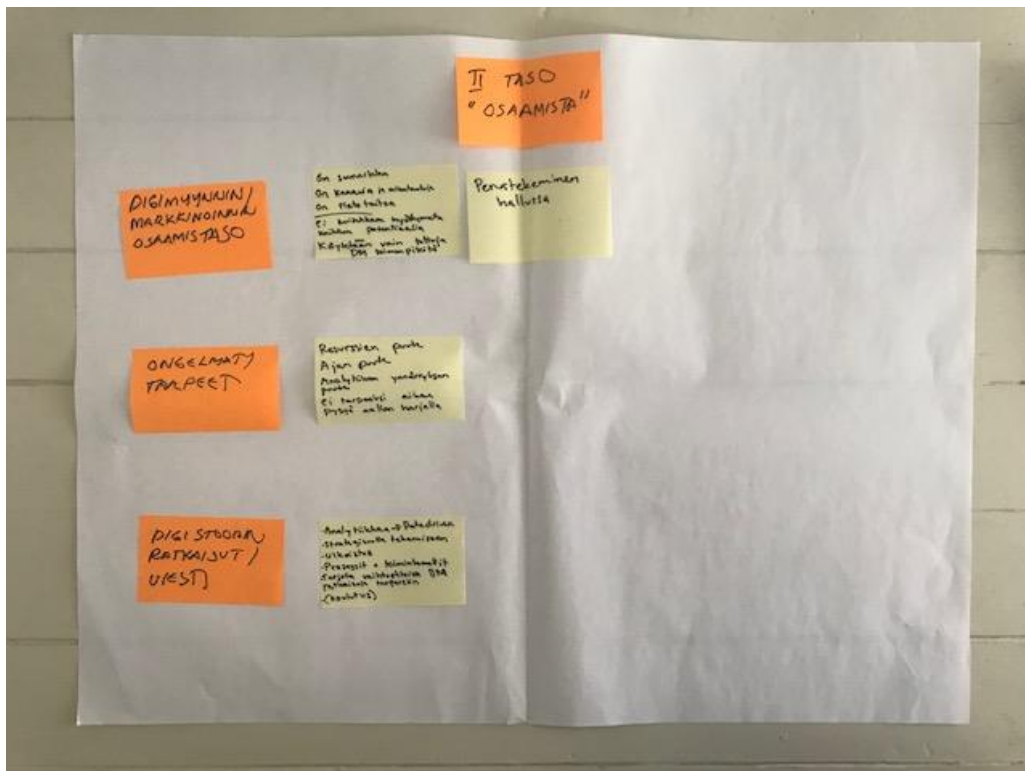
Picture 5: The template to define competence, needs and digital marketing solutions for the Buyer Profile "Expert" (Kaarlehto 2020)

The last exercise of the workshop was to evaluate and then to sort out 74 questions to the three chosen profile categories. These question examples, measuring one's skills and competence in digital marketing, were pre-chosen from the tests that the thesis author had done while benchmarking the available online tests in digital marketing skills and competences (see Chapter 5.3.3)

Since the time for the workshop was running out, both employees were given an own, different pile of questions, 37 questions each. Sorting out the questions to different categories

seemed to be quite easy for them. Even though discussion and evaluation together was allowed, both evaluated their own piles quite independently. None of questions was neglected even though this was also an option.

For the level I, Beginner, 10 of the questions were chosen. For the level II, "Some expertise", 31 questions and for the level III, "Virtuous", 33 of the questions were piled up. In Picture 6, the workshop participants, the Service Provider's employees, are evaluating and sorting out the question examples.

Picture 6: The workshop exercise of evaluating and sorting out the question examples measuring one's skills in digital marketing (Kaarlehto 2020)

5.4.2   Summary of the workshopping

The overall feeling during and after the workshop was good and it seemed that a mutual understanding of the scope, focus and goals of the test was reached. In addition, important insight even at very detailed level (e.g. test questions) could be discussed and be defined. This was very important for the thesis author in order to proceed with the paper version of the test.

Two main challenges of the workshop were the limited time for the workshop and the limited amount of workshop participants. With two workshop participants, the amount of different

views, opinions and ideas and thus the output produced at the workshop will always be limited. On the other hand, since both of the fulltime employees were present, the thesis author could be certain that all the relevant information and all possible views and opinions important for this project were shared at the workshop.

5.4.3 Creating the first paper version of the test

When the workshop with the Service Provider was held, the author had a more precise idea of both the Service Provider's company and brand and of its perception of different kind of customer groups – defined by their skills and needs in digital marketing.

As an outcome from benchmarking and the workshop, 15 multiple-choice questions were considered adequate for the test – at least to prototype and test with. Before formulating the single questions and their answers, question categories were defined. These categories were based both at the insights gained at the desktop research and at the insights gained from the Service Provider workshop.

The following question categories were defined:

- Business goals set for digital marketing (For theoretical background see: Chapter 3.3):
  2 questions
- Allocating resources for digital marketing (Chapter 3.3): 1 question
- Use of digital marketing channels and tools (Chapter 3.2): 6 questions
    - Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)
    - Search Engine Marketing (SEM)
    - Social media: Facebook
- Understanding and level of inbound and content marketing (Chapters 3.4. & 3.5):
  4 questions
- Measuring and analyzing results of digital marketing activities (Chapter 3.3.): 4 questions

The process of creating the paper version of the test followed had the following steps of creating, evaluating and modifying:

- Evaluating the prechosen game structure and economy (based on the theoretical research)

- Creating the question categories (based on the theoretical research and workshopping)

- Creating the 15 multiple-choice questions underneath the categories (based on the theoretical research and workshopping)

- Creating the suitable answers for each category - three different answer options for each question

- Evaluating the potential outcomes of the test with answers planned for each profile

- Having feedback from the Service provider on the questions: relevance, contents, structure and style

- Modifying the questions according to the feedback

- Naming and creating the three different buyer profiles: profile descriptions, suggestions for actions/services for the profile in digital marketing and for further reading in digital marketing (from the Service Provider's blog)

- Having feedback from the Service Provider on the profile descriptions, actions and blog links

- Modifying the paper test according to the feedback

The master thesis author got positive feedback on the test from the Service Provider already at this stage. Some questions were found too long and some questions had to be modified by the structure and/or by language style or terminology to be more aligned with the others. The buyer profile descriptions were slightly modified. Some of the actions and/or services suggested were changed or modifyed to fit better the Service provider's "way of speaking". In addition, some blog post suggestions were changed or new ones added to the lists.

5.5   Develop: Prototyping, testing and improving

In the Development phase, design-led solutions are developed, iterated and tested with tools such as brainstorming, sketches, scenarios, renderings or prototypes. (Tchimmel 2012, 9)

Prototyping was chosen as a method for this phase of the study. By the service design practitioners, prototyping is primarily described as a tool for learning or for communicating. Service prototypes are used as communicative tools with stakeholders and colleagues: "Prototyping is a way to show service without creating the service, to show what it could look like and how it could work." The learning purpose can be divided into exploring and evaluating. Exploring is "to generate insights, develop your thinking and gathering insights" and evaluating is described as "testing, receiving feedback and finding fall-points." Service prototypes are described as "a lightweight version of the actual service where the crucial parts of the service are tested" (Blomqvist & Homlind 2014, 5)

The Develop phase of this SD process is visualized in Figure 19 below (See the whole process chart in Chapter 5.2, Figure 17)
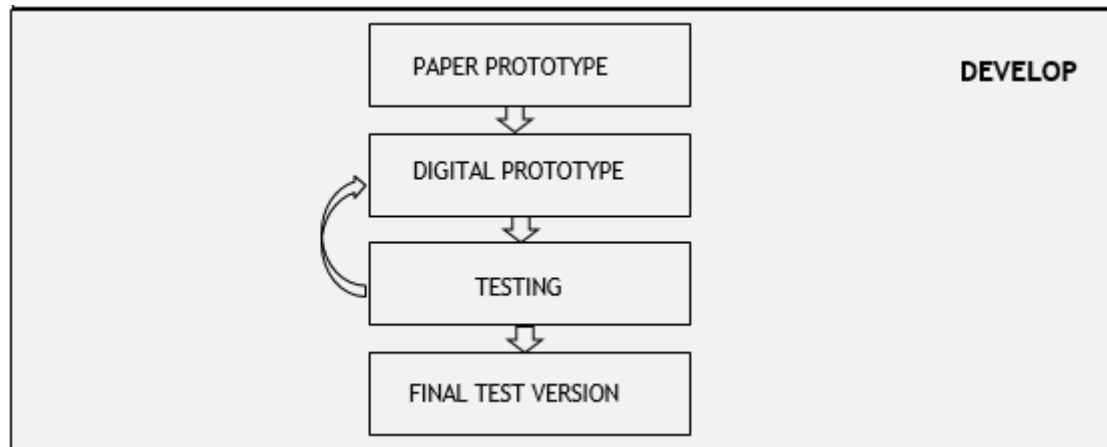

Figure 19: The Develop phase of the development work and study

5.5.1 Creating the digital prototype of the test

After considering and reviewing a couple of other options, an online service called Riddle was chosen as the test platform.

Riddle offers 14 types of quizzes, personality tests, polls and surveys free for a four weeks trial and thereafter with a monthly fee, the monthly price would depend on the amount of results shared, data and customization. With Riddle it is possible to create an online quiz without coding skills. It also provides a possibility to collect leads with integrated lead generation.

Prototype and testing of the Buyer profile test was done during a free trial period, which was extended by Riddle for extra 14 days. The Riddle personality test platform was used. To build the necessary questions, profile descriptions and a lead collection template were intuitive to build. Only for the lead generation instructions provided by Riddle were needed. The test was done in Finnish, and the test was visually customized with the Service Provider's logo, web site-alike colours and a picture from the Service Provider's web pages. Riddle allows to send all leads to MailChimp or AWebwer. In this case, an Excel sheet in Google Drive was used to test the leads collecting function (names, emails, test answers, profile results and the evaluation of the test).

The only feature that could not been altered with Riddle is that the respondent contact details are asked right after the questions before providing the test results (here profile description). This was discussed with the Riddle representatives online. According to their research and experience, this is emotionally the best "momentum" to ask them. When it was to settle

with this with the digital prototype, it was decided to include a question about the best moment to ask the contact details to the set of questions for testing.

5.5.2 Online testing of the prototype

Online testing of the digital prototype was done during one week in March 2020. Five persons were recruited for the testing. The pioneers in usability testing such as Nielsen, Lewis and Virzi, believe that 80 % of usability problems can be identified with a sample of five users, which is known as the "magic number".

Nielson et al. discovered that the first user discovers almost one-third of all usability problems, the second discovers many repeated problems but new ones appear, the third user discovers a small number of small problems; and the fourth and the fifth users also find a small number. After the fifth tester, many problems are repeated, and fewer and fewer problems discovered. (AlRoobaea & Mayhew 2014, 48-49)

Since the persons recruited for the test were located mostly in other cities than the Master thesis author, it was the original plan to execute most of the interviews online. Finally, due to the exceptional circumstances caused by the Corona virus in spring 2020, face-to-face meetings were not even considered. The testing sessions and interviews lasted approximately one hour each. They were executed with Microsoft Teams Meeting and they were recorded with an Xbox app inside Windows 10.

The thesis author recruited all the test persons herself through professional and personal networks. Test persons represented very different kind of organisations. Also the titles and work profiles of the test persons varied, but except for one test person who was mainly involved in sales, all of them work on a daily basis in digital communications and/or marketing and are involved somehow in decision making when digital marketing services area bought from outside.

Test person profiles:

- Test person 1: Planner in fund raising in an international Civic organization with over 100 employees in Finland
- Test person 2: Marketing Coordinator in an company producing and selling technical products (B2B), under 10 employees
- Test person 3: Content Producer in a Nordic company selling insurance services (B2B and B2C) with 50 employees in the Finnish subsidiary
- Test person 4: Communications Manager in an corporation offering healthcare, hotel and restaurant services & products (B2B and B2C), with over 500 employees

- Test person 5: Account Manager in a wholesale trade company for hotels, restaurants and catering (B2B) with over 500 employees

5.5.2.1 Executing and evaluating the testing sessions based on the chosen theoretical frameworks

In a chapter with a focus upon the design of interactions for digital interactions, Stickdorn et al. (2010) introduce *Desirability* as the key concept in designing digital services: "Desirability in a service fires desire in customer" (Stickdorn et al. 2010, 80). According to Stickdorn et al. Desirability is made up of three basic elements: *Usability*, *Utility* and *Pleasurability*.

Usability answers the question: how easy it is to interact with the digital service or solution? Usability is about how easy is it to get to the offering. It is about the ease of use, flow and errors as key metrics. That means how quickly and/or smoothly a customer can move through the service journey and the risk of misunderstanding something and making errors along the way. There are three keys to take care of the usability of a digital service or solution: frequency, sequence and importance. *Frequency* concentrates on the actions that the customers do most frequently, e.g. start, next, back. *Sequence* says that activities that occur in sequence should be presented in sequence, i.e. you pay at the end of the transaction, not in the middle. *Importance* means that important things and information should be given clearly and at the right time.

Utility answers the question: what does the service does, or offers the customer, at the functional level? Is the service or solution providing the customer functional benefits that he/she needs? The basis for creating utility for the customer is to really understand customers and their needs – together with an understanding of the functional benefits of the design offering.

Pleasurability answers the question: how pleasurable the interaction is at the emotional level? It is about how the whole solution makes you feel. It relates to a sum of details within the solution, but also to culture from outside world. It also relates to the way that the digital solution looks and feedback that it gives. But it also relates to the brand behind the solution and to what people expect from it.

In designing digital services and solutions, one has to find the suitable mix or combination to fit the service. This is done by understanding the customers, the offerings and the brand strategy of the company. Some brands focus on more usability and utility than on pleasurability, and with great success.

Stickdorn's framework was used as a basis when formulating the online testing session, it's questions and also when evaluating its results. Figure 20 demonstrates the Stickdorn's framework modified for this study.
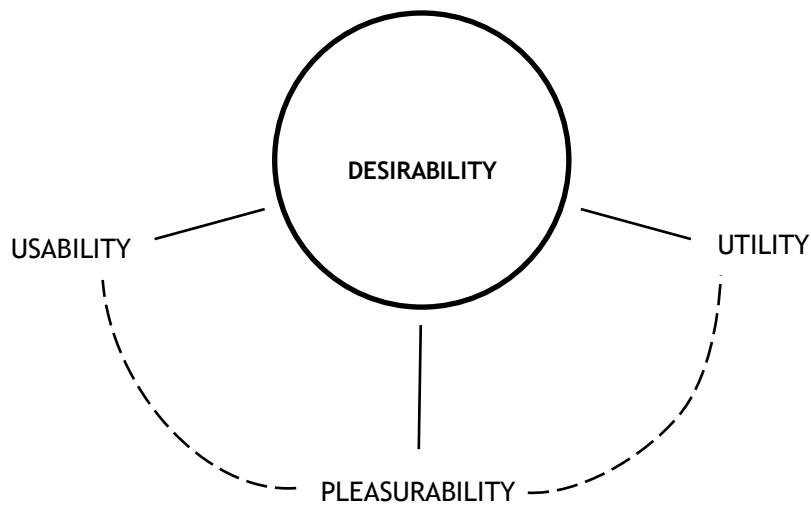
USABILITY – how easy is it to interact with test?
UTILITY – what the test offers the potential customer, at the functional level?
PLEASURABILITY – how pleasurable the interaction with the test is, at the emotional level?

Figure 20: The workshop participants evaluating and sorting out the question examples to measure one's skills in digital marketing (Stickdorn 2010, 87)

For testing usability, the test person was given the link to the test in the demo environment and was asked to share his/her screen while taking the test and reading the results. The test person was adviced freely to comment any thoughts, problems or concerns that she/he faced along the way. In addition, a set of questions with focus on usability, including the aspects of frequency, sequence and importance, was prepared and these questions were answered right after taking the test – if they not had been commented or answered already during the testing session.

The testing questions and discussion topics regarding the usability of the test:

- Are the instructions and info given at the Start page enough? Would you like to have any additional info? (Importance)
- Is the length of the test ideal or too short/too long? Do you think that you would have completed the test if not a testing session?
- Are the questions/answer options easy to read understand? Are they in line with each other? (Importance)
- Is it easy to answer the question? Can you find a suitable answer for your organization? Is some answer option missing? (Importance)
- Would you change the order of questions somehow? (Sequence)

- Is it easy to proceed in the test from start to the profile page with given instructions/buttons/links? (Sequence)
- Would you give your contact details (name? email? phone number?) if not a testing session? Would you have given your contact details at this stage or rather after the results i.e. profile descriptions and recommendations? (Sequence)

5.5.2.2 Evaluating utility and pleasurability of the test by Laine´s b-to-b contents evaluation grid

For evaluating utility and/or pleasurability of the test, a framework of Laine (2010) introduced in Chapter 3.5.1 was modified to fit this test and study. In the model, nine different dimensions evaluate the benefit and input of the test and its contents to the potential customer. The original dimensions were used, but some of the descriptions were altered a bit to match this particular case.

The test persons were shown an evaluation grid in Figure 21 and they were asked to evaluate each dimension with grades from 1-5.

CHALLENGE

No challenge   1 —————————————— 5   Challenges the constructively

INTEREST

Does not arise interest   1———————————— 5   Arises interest

UTILITY

No clear value   1 ————————————— 5   Brings utility

NOVELTY VALUE

Nothing new   1 ————————————— 5   Novelty value

REALISIM

Recommendations for us challenging to achieve   1————————————— 5   Easy to achieve

CREDIBILITY

Traditional referral story   1——————————— 5   Convinces of the Service provider expertise

VALUE OF LERNING

Small, already known knowledge   1 ————————————— 5   Big, learnt new

Figure 21: The grid and dimensions to evaluate the pleasurability of the test

Semi-structured questions on choosing digital marketing provider and the buying process of digital marketing services

Approximately 2/3 of the testing sessions and interviews concentrated on testing and evaluating it from the potential customer point of view. However, some additional questions were added to the session in order to deepen the understanding of potential customers 'goals and motivations and the potential buyer journeys of digital marketing services.

The test persons were shown a list of different aspects that might influence the decision making in an organisation when choosing a digital marketing service provider or a partner. It was also an option to fulfill the list, if they felt that some criteria was missing.

"Pick up the three most important factors that influence decision making at your organisation when choosing a digital marketing service provider or a partner":

- We have used this service provider before and/or I/we know their staff from earlier

- Good references and recommendations from the colleagues in marketing

- Good web pages, e.g. service portfolio and cases

- Active marketing efforts, e.g. newsletters, events etc.

- Service provider's key persons active in social media ja in conversation (LinkedIn, Twitter)

- Personal contacting and selling in an early phase (phone, emails)

- The service provider is well-known and has a strong brand

- Services and expertise provided by the service provider are suitable for organization and/or industry/operating environment

- Something else: _____?"

The test persons were also shown a sketch or a chart of a buyer journey demonstrating various optional paths from taking the test to a potential start of cooperation with the Service Provider. This buyer journey chart can be found as Appendix 2.

5.6   Deliver: launching and integrating the Digital Marketing Buyer Profile Test

In the Deliver phase, the final concept is taken through final testing, signed-off, produced and launched. (Tschimmel 2012, 8)

It was obvious from the beginning of the thesis project that due to the time limit for it, this phase would not be able to be carried out in practice as a part of the development work.

However, a plan for the Service Provider for further actions with the test with piloting, launching and integrating the test to its web pages and to its marketing and sales process has been done based on prototyping and the interviews.

Suggested action plan for the next steps and actions to be taken in this development work as part of the Deliver phase is visualized in Figure 22.
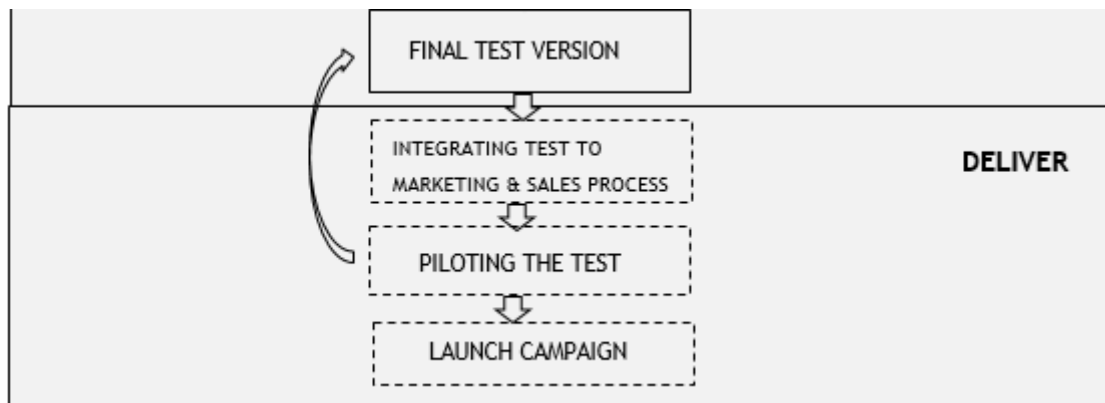

Figure 22: The suggested Deliver phase of the development work

To proceed to the Deliver phase, the following steps and actions are recommended for the Service Provider to consider:

- To evaluate the technical options and costs for the Digital Marketing Buyer Profile Test: either to continue with the test platform used for the prototyping with a monthly fee (suggested), to evaluate other options and platformas available; or to build the whole test with an own local partner in IT solutions

- To integrate the Test as a part of the Service Provider's web site and brand (easily done with the prototyping platform)

- To publish and introduce a pilot (beta-) version of the test for a selected audience with a small email or social media campaign or at the Service Provider webpages - emphasizing the feedback option/evaluation phase of the Test.

- To analyse the effectiveness of the Test in the pilot phase with platform and/or Google Analytics or with analytics offered by the used platform or solution. Key metrics could be: how many click to the test from the social media ad; how many complete the whole test; how many leave their contact and answer details and allow further contacts from the Service Provider; and how do the test takers evaluate the test (1-5)?

- To evaluate and modify the Test based on the overall results gained through the piloting phase.

- To decide 1) to abandon the whole Test as a tool; or 2) to postpone the launch or the use of the Test; or 3) to continue with it and launch the test with paid social media campaign (LinkedIn and/or Facebook) and by including it as an early touchpoint of the buyer journey.

6   Key findings in the study

The aim of this thesis study and development work was *to create a Digital Marketing Buyer Profile Test to support new customer acquisition of a digital marketing service provide*.

The research aim in this Master Thesis study was *to evaluate gamification in new customer acquisitions when selling digital marketing services in the business-to-business context*.

The aim of the research was defined to be reached through examining the three Research Questions:

RQ 1) *How b-to-b services are sold: what are the key phases, considerations and recent developments in b-to-b marketing and selling?*

RQ 2) *What are digital marketing services and the key information and insights needed for a successful execution?*

RQ 3) *How can gamification be used in marketing and new customer acquisition?*

Service Design methods and a SD process of Discover, Define, Develop and Deliver was applied to this thesis and development work. The process is explained and visualized in Chapter 5.3 in Figure 17.

The key findings from the theoretical background for the study were described in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. These key insights had an important input for understanding the wider context of b-to-b marketing and sales, digital marketing and gamification but also for designing the test structure and contents. Tools and frameworks from the theoretical background will also be applied to analyse and to summarize the key findings of this study.

The final test version, modified based on the testing of the digital prototype, can be found as Appendix 3. Only the logo and name of the Service Provider and the blog post titles have been removed or covered to protect the privacy and identity of the Service Provider.

6.1 Empirical findings in the Service Design process

In this chapter, empirical findings from the Discover and Define phases will be described and discussed. Empirical research in this study included workshopping and prototesting. The key findings of these will be described and discussed below in the subchapters.

6.1.1 Workshopping

The goal of the workshop was to have a better understanding of the business model, business goals as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the Service provider. The goal was also to discover the current sales process, the possible buyer profile categories and the expectations and wishes regarding the test to be developed.

The key findings of using BMC Canvas were the following:

- At the core of the Service Provider's brand and value promise is to offer support for their clients to produce contents that increase sales and digital marketing solutions that improve the digital customer experience that their clients provide to their customers.
- The main operations (of the two employees) include new customer acquisitions and negotiations, developing the freelancer/expertise network, project management and content production.
- The key resource is a network of 20-25 freelancers and the main partner is HubSpot (an official partnership status just received)
- The Service Provider's clients are mainly small and medium size companies (SMEs) and the relationships are maintained by personal contacts.
- The main channels for new customer acquisition are web pages and blog posts that are shared in LinkedIn. The main channels for maintaining the customer relationship are phone and email. An own newsletter has been in plans.

According to the workshop analysis, the strengths of the Service Provider are:

- Expertise in sales
- Understanding of the client's business
- Versatile internal skills and competences
- Freelancer network = e.g. flexible, best updated skills always available, not tied to same experts and their skills

The weaknesses of the Service Provider are:

- Lack of awareness
- "Versatility"
- Limited resources (budget, employees)
- Freelance network: e.g. are suitable experts available when needed, coordinating a large network of freelancers for multiple projects

The possibilities for the Service Provider are:

- Value/brand proposition that differentiate
- Trend of outsourcing (digital marketing) services
- A newcomer in the business = agile to react to possible changes and demands
- Freelance network = e.g. flexible according to specific needs, the best expertise for each task

The threats for the Service Provider are:

- A lot of service providers in digital marketing
- Resources = are they enough/adequate if many projects at the same time or big accounts
- Clients' own marketing departments and existing partners = unwillingness to buy from outside the house and/or change the service provider
- Changes in e-privacy legislation = how will they effect digital marketing options?

One of the important goals of the workshop was to understand the Service Provider's sales process in new customer acquisition and the current touchpoints along it. The touchpoints and the main goals, tasks and/or channels at different touchpoints were summarized in the workshop and are visualized in Table 2.

TOUCH-POINTS	First touch-point	First contact	First meeting	Quotation	Coopera-tion starts
CHANNELS/ ACTIONS	Contents at Web pages (SEO, SEM) Social Media (own channels & groups) Own and Consortium tele marketing directory Personal contacts (Business networks, previous contacts)	Contact enquiry sent (from the web pages) Email (Service Provider or Customer) Phone call (Service Provider or Customer)	The Client's or Service Provider's premises - depends on the company and case who will be attending	Sent by email – a p2p meeting preferred if possible	an own process model/template designed for this
TASKS AND GOALS AT THIS TOUCH-POINT	Rise awareness & interest towards the company and its' services	BEFORE Background info about the Company and the contact person Current situation in digital marketing DURING Needs and demands Timetable Budget (estimate)	To gain a deeper discussion and analysis of the current needs and demands The Service preliminary visions on the solutions/actions To find out the Client's purchasing/decision making process Defining the budget To specify the Client's own competence and skills in digital marketing	To design a quotation based on the info gained at the meeting and before INCLUDES: Analysis of the current situation Suggested process and/or actions for solution Expenses/ budget A special effort put on the visualization and lay-out of the quotation	

Table 2: Service Provider's sales process in new customer acquisition

The different digital marketing buyer profiles were also defined in the workshop and the levels of competence for each of the three profiles (Beginner, Some skills and Virtuous) were defined in detail by the pre-chosen question examples from 10 benchmarked online tests as described in Chapter 5.4.1.2.

As a result of the workshop different profile skills levels, the possible needs and demands in digital marketing at that particular profile level and the solutions and services that the Service provider could provide for a customer with the profile were also defined by short descriptions that can be found in Table 4.

Profile details ╲ Buyer profile	"Beginner" => "Newcomer/ Rookie"	"Some skills" => "Expert"	"Virtuous"
Skills in digital marketing	- Web pages and social media channels exist. - No strategy or systematic plan for content production.	- Copes "basic" digital marketing. - A digital marketing plan exists. - Multiple channels and content calendars exist. - Has skills and competence. - The whole potential of digital marketing is not in use – satisfied with the familiar channels and activities.	- A high level of competence in digital marketing. - Digital marketing based on the strategy and business goals. - Many experts from different fields of digital marketing in-house. - Own standardized processes in execution of marketing plans and activities.
Needs, demands and/or problems	- No understanding - No time - No competence or skills	- Lack of resources and time - No competence in analytics - No time to keep up with the trends and new tools	- Stuck with the own way of thinking and doing ("Group thinking") - Outside vision or opinion needed - Extra pair of hands needed
Solutions needed /The Service Provider's services for an oraganisation with the profile	- More strategic approach to digital marketing and it's planning - Outsourcing (even all the digital marketing operations?) - (Training)	- More strategic approach to marketing planning and execution - Analytics - Data driven content development - Processes and operational decisions Outsourcing - Different/new options and solutions for digital marketing tools and activities - (Training in digital marketing)	- Sparring - Consultation and coaching - Expertise in a specific field of digital marketing when needed (with websites, coding etc.) - "Extra hands" or assistance in the hectic times or with special projects/campaigns

Table 3: Different buyer profile competences, problems and services needed in digital marketing

As a summary, the following key observations and insights of the business, business goals and challenges of the Service provider could be made based on the workshop exercises and discussion:

- As a new service provider, there is a lack of awareness of the company among potential customers and a clear demand for an unique own brand/value proposition to differentiate from the competitors.

- As a new service provider, there is a clear need for quality leads and for new clients but not always necessary resources for the actions and tasks in mind. Despite of development plans, at the moment new acquisition is based mostly on the existing contact networks and incoming quotation requests - not on a proactive, planned inbound strategy.

- A lot of the background information about the potential client, essential for a successful quotation and sales, is acquired before or during the first phone call or during the first meeting. A lot of effort is also put on preparing quotations, which will not end up as a co-operation project or new customer relationship.

- The variety of services and solutions offered by the Service Provider is quite large: from web site and social media channel build-up and development to content design and production, analytics, inbound sales and marketing automation. As stated in the SWOT analysis, this can be a strength when looking for a partner to whom to outsource your digital marketing. However, in order to differentiate oneself from the competitors with a clear brand/value proposition, it can also be a challenge.

- The potential clients or target markets are not specified except for "small and medium-size enterprises" (which can also mean companies with hundreds of employees). There are also organisations with fund-raising activities as clients.

- Operating via a freelance network is a modern and flexible way of operating but is still developing and can be a strength but also a weakness depending on many variables and circumstances.

In Chapter 4.6, a framework for gamification design is introduced. Based on that framework by Burke and because of the workshop, the key business goals of the Service provider can be defined. These *business goals* of the Service Provider are:

1) to arise awareness of the Service Provider and interest towards its services among potential customers
2) to strengthen the Service Provider's brand/value promise as a digital marketing professional
3) to gain quality leads to support new customer acquisition; and
4) to help specify needs, demands and competence of potential customers.

These business goals for this development task and study are visualized in the following Figure 23.
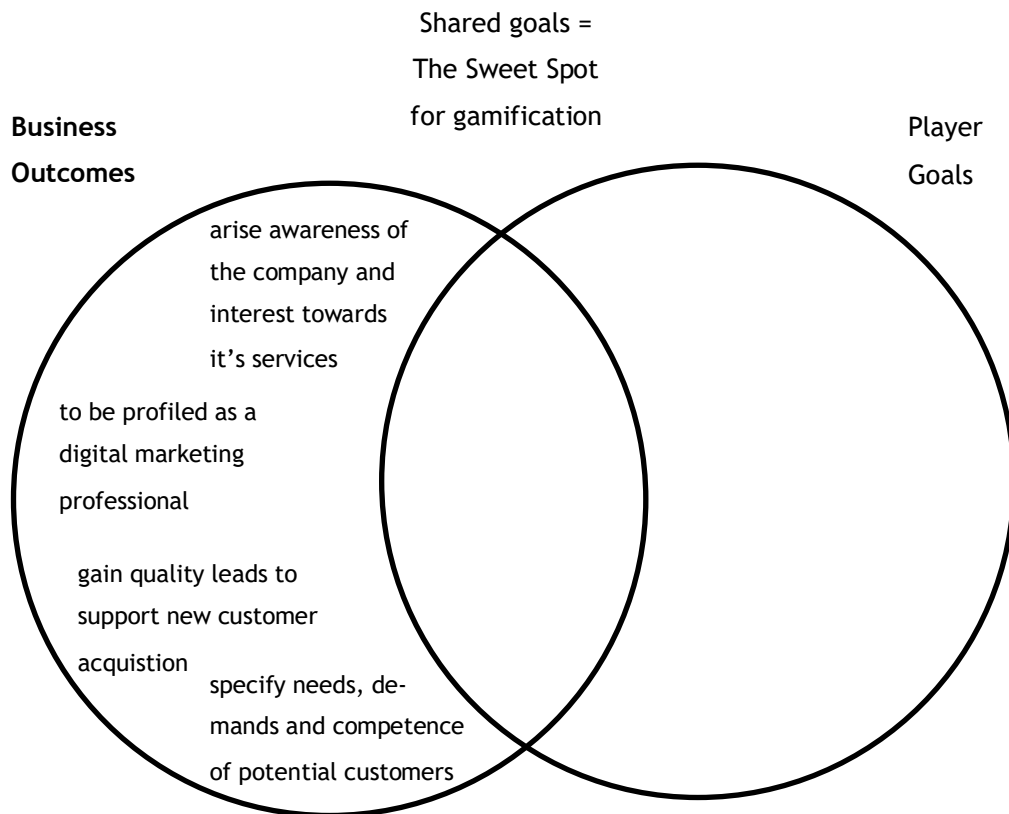
Shared goals =

The Sweet Spot

for gamification

Business   Player

Outcomes   Goals

arise awareness of
the company and
interest towards
it's services

to be profiled as a
digital marketing
professional

gain quality leads to
support new customer
acquistion

specify needs, de-
mands and competence
of potential customers

Figure 23: The business goals of the Service Provider for designing the Digital marketing buyer profile test

6.1.2   Prototyping

The main results and modifications from online testing and prototyping are summarized below.

 Results on the usability of the test

The overall result of the testing session was that the test was easy and intuitive to take, the instruction /start page in the beginning, questions, answer-options, the contact page and profile descriptions with recommendations for marketing actions and for further reading (=blog posts of the Service Provider) were all considered clear, descriptive and relevant.

Observations and findings on the dimension of frequency and sequence

Frequency in the context of usability means that things that the users do (next, back, search) should have a prominent position in the sequence, and sequence means that activities that occur in sequence (i.e. when you pay and get a receipt) should be presented in sequence.

All of the test persons felt that the length of the test was good. There was no temptation to quit and it was easy an intuitive to proceed within the test from one question to another. One test person suggested a shorter test of 12 questions but another one felt that the test could have been longer as well – up to some 20 questions. Others were satisfied with 15 questions.

After answering a question, the test proceeded automatically to the next step. The second test person asked in the middle of the test if one could choose more than one of the answers. Since this was not possible, a remark of this was added to the start page information.

In the questions contents there were some obstacles for proceeding in the test: for some questions, the right or suitable answers were not found. However, this was more of a content issue – not an usability issue.

However, 11 out of total 15 questions were slightly modified based on the comments and re-marks gained during the testing sessions. One of the questions was totally redesigned after the third testing session since it was found out to be incorrect and thus confusing for the test persons who thought it would be a "trick" to test the awareness of the test person – which was not the case.

The modifications to the questions were minor. The original idea was to have only three an-swer-options for each question but this was neglected after the testing. Completely new an-swer-options were added to some questions. These were mainly options that would suit when the person, who is taking the test on behalf of an organization, is not involved with the mar-keting activity that the question concerns or this activity - or function is outsourced to an outsider service provider - and thus details and the right answer are not known for the person answering.

A couple of questions were not altered even if some of the test persons hesitated answering them and commented these questions to be difficult. It was an observation that these ques-tions made the difference between different skill levels. It was also an observation that con-tents that were adopted from inbound and/ content marketing philosophy were not under-stood by all test persons. They chose answers that were thought to indicate the use of in-bound philosophy only because the answers seemed right and relevant.

A discussion with each of the test persons was taken if the form for contact details (name, or-ganization and email) and a permission for sharing the test answers and profile result with the Service Provider and a possible option for registering for an email newsletter should be before or after the profile descriptions. This divided opinions and therefore it was a decision – and also the only option offered by Riddle – to leave it as it was: after the questions and before the results.

It is a suggestion to follow this up in the possible piloting at the Deliver phase. It would be ideal to able to do A/B testing in the pilot phase with the two options: to have the contact form before and after the profile descriptions.

Observations and findings on the dimension of importance

Importance in the context of usability means that relevant and important information must be given clearly and at right time. In this test, the test persons' comments and thus modifications focus mainly on the information given on the start page and on the contact information page.

The start page of the test was altered according to the testing. The order of the chapters was altered, i.e. a remark of the amount of the questions and the time that taking the test would take (10 minutes) was moved upwards. The fact that you could choose just one of the answers was added. Some of sentences were made shorter. There were comments from the test persons that the start page should "sell the test" more and open up the reasons and/or rewards why one should take the test better:

 "I would like to read here more evidence of the utility or value that I – or my company – would gain by taking this test. The language could be also more direct and maybe not so formal. Or maybe the idea is that this would be a landing page and the actual selling of the test is already done?" Expert 3

Some made the remark that the start page would probably not be the first information or the actual advertisement for the test: the real campaign and test selling would probably take place in a social media post or ad – or in a newsletter etc. Based on these comments, the language in the start page was designed to be a bit more dynamic and selling but it was kept in mind not to make it too long either.

The contact form page, i.e. a page that appears after the questions but before the actual results i.e. profile descriptions, was reconstructed based on the test results. It was found out that especially to know which button or link to click next, after giving/not giving your contact details, was unclear.

"It is a bit difficult and confusing to understand what link or text to click - I would use buttons instead of text links for the desired actions." Expert 1

"It is good that the phone number is not asked at this phase of the relationship- I just hate when you leave it and the very next day someone (cannot hear the name or the company because pronounced unclearly and fast) calls you and the only argument is that you have ordered our newsletter – what do you think of that?" Expert 1

"To have an option to order a newsletter is a good reason for giving your contact information." Expert 1

"A Digital marketing guidebook as a reward is not very tempting – they are usually too general and done in a hurry – too obvious that they have been done only to fish contact details…" Expert 1

"I would appreciate a Digital Marketing Guidebook as a thank you for leaving my contact details." Virtuous 2

"I wouldn't mind leaving my phone number, too." Virtuous 2

Picture 7 demonstrates the modification of the contact details page. It is in Finnish, but on the left, one can see left the original one for prototyping and on the right, the modified final version. On the final version there is one clear button stating: "Send my contact details and answers and show our profile" – information about newsletter and unsubscribing it is given earlier at the top of page.

Picture 7: The first prototype version of the contact details page and the final modified version of it (right)

Results of the utility and pleasurability of the Test

The utility and pleasurability of test were evaluated with a modified content grid introduced by Laine for analyzing b-to-b content marketing. Using seven dimensions to measure the potential utility and/or pleasurability, the following results visualized in Figure 24 were achieved.

CHALLENGE

No challenge   1 ————————————●——— 5   Challenges the constructively

INTEREST

Does not arise interest   1————————————●— 5   Arises interest

UTILITY

No clear value   1——————●————————— 5   Brings utility

NOVELTY VALUE

Nothing new   1————————●——————— 5   Novelty value

REALISIM

Recommendations for us challenging to achieve   1——————————●——— 5   Easy to achieve

CREDIBILITY

Traditional referral story   1———————————●—— 5   Convinces of the Service provider expertise

VALUE OF LERNING

Small, already known knowledge   1————●———————————— 5   Big, learnt new
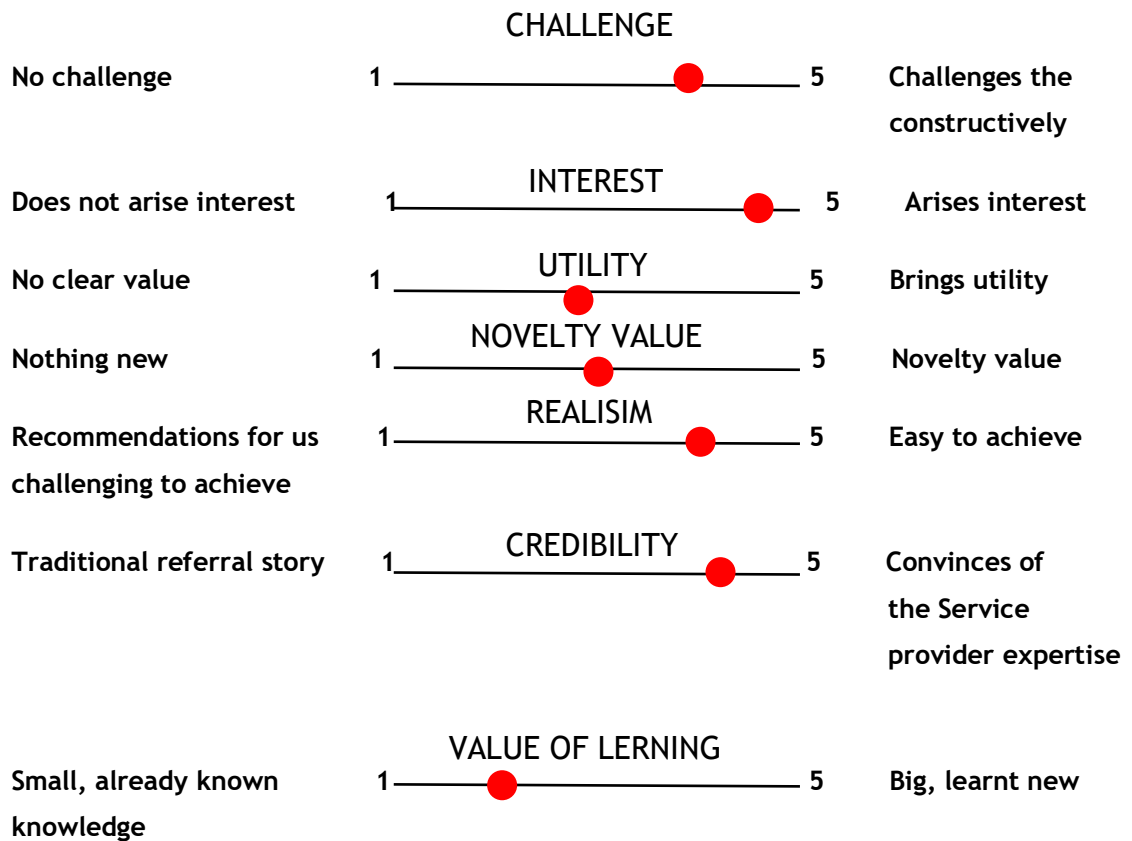
Figure 24: The results of evaluating the Buyer Profile Test utility and pleasurability

The test persons evaluated that the Buyer Profile Test arises positive interest (With average score 4,75) and challenges them constructively (4,2). It also convinces of the expertise of the Service Provider in the field of digital marketing (4,2) The recommendations suggested seem realistic (3,8).

However, the overall utility of taking the test was average (3,2) and the test persons felt that they did not learn much new or something that were not known to them in advance (2,4)

Rating the test with stars from 1 to 5 was integrated as a part of the test. This was done before the profile descriptions on the contact details form. Four out of five test persons gave the test 4 stars which was described in the alt-text: "stopped me to evaluate our activities" One test person gave it 5 stars: "gave me ideas to develop our digital marketing".

Based on the observation of the thesis author, the focus and interest of the test persons was more on the results and profile descriptions – than on the relevance or contents of the questions. Not much criticism or feedback on the contents or scope of the questions was received. The only comment on the question contents – beside the answer options and question structures and grammar – was the following:

"This test does not reveal that actually our web pages would need to reconstructed and renewed." Expert 1

According to the comments, the profile descriptions matched the organisations of the test persons very well. Two of the test persons got "virtuous" profile and three of the test persons got an "expert" profile.

As the test was done online, not all the facial etc. expressions were able to be observed. However, from the tone of the voice and based on the comments the test persons seemed all quite satisfied and even proud of the results:

"What? Are we really a Virtuous, maybe a bit exaggeration…?" (After reading the profile description:) "Actually this like written about our company – everything suits us! It makes you feel kind of proud that things have been done and led to the right direction." Virtuous 1

"The whole profile descriptions and also all the recommendations are like they were written for our company!" Virtuous 2

"The profile matches our company quite well – indicates that things are done but there are many things to do as well." Expert 3

On the "Expert" profile, one of the test persons "Expert 1" made some detailed remarks, which were taken into consideration when modifying the final version of test:

"The recommendations should be organized so that the easiest actions should be first in the list – some recommendations are so wide and complex require commitment from the whole organization that they would be not the first ones that we would consider..."

"Some of the recommendations are too general, e.g. Customer experience, and some too much jargon, e.g. about analytics – I would appreciate concrete more actions here."

"In the profile description we get credit that we already follow and measure our actions and analytics and now in the recommendations it is suggested that we should follow and measure our actions…"

Willingness for further engagement with the Service Provider after taking the test

All test persons were of the opinion that if they would get around to make a test, it would be more likely that they would like to hear more about the Digital marketing service provider behind the test. All of the test persons were eager to get a newsletter or hints of relevant blog posts from the Service Provider.

"I am quite eager to subscribe a newsletter or to leave my contact details if I can assume to get relevant information, invitations etc. benefit out of it. I am always very willing to share my feedback if it is for any use for a service provider to develop its operations and customer experience."

"The result of the test made you feel competent and in a good mood – things are taken care of and we are doing right things." Virtuous 2

"I might leave my contact details easier after reading the profile description and recommendations which convince me better on the expertise of this company that just the questions..."

"The test and especially the profile results were really nice to get. Definitely this kind of a test gets you definitely in the right mood for a possible cooperation with the company behind this test." Virtuous 1

However, the discussions confirmed the facts about critical and proactive b-to-b customers, discussed in Chapter 2, as well. Most of the test persons said that they follow articles, news and posts in digital marketing in social media and are willing to register for a newsletter, join webinars or download guidebooks in digital marketing. However, if they find the contents of those not relevant or done clearly for just marketing purposes, they would not hesitate to unsubscribe. One stated that webinars are not so tempting at the moment since there are too many of them nowadays.

"Depends totally on the day and my current mood if I would leave my contact details or not… Sometimes I would and sometimes definitely not! And if I don't not get relevant information from the newsletters, I do not hesitate to unsubscribe." Virtuous 1

"A Digital marketing guidebook as a reward is not very tempting – they are usually too general and done in a hurry – too obvious that they have been done only to fish contact details and generate leads..." Expert 1

"And I just hate when you leave it and the very next day someone - cannot hear the name or the company because pronounced unclearly and fast - calls you and the only argument is that you have ordered our newsletter – what do you think of that?" Expert 1

"I would appreciate a Digital Marketing Guidebook as a thank you for leaving my contact details. In addition, if the whole test could be marketed that by taking it, I would give essential and important feedback, I would be even more eager to take it. I just love to help others to develop their work etc." Virtuous 2

Visual style and layout as a component of utility and pleasurability

Visual appearance, layout and style, including the use of colors, fonts, pictures and graphics, can influence both the usability of a test and also the pleasurability (i.e. how the test makes you feel). All the test persons were asked to evaluate the visual outlook and layout of the test. No particular remarks or modifications were made based on the comments:

"The overall impression is very grey – but it seems to be nicely in line with the web pages and the brand of the Service Provider. The question pages are simple but that is only a good thing that one can concentrate on the questions. Definitely no pictures needed on the question pages." Virtuous 2

Only some individual remarks on the start page picture were made:

"The picture on the main page could be more colorful. It is also very static – could there be a red curve to demonstrate the potential growth with digital marketing? Or something more dynamic?" Expert 1

"I just love the symbolism of the picture in the first page – especially those pearl ear rings and a notebook…" Expert 2

Comments on the buyer journey of digital marketing services

To discover background information on the test persons and also better to understand the buying process of digital marketing from the customer point-of view, a short discussion on the topic was included at the end of each testing session. It was very well realized by the thesis author that these were also just some individual opinions and thoughts and because of the small size of interviews, no further conclusions could be made based on them. However, these discussions confirmed very clearly some points that were found out in the desktop research as well.

The buying process of digital marketing services is complex and often many people are involved. It might take some time that the demand for a new service provider comes up. For most of the test persons that meant a very specific need: a new digital marketing tool or technology that would interest or a campaign that would like to outsourced. One organization did not want to use many service providers, as it gets hard to manage, but some others commented that they look for special skills and competence matters.

From the list of the most important criteria when choosing a digital marketing service provider or partner, the next ones got more than two or more votes:

- We have used this service provider before and/or I/we know their staff from earlier

- Good references and recommendations from the colleagues in marketing

- Services and expertise provided by the service provider are suitable for organization and/or industry/operating environment

These were also mentioned:

- Good web pages including service portfolio and relevant, interesting cases (for us)

- Active marketing efforts, e.g. newsletters, events etc.

- The service provider is well-known and has a strong brand

- Something else: all the needed services from the same service provider

The test persons were all of the opinion that it would be important for a potential service provider to make them aware of the existence, the brand and the special competences of the service provider. Thus, when a need or demand for digital marketing services maybe later on occurs, they might remember to contact that particular service provider.

As mentioned already earlier, e.g. a newsletter with relevant, quality topics would be a good way to stay in touch. The test persons preferred newsletter to events and webinars of which there are even too many invitations sent to them nowadays.

As a summary of the empirical findings from the prototyping sessions with the potential clients, the following goals could be identified from the potential player's perspective:

The player (=potential client for digital marketing services):

1) is interested in the level of own / company competence
2) wants to feel competent &
   satisfied of made choices and actions
3) constant professional development through relev**ant** contents in digital marketing
4) wants to be and to be profiled as a digital marketing professional

The identified player goals are visualized in Figure 25.

Shared goals =
The Sweet Spot
for gamification

Business
Outcomes

Player
Goals

is interested in the
level of own / com-
pany competence

wants to feel
competent &
satisfied of
made choices
and actions

constant profes-
sional develop-
ment through rel-
ev**ant** contents in
digital marketing

to be and to be profiled as a
digital marketing profes-
sional
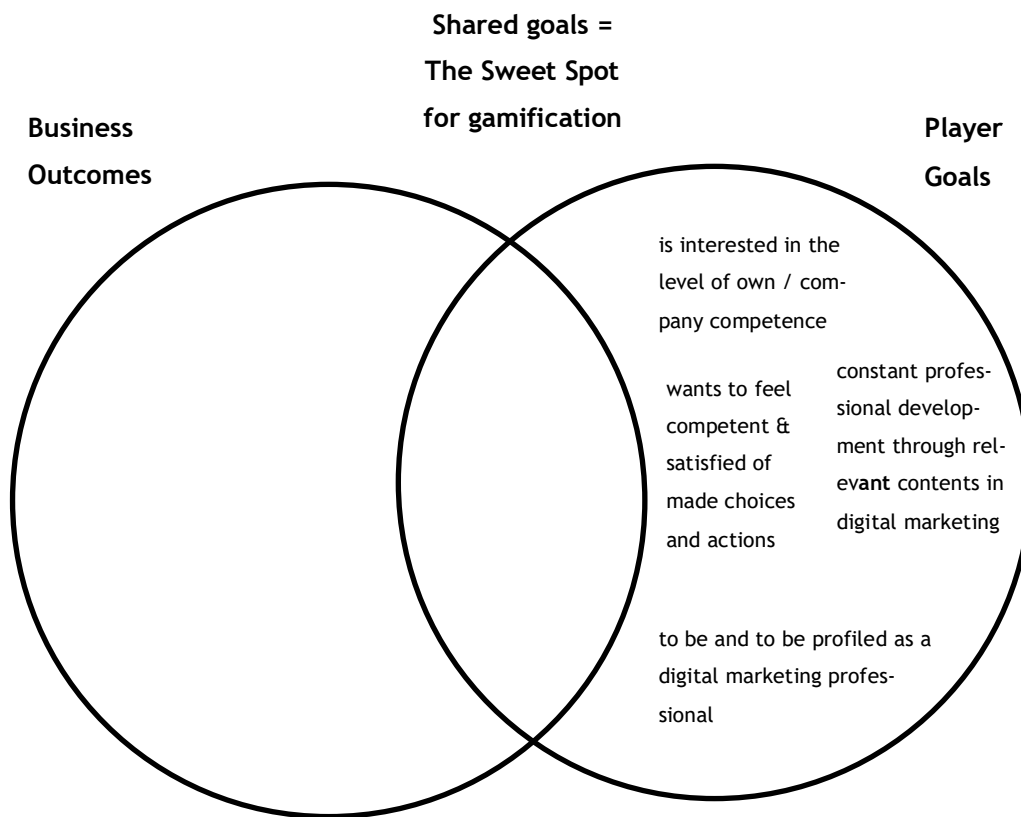
Figure 25: The identified player goals of the Digital marketing buyer profile test

6.1.3 Remarks of prototyping and testing reliability

One might argue that five persons for the prototype testing or for the findings is not enough. AlRoobaea & Mayhew (2014) also write that there is no consensus even among the experts on sample site since there are various factors influencing the results. These factors can be e.g. whether the test is executed early in the design phase or after several iterations of test and re-design; type and quality of the methodology used to conduct the assessment; match between the assessment and the context of the real world usage; representativeness of the assessment users; skill of the evaluator; and personality of the participant. (AlRoobaea & Mayhew 2014, 49)

It is also important to realize and remember that prototyping and testing in a Service Design process can never be treated as quantitative or even qualitative research. It must be seen as a one phase in the iterative process in order to improve the service or solution with a better understanding of the customer's wants, needs, emotions and behavior.

It was also obvious for the thesis author in advance that based on five test persons, the key problems in the usability of the test could possible be discovered but in order to evaluate the contents and the utility and pleasurability of the test, this phase would give only some preliminary results. Therefore piloting the test as a beta-version in a real environment as a part

of the Service Provider's marketing and sales process is strongly suggested. This would allow the further evaluation and constant improvement of the test.

The test persons were recruited without a special focus or criteria about their company, industry or the size of the company. The only criteria for recruitment was that the person should be involved and/or interested in using digital marketing to develop his/her organisation's brand and/or business. This represent the real-life situation since the Service Provider has so far not focused sales activities at any certain customer profile. From the testing point of view, it was a bit regretful that none of the test persons got the profile of a "Beginner" i.e. "Newcomer". Efforts to find "Beginner" level testers were made, but then the deadline for the free-trial period of the test environment was met and the prototyping phase came to its end.

6.2   Summary of key findings of this study

Based on both theoretical and empirical research, where Service Design process and methods were applied, three key findings can be summarized to answer the research question of *evaluating gamification in new customer acquisitions when selling digital marketing services in the business-to-business context:*

- Gamification can be applied to meet both the company's and the customer's goals and interests
- A Gamified marketing solution can serve as an effective and engaging touchpoint at the very beginning of the b-to-b buyer journey
- Gamification meets the demands of the changed b-to-b customer and b-to-b sales and marketing landscape

These three key findings will be discussed in subchapters 6.2.1 – 6.2.3.

6.2.1   Gamification can be applied to meet both the company's and the customer's goals and interests

In designing a gamified solution, it is vital to understand both business and player goals. Clear business objectives must be defined for the gamification project. "The sweet spot" for the gamification project, for a successful solution and for its implementation can only be found when shared goals for both the service provider and the player, the potential customer, can be defined.

Having clear business goals is not only a demand for a successful gamification process but also a foundation for a digital marketing strategy and execution. Therefore, an understanding of the Service provider's business, brand and business goals were examined at the Discover and

Define phases of this study and particularly at the workshop with the Service Provider. Many goals could be defined for a Digital Marketing Buyer Profile test: to arise awareness of the company and towards its services, gain quality leads to support new customer acquisition and to specify needs, demands and competences of potential customer. Through SWOT analysis there was also a clear need for a Service Provider's brand. This was defined as the fourth goal: "*to be profiled as a digital marketing professional*".

Utilitarian and hedonic value have been studied as the major value dimensions for explaining customers' experiences in online context and explaining the experience of gamification marketing activities. It has been claimed and also researched that the motivational power of games is the main idea behind gamification. The motivational experiences are self-development, social connectedness, expressive freedom and social comparison. Among the different experiences, self-development has the strongest effect on business outcomes.

As an evaluation method for the test's desirability for its potential users, a Stickdorn's framework of desirability for digital solutions was chosen. In the testing sessions usability (*How easy is it to interact with the test*?); utility (*what does the test offer potential customer at the functional level?*); and pleasurability (*How pleasurable the interaction with the test is, at emotional level?*)

All of the test persons at the Develop phase of the study found the test contents as interesting and stimulating. They got a good first impression of the Service Provider – of a company that they have never heard of before. Based on the discussions with the test persons, the Digital Marketing Buyer Profile Test, which was the case in this study, was easy to use and take and thus the dimension of usability was met.

Based on the empirical observations and results, taking the test was also a positive emotional experience for the test persons. They were of the opinion that the test challenged them constructively which can be analysed to relate to the feeling of self-development – a dimension related to perceiving achievement, being challenged, and making process – satisfying the need for competence. Based on these observations, "*to be profiled as a Digital Marketing professional*" was defined as one of the player's key goals.

From Figure 26 below, one can study both the business outcome goals of the Service Provider and the player's goals found out in this particular development work and study. The outcome of the thesis development work was that the goal "to be profiled as a digital marketing professional" could be defined as an unifying goal for both the Service provider and the potential customer. This goal should be the core evaluation criteria when further developing the Digital Marketing Buyer Profile test as a marketing and gamification solution and also as a foundation for further marketing actions and touchpoints along the buyer's journey.
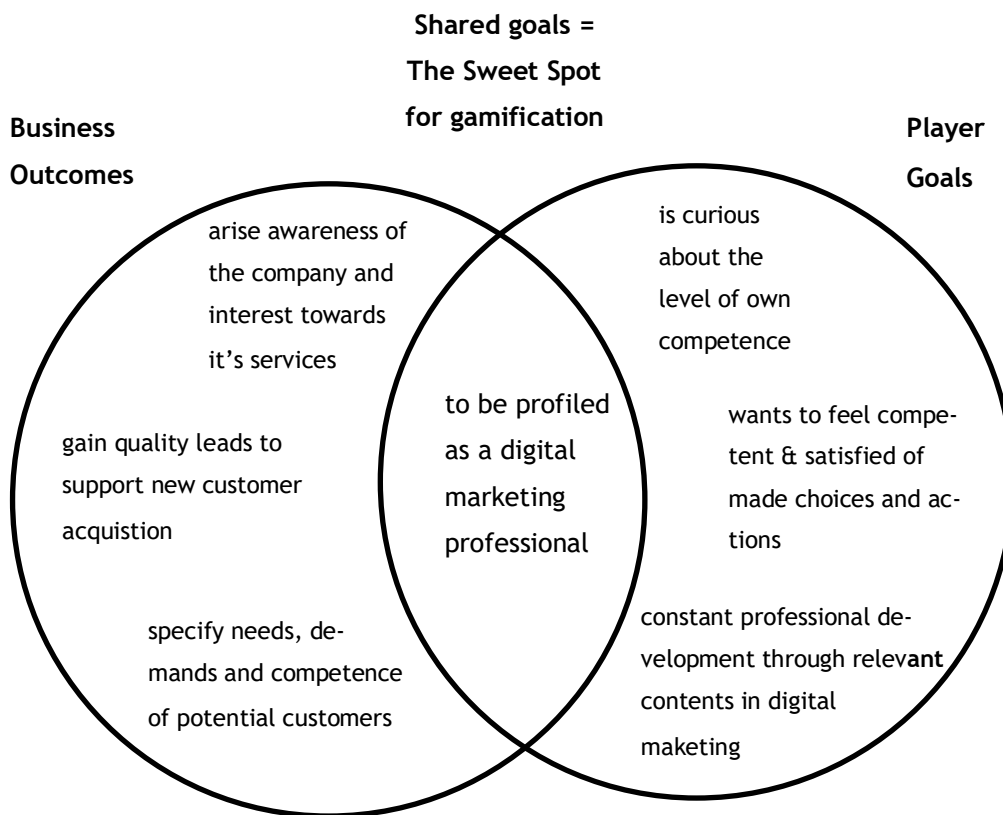
Shared goals =

The Sweet Spot

Business

for gamification

Player

Outcomes

Goals

arise awareness of
the company and
interest towards
it's services

is curious
about the
level of own
competence

to be profiled
as a digital
marketing
professional

gain quality leads to
support new customer
acquistion

wants to feel compe-
tent & satisfied of
made choices and ac-
tions

specify needs, de-
mands and competence
of potential customers

constant professional de-
velopment through relev**ant**
contents in digital
maketing

Figure 26: Shared goals and the sweet spot of the digital marketing buyer profile test

As an answer to the reach aim of this study, this key finding can be seen as a support to the claim that gamification can be designed to meet both the organizational and player goals in the b-to-b marketing context, especially when the key motivational experience is self-development. The usability and the pleasurability of test was evaluated very good by players who found especially the contents of the test pleasurable – that is interesting and challenging enough for them.

However, the case solution, Digital Marketing Buyer Profile Test, was not evaluated particularly high in bringing new information or learning experience to the test participant. In addition, the usability of the test questions and results for the test persons and for the organization behind was evaluated average. Since people appreciate useful information with utilitarian value, these results need a more careful consideration in the marketing actions or at buyer's journey touchpoints that will take place right after the test, e.g. in recommended blog posts and/or newsletters.

From the Service Provider's point of view, it has been recognized by the thesis author, that the goal "To be profiled as a Digital marketing Professional" is general as a goal and does not defined well enough the possibly wanted brand identity and brand or value proposition of the

Service Provider. However, defining the brand dimensions and promises, together with a matching service portfolio, would have been another thesis project.

6.2.2 A Gamified marketing solution as an effective and engaging touchpoint at the very beginning of the b-to-b buyer journey

The aim of the research was to evaluate gamification in new customer acquisition when selling digital marketing services in the business-to-business environment. It was not the intention to define a potential buyer's customer journey or the touchpoints along them.

However, in the discover and define phase, when studying the contemporary literature of b-to-b sales and of inbound marketing strategy, it became obvious that a gamification solution like a Digital Marketing Buyer profile test must be evaluated not only as a single marketing activity or a piece of content in digital marketing but as a potential starting point of the sales process of the Service Provider and/or as an early touchpoint of the potential customer's buying journey.

According to Simon (Stickdorn et. al 2010, 214): "Service design is about choosing the most relevant touchpoints for service delivery and designing a consistent customer experience across these many touchpoints. It looks for opportunities to introduce potentially new and more effective touchpoints, remove weak touchpoints, and coordinate the user-experience across touchpoints in relation to brand message and user needs."

Therefore, evaluating the test as a touchpoint for the potential customer was included in the testing session with questions concerning the potential customer's interest for continuing the cooperation with the Service provider after taking the test and getting the results.

Based on the results, the test author can claim that a gamification solution can be an effective and engaging touchpoint at the very early phase of a buying journey. All the test persons were willing to share their contact details and sign in for a newsletter or to receive invitations to events that would provide them useful and interesting information for professional development in digital marketing. They felt that this kind of a test was also different from the very many approaches – invitations, emails, and webinars – that they receive from the competitors of the Service Provider.

For all of the organisations that the test persons represented, it was not relevant to look for a new cooperation partner or digital marketing service provider at the moment. This also confirmed the need for a proactive – and often long - marketing process with several touchpoints in the b-to-b markets prior to the first personal contact of the sales force.

For the Service Provider, the Digital Marketing Buyer profile test would provide a unique and effective way to personalize and modify its message and service offerings to the different target groups and at different touchpoints along the buyer journey. The target groups could be built as the level of competence in digital marketing as the main – or one – dimension. The newsletter and/or social media contents could be tailored to the different competence and skills levels when the Buyer Profile test would be in use and the potential customers would allow the Service provider to see their profile description and answers – as it was the case with the test persons.

6.2.3 Gamification meets the demands of the changed b-to-b sales and marketing landscape

The b-to-b marketing and sales have changed rapidly in the recent times. Especially due to the digitalization and globalization, b-to-b customer are more independent and more aware of the options available than never before and the sales personnel do not poses the authority that they might once have had.

The b-to-b customer also demands more of the company and from its sales and marketing actions. Together with the growing trend of effiency, a first meeting with a potential client can end up as a disaster if the sales person is not prepared and if his/her customer insight is poor or even false.

The discussions during the prototyping sessions also confirmed the assumption of "a critical and pro-active b-to-b customer" discussed in the theoretical framework chapters. The test persons were willing to achieve digital marketing but were also very critical and demanding on the quality and relevance of the contents and would not hesitate to unsubscribe a newsletter or quit watching a webinar. This confirms the assumption that it would only increase the frustration of a potential customer with a service provider if he/she is much further on the buying journey than the potential service provider realizes or understands.

The sales methods and processes have also evolved along with the trends and the changes in customer behavior since it has become evident that new approaches from the service providers and sales forces are needed in the b-to-b context. Marketing has become more important in the process of selling b-to-b services. In addition, in the marketing context, inbound philosophy introduce by Hubspot, has shifted the focus of marketing from "push" to "pull" strategies. Developing contents, i.e. content marketing, to attract and engage potential customers plays a bigger role in the marketing and sales efforts of the most successful companies.

Digital Marketing Buyer Profile test belongs to the category of gamified marketing activities and based both on the theoretical review and on the empirical observations, it meets very

well the new demands of b-to-b marketing and sales. It is a relatively new way to arise positive interest and thus more awareness for a service provider. It can engage a potential customer by challenging and after that by rewarding him/her with test results that meet his/her hedonic and emotional needs of feeling competent and professional at your work.

When a potential player and customer feels convinced and satisfied enough to share his/her contact details and test results to the organization behind the test, this can be seen as a first, early gesture of trust and thus a valuable starting point for a possible future relationship and cooperation. Sharing one's results also provide an excellent starting point for later cooperation and possible co-creation of mutual solutions and ways of cooperation.

7   Conclusions and suggestions for further actions and research

This study and thesis work, including the prototyping phase, was completed in very different circumstances during March and April 2020 than when it started some months ago in December 2019. The whole world including Finland was to fighting against the coronavirus. Most of the people working remote at home, all size of companies struggling with financial and/or resource problems caused by restrictions set by governments limiting the use of many products and services.

The world and business environment had changed dramatically for the time being and maybe forever. When the economy after the crisis times recovers, changes in working, meeting and buying - which have been shifted from face-to-face to online in even the most traditional organisations - will also mean new opportunities and hopefully growing demand for those working in digital business and marketing.

Therefore, whenever the time is right and the adequate resources available for new customer acquisition, it is a strong recommendation from the thesis author to give this test a try in the Service Provider's marketing and sales process. It became obvious that this test could create interest and a positive attitude towards the Service Provider but would need a carefully designed flow of further actions/touchpoints to develop a true relationship with the potential customer. Launching an own regular newsletter, as it has already been planned, would be an excellent move and touchpoint after the Test. For potential customers who do not have the acute demand for a new digital marketing partner or service provider at the time of taking the test, this would be a good option as the next step after the test had been taken. In this way, the Service Provider would stay in the top of mind and be considered as a partner when needs for buying digital marketing services would occur later on.

As an additional option, the test platform used for prototyping would also allow even more sophisticated possibilities for personalization of the marketing actions as described earlier.

This would decrease the flow of unrelevant information to the potential customer and thus decrease his/her potential frustration when receiving information or offers not relevant for his/her oraganisation.

Further research in evaluating gamification in b-to-b marketing and sales is definitely needed. It was challenging to find examples or research of the use of gamification especially in the b-to-b context. During the theoretical phase it became very clear that there are own various frameworks and process models for b-to-b sales, digital marketing and for gamification design. However, they all have a lot in common and match the Service Design process used in this study as well. All emphasis the importance of the organizational insight (strategy, goals, resources) and the customer insight (emotional and rational needs, motivation and behavior). In addition, all aim to find the process and/or a solution that would serve both the company's and the customer's interest. To conceptualize a planning model for a customer-centric gamification design for b-to-b marketing, based on the existing models in different disciplines, could be one interesting topic for a further research project.

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Figures

Tables

Pictures

Appendices

Appendix 1: Online tests benchmarked at the Discover phase

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Appendix 2: The digital marketing buyer journey chart

TESTI OSANA DIGITAALISTEN PALVELUIDEN OSTOPROSESSIA

www.digimarkkinointitoimisto.fi

JÄÄ TÄHÄN

Saan vastauksieni mukaan räätälöityjä somemainoksia tai uutiskirjeitä

Saan somemainoksia tai uutiskirjeitä

Jätän yhteystietoni ja annan luvan lisätietojen lähettämiseen

Saan organisaatiomme profiilikuvauksen ja toimenpide-ehdotukset & blogisuositukset

Tutustun ehdotettuihin blogipäivityksiin ja/tai palveluihin

Jätän yhteystietoni ja annan luvan vastauksiini sekä lisätietojen lähettämiseen

En jätä yhteystietojani

Jätän yhteydenotto-pyynnön

Teen testin

Tulen Digimarkkinointitoimiston etusivulle, missä mainosbanneri: "Tee testi"

Tutustun sivustoon ja palveluihin

Näen somessa mainoksen/ päivityksen: "Tee testi"

Googlaan "digitaalinen markkinointi, toimisto" tms.

Tarjouspyyntö ja lisäneuvottelut

YHTEISTYÖ KÄYNNISTYY

Workshop, missä tarpeemme kartoitetaan ja priorisoidaan

Toimistosta soitetaan minulle

Tapaaminen, missä tarpeemme ja yhteistyön mahdollisuudet kartoitetaan

Saan ehdotuksen profiilimme mukaan räätälöidystä workshopista 2h

Toimistosta soitetaan minulle

Appendix 3: The final version of the Digital Marketing Buyer Profile Test

Mikä on organisaationne digimarkkinoinnin taso? Tee testi ja selvitä!

Tee helppo, nopea testi – saat tuloksena yrityksenne/organisaationne digimarkkinoinnin osaamisprofiilin sekä suosituksen siitä millaiset digimarkkinoinnin toimenpiteet teille sopisivat.

Testissä on 15 monivalintakysymystä, ja sen tekeminen kestää noin 10 minuuttia.

Testin tarkoituksena on kartoittaa osaamisen tämänhetkistä tasoa – vastaathan siis mahdollisimman totuudenmukaisesti. Älä jää miettimään vaihtoehtoja liiaksi. Vastauksista voit valita vain yhden vaihtoehdon, joten valitse se, mikä sopii tai tuntuu parhaimmalta.

Huom! Tuloksen saaminen ei edellytä yhteystietojen antamista – tämä on vapaaehtoista mikäli haluat jatkaa keskustelua digimarkkinoinnin mahdollisuuksista kanssamme myöhemmin.

Testin tarjoaa sinulle ja organisaatiollesi XXXXXXXXX - sisältöihin ja digitaalisiin asiakaskokemuksiin erikoistunut digimarkkinointitoimisto.

Aloita

LOGO

Yrityksessämme digitaalinen markkinointi

- kiinnostaa, mutta ei ole ollut aikaa tai osaamista perehtyä sen kaikkiin mahdollisuuksiin.
- ymmärretään tärkeäksi kilpailukeinoksi, mutta vielä on paljon tekemistä sen täysimittaisessa hyödyntämisessä.
- on keskeisessä roolissa brändimme tunnettuuden ja myyntimme/toimintamme kasvattamisessa.

LOGO

Digitaalisen markkinoinnin ensisijainen tavoite on meillä

- vielä tarkemmin määrittelemättä.
- tehdä yritystämme, sen tuotteita/palveluita/brändiä tunnetummaksi ja houkuttelevammaksi.
- kerätä liidejä ja tukea myyntityötä.

LOGO

Meillä digitaalisesta markkinoinnista vastaa

- yksi henkilö monen muun tehtävän ohella (tai markkinointi on ulkoistettu toimistolle tai freelancerille).
- pieni tiimi käyttäen tarvittaessa apuna mainos- ja digitoimiston tai freelancereiden palveluja.
- oma markkinointiosasto, jossa digimarkkinoinnin erikoisosaamista, tarvittaessa apuna mainos- ja digitoimistot tai freelancerit.

LOGO

Digimarkkinointikanavien käytön osalta meitä kuvaa parhaiten lause:

- meillä on omat verkkosivut sekä Facebook-profiili, johon teemme päivityksiä satunnaisesti.
- on omat hakukoneoptimoidut verkkosivut, teemme myös some-, digi- tai/ja hakukonemainontaa.
- toteutamme digitaalista markkinointiamme inbound-strategian mukaisesti, markkinoinnin automaatiota hyödyntäen.

LOGO

Hakusanaoptimoinnin tekemistämme kuvaa parhaiten lause:

- olemme laatineet avainsanalistoja ja sijoittaneet verkkosivuillemme avainsanoja.
- olemme käyttäneet Google AdWordsia apuna avainsanojen määrittelyssä ja testaamme sivujemme löydettävyyttä eri työkaluilla.
- edellisen lisäksi huolehdimme, että somessa, blogeissa tai kumppanien sivustolla on linkkejä ohjaamassa liikennettä verkkosivuillemme.
- olemme ulkoistaneet hakukonemarkkinointimme.

LOGO

Haluamme, että verkkosivujemme Bounce rate on

- alle 50 %
- yli 50 %
- en tunne tätä mittaria enkä usko, että muutkaan meillä tuntevat.
- emme seuraa tätä mittaria.

LOGO

Google AdWords –kampanjamme rakennetaan seuraavassa järjestyksessä:

- mainostili, avainsanat, mainosryhmät, mainoskampanjat, mainokset.
- mainostili, mainoskampanjat, mainosryhmät, mainokset, avainsanat.
- emme ole tehneet tai ostaneet tällaisia kampanjoita.
- teemme hakukonemainontaa, mutta en tee niitä itse/niiden tekeminen on ulkoistettu.

LOGO

7/15

Facebook-mainonnan kohdentamisessa olemme käyttäneet seuraavia tapoja:

- olemme kohdentaneet Fb-mainonta iän, sukupuolen, paikkakunnan sekä kiinnostuksen kohteiden perusteella.
- edellä mainittujen lisäksi olemme kohdentaneet mainonta myös Fb-sivumme seuraajille, look-a-like –ryhmille sekä verkkosivuillamme käyneille.
- emme ole kokeilleet Facebook-mainontaa.
- emme tee Facebook-mainonta, koska ei tavoita meidän kohderyhmiämme.

LOGO

8/15

Hyödynnämme 10 parasta vinkkiä -tyylisiä juttuja blogissamme tai uutiskirjeessämme

- uuden asiakkaan kiinnostuksen herättämiseksi.
- asiantuntemuksemme rakentamiseksi ja vahvistamiseksi.
- meillä ei ole blogia tai uutiskirjettä, emmekä tee ajankohtais- tai uutisjuttuja.
- teemme tällaisia sisältöjä lähinnä verkkosivuillemme tai somekanaviimme.

LOGO

9/15

Sisältömarkkinoinnissamme keskitymme

- eri sisältömuotojen ja –kanavien monipuoliseen hyödyntämiseen.
- eri asiakaspersoonillemme räätälöityjen sisältöjen toteuttamiseen markkinoinnin automaation avulla.
- ajantasaiseen informaatioon toiminnastamme ja tuotteistamme.

LOGO

10/15

Digitaalisen markkinoinnin eri kohderyhmät

- on meidän hankala määritellä, koska niitä on niin paljon / hyvin erilaisia / vain yksi.
- huomioidaan meillä verkkosivujen rakenteessa ja somemarkkinoinnin kohdentamisessa.
- määrittelevät meillä markkinoinnin sisältöjä eli viestimme ovat erilaiset sen mukaan kuinka tuttuja tuotteemme/palvelumme ovat hänelle.

LOGO

11/15

Paras sisältö syntyy näkemyksemme mukaan

- kun ymmärretään, missä olemme kilpailukykyisiä ja erotumme.
- kun saamme potentiaaliset ja nykyiset asiakkaamme/kohderyhmämme kiinnostumaan ja keskustelemaan.
- kun asiapitoista faktaa kevennetään toimialalle sopivalla huumorilla.

LOGO

12/15

Seuraamme digitaalisen markkinoinnin tuloksellisuutta

myyntilukujemme, erillisten tutkimusten ja/tai saamamme palautteen avulla.

kanavakohtaisesti, eri toimenpiteille asetettujen tavoitteiden pohjalta määriteltyjen mittareiden mukaan.

pääosin Google-analytiikalla ja Facebook Business Managerin raporttien avulla.

en tiedä miten seuraamme tai onko mittareita määritelty.

13/15

LOGO

Arvioimme onnistumistamme sosiaalisessa mediassa seuraavilla mittareilla:

tykkäämiset, jaot, liikenne nettisivuille.

tykkääjien ja seuraajien kasvu valituissa somekanavissa.

emme ole määritelleet mittareita somen seurantaan.

en tee itse somemarkkinointia tai se on ulkoistettu, joten en osaa vastata.

14/15

LOGO

Pyrimme saamaan AdWords-mainoksillemme mahdollisimman korkean CTR-prosentin

varmistamalla, että avainsanamme liittyvät mainoksiimme.

varmistamalla, että mainoksemme sijoittuvat hakutuloksissa ensimmäiseksi.

en osaa vastata tähän, enkä usko että meillä muutkaan osaisivat koska emme ole itse tehneet AdWords-mainontaa.

15/15

LOGO

Kiitos vastauksista!

Jaa vastaus- ja yhteystietosi

Kun jaat tietosi, Testin tekijä voi lähettää sinulle uutiskirjeensä sekä profiilinne mukaisia tietoja palveluistaan ja tapahtumistaan. Voit poistua postituslistalta milloin tahansa.

Mikäli et halua jakaa tietojasi, klikkaa sivun alareunasta tekstiä "Näytä vain osaajaprofiilimme".

Etu- ja sukunimi*, organisaatio*

Sähköpostiosoite*

Kiitos jos arvioit testimme:

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Lähetä vastaus- ja yhteystietoni ja näytä osaajaprofiilimme

Näytä vain osaajaprofiilimme

LOGO

DIGIMARKKINOINNIN TULOKAS

Onneksi olkoon! Organisaationne on digimarkkinoinnin "tulokas", jolla on digimarkkinoinnin maailma vielä suurelta osin valloittamatta.

Teillä on digimarkkinoinnin työkalupakissa vielä paljon kartoittamattomia ja kokeilematta olevia työkaluja ja mahdollisuuksia tunnettuuden, kiinnostuksen tai myynnin lisäämiseksi. Testin tulokset ja pelkästään sen tekeminen kuitenkin kertovat, että organisaationne, tai ainakin sinä sen edustajana, tiedostatte digimarkkinoinnin mahdollisuudet.

Aika ei ehkä vain riitä kaiken muun ohella paneutumaan digimarkkinointiin tai ehkä muut työtehtävät ja tavoitteet priorisoituvat aina edelle. Nyt on kuitenkin hyvä hetki viimeistään tutustua digimarkkinointiin ja terävöittää organisaationne näkyvyyttä ja toimenpiteitä digitaalisissa markkinointikanavissa.

Suosittelemme organisaatiollenne seuraavaa:
- Analysoikaa ja tutkikaa verkkosivujenne liikennettä. Näin löydätte mahdollisia kehityskohtia helposti.
- Hyödyntäkää sosiaalista mediaa verkkosivuliikenteen kasvattamisessa.
- Miettikää, keitä ovat asiakkaanne. Liikkuvatko he sosiaalisessa mediassa, lukevatko he blogeja tai käyttävätkö he ainoastaan sähköpostia. Tarjotkaa heille sisältöjä siellä, missä he liikkuvat.
- Istukaa tiiminä samaan pöytään ja rakentakaa digimarkkinoinnin suunnitelma ja strategia kaiken tekemisenne pohjaksi.
- Laatikaa tekemisellenne tavoitteet sekä mittarit, joiden mukaan voitte arvioida tekemisenne laatua.

Sinua voisi kiinnostaa blogimme postauksista:
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Olemme sisältöihin ja digitaalisiin asiakaskokemuksiin erikoistunut digimarkkinointitoimisto. Tarjoamme räätälöityjä ratkaisuja kaiken tasoisille digimarkkinoinnin tekijöille kaiken tekemisen ulkoistamisesta sisällöntuotantoon tai esimerkiksi sosiaalisen median hallinnointiin.

Tutustu palveluihimme

Toista uudestaan

Jaa tuloksesi 🇫 🐦 💬 in

LOGO

DIGIMARKKINOINNIN TAITAJA

Onneksi olkoon! Organisaationne on digimarkkinoinnin "taitaja", jolla on digimarkkinoinnin tekeminen hyvällä mallilla ja hyvässä vauhdissa.

Digimarkkinoinnin mahdollisuudet on organisaatiossanne selvästi ymmärretty, ja niihin on tartuttu! Verkkosivut ja valitut sosiaalisen median kanavat ovat kunnossa sekä todennäköisesti myös hakusana- ja display-mainonta käytössä. Digitaaliset kampanjat ovat tuoneet liikennettä verkkosivuille ja tätä seurataan analytiikan kautta.

Aika ja/tai osaaminen ei kuitenkaan aina riitä kaikkeen tarvittavaan tekemiseen tai digimarkkinoinnin määrätietoiseen kehittämiseen. Sisältöjen tuottaminen eri kanaviin eri muotoja käyttäen voisi olla monipuolisempaa, monikanavaisuuden hallinta suunnitelmallisempaa ja mittaaminen ja seuranta pitäisi nivoa paremmin yhteen (liike)toiminnan tavoitteiden kanssa. Jos olette myyntiorganisaatio, keskusteluissa tai kokeilussa on varmasti myös jo inbound-markkinointi ja markkinoinnin automaatio.

Suosittelemme organisaatiollenne esimerkiksi:

- Ostajapersoonien luomista ja hyödyntämistä sisällöntuotannossä ja kanavavalinnoissa.
- Erilaisten sisältöjen hyödyntämistä digitaalisen asiakaskokemuksen parantamiseksi.
- Sisältöjen suunnittelua data-ohjautuvasti analytiikkaan pohjauten.
- Indbound-markkinointiajattelun täysimittaista hyödyntämistä.
- Markkinoinnin automaation käyttöönottoa.
- Verkkosivujen käytettävyyden analysointia ja teknistä hakukoneoptimointia.
- Tavoitteiden ja mittareiden priorisointia ja systemaattisempaa seurantaa.

Sinua voisi kiinnostaa blogimme postauksista:

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Olemme sisältöihin ja digitaalisiin asiakaskokemuksiin erikoistunut digimarkkinointitoimisto. Tarjoamme räätälöityjä ratkaisuja kaiken tasoisille digimarkkinoinnin tekijöille sisältösuunnitelmista verkkosivujen optimointiin ja inbound-markkinointiin.

Tutustu palveluihimme

Toista uudestaan

Jaa tuloksesi

LOGO

DIGIMARKKINOINNIN VIRTUOOSI

Onneksi olkoon! Organisaationne on digimarkkinoinnin "virtuoosi", jossa tehokas ja toimiva digimarkkinointi on ymmärretty keskeisenä kilpailuetuna!

Teillä digimarkkinointia tehdään ammattimaisin ottein ja suunnitelmallisesti. Tiimistänne löytyy erikoisosaamista niin sisällöntuotantoon, hakukonemainontaan kuin analytiikkaan joko omasta takaa tai yhteistyöverkoston kautta. Tavoitteet ovat korkealla: haluatte olla oman toimialanne kärjessä digitaalisessa markkinoinnissa. Haluatte rakentaa ainutlaatuisia digitaalisia asiakaskokemuksia - ja sitouttaa tekemiseen koko organisaationne. Jos olette myyntiorganisaatio, markkinointia tehdään inbound-ajattelun pohjalta, markkinoinnin automatisaatiota ja eri teknologioita hyödyntäen.

Aina resurssit eivät kuitenkaan riitä digimarkkinoinnin uusimpien trendien seuraamiseen, uusimpien työkalujen tai sovellusten vertaamiseen ja testaamiseen. Uusien työkalujen ja kanavien lisäksi vanhatkin muuttuvat ja kehittyvät niin että ilman jatkuvaa seurantaa, testausta ja opiskelua on muutoksessa mahdoton pysyä perässä. Onko organisaatiosi miettinyt mitkä toiminnot on jatkossa hyvä pitää yrityksen sisällä ja mitkä ulkoistaa? Tarvitaanko ehkä uusia kumppaneita luotsaamaan omaa tekemistä uusista näkökulmista ja uusin, tuorein ottein?

Suosittelemme organisaatiollenne esimerkiksi:

- Panostamaan omnikanavaisuuteen ja digitaalisiin asiakaskokemuksiin esimerkiksi markkinoinnin automaation avulla.
- Toteuttamaan brändibarometri tai mielikuvatutkimus, jolla selvitätte, ovatko tekemänne toimenpiteet saavuttaneet asiakaskunnassanne toivottua tulosta.
- Tarkistamaan, että suunnitellut ostajapersoonat ovat aina ajan tasalla, samoin kuin myös organisaation muut strategiat ja suunnitelmat.
- Erottumaan sosiaalisessa mediassa todellisella vuorovaikutuksella ja aktiivisella asiakkaidenne aktivoimisella.

Sinua voisi kiinnostaa blogimme postauksista:

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Olemme sisältöihin ja digitaalisiin asiakaskokemuksiin erikoistunut digimarkkinointitoimisto. Tarjoamme räätälöityjä ratkaisuja kaiken tasoisille digimarkkinoinnin tekijöille strategiatyöstä markkinoinnin automaatioon ja erilaisiin sisältöihin.

Tutustu palveluihimme

Toista uudestaan

Jaa tuloksesi 🅵 🐦 💬 in

LOGO