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Delivering Agile Marketing Projects: A View from Practice

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ABSTRACT

Successful marketing projects are vital to most organisations to ensure their survival. The paper advocates an 'agile approach' in creating effective marketing initiatives. It underscores the necessity of clearly defined objectives and internal efficiency, addressing power issues for optimal resource allocation. Brand definition, understanding the customer base through profiling, and implementing a differentiated, segmented approach are crucial aspects. The paper recommends data gathering for analysis and leveraging technology to support these projects, all encapsulated within the 'agile approach.' The research methodology involved a survey of literature, complemented by a semi-structured group interview with experienced UK-based marketing professionals. Inductive analysis was applied to the gathered data, extracting principal themes. The outcome of this research proposes a framework for delivering 'Agile marketing projects' based on a project management 'learning' model. This structured approach contributes valuable insights for organizations seeking success in their marketing endeavors.

Keywords: *Marketing project, Agile approach, SMART objectives, Brand definition, Customer focus, Market segmentation, Leveraging technology.*

Introduction

Successful marketing projects are critical to the survival of many public, private and charitable organisations, in respect of communicating effectively with their customers and users. Failure to achieve the requisite levels of demand from the target audience may cause closure, reduction or termination of operations. These projects may also provide potential customers with the option of gaining superior products and services, thus generating benefits for these stakeholders.

This paper investigates the principal aspects required to make marketing projects successful, via UK-based research.

The main definitions can be considered.

'Agile' is 'being able to deal with new situations quickly and successfully'.

'Marketing' is 'the business activity that involves finding out what customers want, using that information to design products and services, and selling them effectively'.

'Project' is 'a piece of planned work or an activity that is finished over a period of time and intended to achieve a particular purpose' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). Projects designed to deliver marketing objectives should be agile, that is flexible in their approach, in order to optimise their use of resources and opportunities in their environments.

Problem Statement

There is a need for marketing projects to attain a level of success that generates enough demand to sustain the organisation, in respect of its products and services.

One research source states that many companies are ineffectively spending 40 to 60% of their digital marketing budgets, for instance (Magoc, 2023).

This suggests that improved techniques are needed to create successful marketing projects.

Research Objective

The principal aim of the research was to obtain recommendations from practitioners to assist in delivering successful outcomes for marketing projects. A framework for delivering 'agile marketing projects' was then constructed. This summarises the learning from the literature and empirical work.

Literature Review

Several key journals were utilised for a search on the topic of marketing projects and related areas. The important themes were extracted via a review of the selected articles, using inductive techniques. These were then organised into themes.

Organisation

One article considers the building of a brand using advertised promises to the customer (Martin, et al., 2024). This is viewed as a highly effective way to attract and retain customers with a specific commitment, provided it is fulfilled. These authors use an advertising database to construct their argument. Their conclusion was that the most effective advertising was based on verifiable promises to the customer. The nature of the commitment by the organisation will determine the potential target audience for the product or service.

An example was given of a car hire company promising that customers would be given the car that they requested, rather than the next available vehicle, thus appealing to drivers who wanted to drive superior or specific cars. The promise should, ideally, set a quantifiable target which is measurable by the customer. This article determined that the organisations using this type of advertising declared better performance statistics, in respect of customer response metrics. The customer promise should define the target group, the nature of the transaction and the customer reward for supporting the brand. It should comprise the organisation's strategy and align both internal and external stakeholders in respect of effort, expectations and resourcing. The ideal is to be the default brand for purchase, so that competitors' products are not even considered, irrespective of their customer arguments.

An article by Stengel et al. (2023) considers the performance of brands and proposes metrics to assist organisations to improve brand performance. The perceived tension between performance measurement and brand-building activities is addressed. This is envisaged as focusing on short-term performance enhancement or long-term brand value, with the emphasis on one of these occurring at the expense of the other. The authors refute this premise and state that the two objectives are compatible, provided the correct perspective is assumed and suitable indicators are determined, in order to assist in achieving both aims. Examples from three different companies are used to illustrate this statement in practice. The suggested key performance indicator comprises four factors that comprise the customer's view of the brand, namely: familiarity with the brand; respect for the brand; relevance of the brand to the customer's life; unique aspects of the brand. Surveying a selected sample of customers and potential customers in a targeted area will allow this indicator to be constructed.

These should provide suitable metrics for the development of brand value and also enhance short term performance of the organisations. The importance of addressing specific areas was

stressed. The location and type of customer to be targeted requires attention in order for the brand strategy to be effective. Examples of target groups were provided, such as: loyal customers; those prepared to switch to competitors' products and services; potential new customers; former customers who could potentially switch back to the company's products and services. The demographic groups are also important, for instance, if the product has a customer base comprising young males then attempts to make the brand appeal to families or an older generation may lead to the core group being alienated. The location is also relevant to brand strategies, in order to concentrate resources on key areas.

The holistic view also should be considered, in respect of the potential effects on demand for products and services. An increase in traffic on the website, for example, may not generate the expected gains if this is the result of an intensive marketing campaign that alienates regular customers, due to excessive communications. The increase in a key performance indicator here may actually lead to a reduction in demand. This article, therefore, proposes that a nuanced approach to brand development is required, considering the full context and using the suggested indicator. This could then be linked to revenue in order to demonstrate the success of these initiatives, developing brands for improved performance as well as long-term benefits.

A 'hybrid' business venture, applying an entrepreneurial approach to a new product or service, from within a large company, is considered by Furr & O'Keeffe, (2023). The authors state that such enterprises have generally been successful, citing examples from practice. The objective is to apply entrepreneurial skills to creating a product or service, in an agile manner, while being supported by corporate resources. The properties of a new 'start up' business, namely flexibility and dedicated, risk-taking management, could be combined with the strength and security of a corporation. This was viewed as being feasible only if the entrepreneurial division was separated from the corporation and allowed to exercise its own discretion, without being constrained by corporate rules and procedures. This would, it was suggested, permit innovation via flexibility without the need for compliance to hamper the initiative. The entrepreneur could be recruited from outside the company, in order to ensure that the requisite qualities are present. The benefits of both types of enterprise could then be obtained, in order to create and exploit new business initiatives. These should be identified as business needs that are not currently being fulfilled. An example was the American car repair market, where a 'hybrid' initiative created a disruptive business that achieved success in a fragmented context. The latter allowed this entrepreneurial initiative to be viable, as customer demand was not being satisfied, for example in respect of on-site repairs. The 'start up' division's initial success could then be scaled into a larger commercial initiative, using the corporation's resources, especially finance and marketing. The ultimate aim is to provide a new value proposition for customers and rapidly exploit it then scale this provision to satisfy the market demand. This also encourages a knowledge exchange between the 'start up' and corporate businesses. This will allow the brand to be established and exploited, thus maximising the returns at the corporate level.

An article by Ghazimatin et al. (2021) uses an empirical study to examine temporary organisations in marketing and their challenges in operation, especially the governance aspects. The study is located in the United States 'business to business' construction sector. The temporary organisations comprised the contractors working on each project and these were hybrid in that they had connections to each other through prior work projects, so trusted suppliers were used for new projects comprising a network in the sector. The research examines firms chosen on the basis of price, using fixed price or variable (costs plus an agreed amount), and supplier firm selection by ability. The former tended to be regulated by a formal contract and the latter via longer term connection, developing trust between the parties. The relationship can be determined by the size of the project, duration of the contract and the quality and amount of previous

collaborations between the main parties. This research stated that projects involving suppliers chosen according to their ability, had superior results in terms of delivery than those where price was used as the selection criterion. One key aspect was that alignment of the organisations was critical in that the cultures, values and objectives should match, aligning the two types of selection. This supersedes the latter criteria, if the organisations are so aligned. The selection process, also, forms part of the relationship-building process and contributes to motivating the suppliers. Selection on ability was viewed as assisting in coordination, thus saving time in communications between organisations. The utilisation of variable pricing was said to cause more time to be spent on coordination between the companies. The ultimate objective was to stop project costs exceeding the budget figure. Successful governance of these projects can contribute greatly to their ultimate success and this article addresses the requisite factors. The temporary combination of a number of suppliers to achieve marketing objectives, comprising a network of organisations, selected on abilities or via price and bound by social ties or contracts, is essential for successful delivery of the prescribed outcomes.

The emergence of new stakeholders to potentially disrupt the marketing environment is considered by Moorman et al.(2024). The area is the health care sector, with marketing occurring 'direct to the consumer' and 'business to business'. The traditional stakeholders of: pharmacies and drug companies; hospitals and medical centres; have now been supplemented with additional parties in this sphere. Problems with traditional routes to health care, including lack of access to doctors (increasingly via online or via telephone), long waiting lists for treatment and lack of resources for medical centres have increased the trend to seek alternatives. This trend has been strengthened by the covid pandemic, with many countries' health systems struggling to recover after this severe disruption.

Online platforms and communities are present in this sector. These can provide valuable support for health care users. The communities are usually started in order to share experience on a common theme, such as individuals undergoing specific treatments. These may also include the role of supporting the families and friends of these individuals. Platforms can be setup to promote specific products and this involves direct marketing of these to consumers.

The presence of online advice sources has led to many individuals attempting self-diagnosis. Commercial services are available to obtain a diagnosis of potential health problems. 'Wearable' health monitoring technology is readily available. Many health products can also be purchased online. The use of online 'influencers' can help to market products and this could be voluntarily or paid advocacy. This can lead to quality issues and treatment problems, as inappropriate products are purchased and administered.

Alternative medicine has also increased in importance and is promoted as a healthy option, rather than traditional forms. These treatments could be more closely aligned with traditional forms, so that information is shared, to assist diagnosis and care.

The disparity between the rich and poor is more marked here, with expensive private health care only being available to the wealthiest groups. The use of cheaper alternatives, such as self-diagnosis and purchase of online treatments, will probably increase in the poorer groups.

Customer feedback is increasingly gathered and made available, usually in sample or aggregate form. This can be used to assess providers and products, as well as be used to influence funding decisions. This can lead to excess demand on some resources, thus resulting in poorer access to treatment and increasing the trend to access alternative sources of health care.

The need for data to be gathered and analysed in the health care sector is paramount. This should be kept securely and used ethically. This can potentially be used for marketing, in order to target the communication of products and services to the appropriate audience.

The availability of public health services, as well as a private sector provision, is mentioned. This was viewed as generally enhancing the health of the population, in providing a publicly available standard of care, irrespective of income.

Marketing has the potential to help increase choice for consumers and gather data to promote changes to improve the provision of this vital service, according to this article. These new stakeholders can receive separate target marketing, according to their consumer profiles.

Process

Whitler (2022) examines the area of learning from marketing methods utilised in China, using examples from this country. The speed of delivery is noted, with China's typical marketing campaigns being conceived and executed rapidly, in comparison with the 'traditional' approach, comprising more lengthy preparation. The focus is usually on delivery to mobile devices, as smartphone ownership is high with long average daily use times in the Chinese population. The aim is to 'go viral' with the advertising being read by large numbers of potential customers. This contrasts with the traditional approach of considering many different advertising channels, such as television, radio, posters and newspapers. The technique in China is to rely heavily on 'influencers' to promote the products and services. The latter are said to have a much greater effect than in western campaigns. The aims are also viewed as being different, with campaigns in China focusing on revenue generation and increasing market share, so a 'long term' perspective, rather than a profit-centric view. The campaigns are thus conceived and developed rapidly, with the objective of quick, general distribution of the promotional material. The monopoly of several large companies, present in China, permits information on consumers to be gathered, so cooperation between the big companies can provide an accurate profile of the customer and highlight areas of potential demand. This allows a more nuanced approach to marketing, where offers are tailored to consumer preferences, thus allowing more effective promotion of products

and services to occur. This, therefore, means that campaigns can span different platforms, to cover different consumer areas, such as fashion, food and gaming. The Chinese method comprises a more agile approach to marketing than traditional methods and can, thus, provide potential learning in this sphere.

Project

An article addresses the construction of a marketing AI strategy. AI is 'artificial intelligence' that is 'a particular computer system or machine that has some of the qualities that the human brain has' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). The authors (Davenport et al., 2021) discuss the formulation of a marketing strategy that utilises AI Software. They suggest that the marketing discipline provides a good area for the development of applications that use AI. The notion is that organisations use two criteria to categorise the applications, namely: level of complexity is stand-alone or integrated; intelligence level is task automation or machine-learning. Examples are: a customer service chatbot; a stand-alone application for selection of paint colour; an enhanced customer relations service; an integrated facility to offer customers potential film purchases, based on past choices.

Organisations with little experience in this area should, it is suggested, progress in stages from simple uses to more complex, in order to develop their capacity to accommodate these enhancements. Initial uses could, thus, include stand-alone applications that advise staff on assisting customers. These are much lower risk than applications used directly by the customer, possibly embedded in other processes such as purchase of goods and services. The facility to promote products on the basis of past history then take payment for them is a sophisticated marketing mechanism.

There is a need to acquire the data for AI decision-making and this means there is an ethical aspect to consider, in respect of security and use of customers' personal information. Organisations should address this aspect by formulating a policy. The automation of routine decision-making via AI applications is regarded as a positive trend,

with critical decisions being taken by humans, for example in terms of strategy. The practice of marketing can be significantly extended and enhanced by AI developments and the optimum usage needs to be determined by the organisations and their target market.

The potential new rationale for marketing caused by artificial intelligence (AI) in the next generation of smart assistants (such as 'Alexa' by Amazon) is considered by Dawar and Bendle (2022). This article suggests that customers will be more dependent on these devices to assist their purchasing decisions. This will require a paradigm shift in marketing techniques in order to affect the AI based decisions. Traditional brand management and promotion to encourage customer loyalty may have to be refocused. The marketing campaigns will need to influence the next generation of smart assistants to ensure that purchasing decisions consider and select the promoted products and services, as these may be delegated wholly or partly to these devices. The concept of customer loyalty to a brand will have to change and accommodate influencing the smart machines to ensure the products and services are selected by these AI programmes. These interventions should be explicit, so that the customer is aware when products are being promoted by companies, for example by paying for product placement in terms of the purchasing decision on the smart assistant. The criteria for selection by the software could be made explicit, in order to understand this decision and ensure products are placed in order to maximise their chances of success. This changes the basis of marketing from traditional mechanisms via channels, such as TV, radio and online, to concentrate on the manufacturers of the smart assistants and the criteria for decision-making, together with any control parameters to be set by the customer. The default purchases made by customers who keep buying a product because they do not have time to check if it still meets the original selection criteria, such as price and quality, may be disrupted. Smart assistants could compare prices and quality criteria, for example, in respect of a number of competing products. This means

that this form of 'brand inertia' may be disrupted and a new context accommodated. This may further shift marketing into a more technology-focused approach.

Fantini and Narayandas (2023) examine the use of analytics for marketing, illustrating their rationale with examples from practice. Three types of scenarios for decision-making in this area are outlined, based on the type of decisions and availability of appropriate data, namely: descriptive; predictive; prescriptive. These vary by the degree of human autonomy in the decisions and use of automation. Decisions that require future scenario descriptions, such as strategic marketing, are said to be best made by humans, as there may be insufficient data to provide automated solutions, for example in terms of future scenarios. Humans can, therefore, use expertise to accommodate ambiguity. Decisions with some data and a variety of potential scenarios, such as demand planning, can have several different solutions generated and the manager can decide which of these to implement. The final category is totally automated decisions, occurring because the context is rich in data and the type of decision requires such analysis, such as inventory management, so the solutions are prescribed and applied automatically, without human intervention. Machines are, thus, superior in terms of calculation and deduction.

Managers are required to frame the appropriate questions, rather than be 'the source of all knowledge' in respect of marketing decisions, according to this article. An example of stock control is given, showing the progression of inventory management from descriptive to prescriptive techniques, in order to improve the quality of decisions regarding sale of excess stock, using price and sales criteria. The control of the inventory benefitted from greater investment in gathering and processing the data and more automated decision-making. The tension between data analysts, whose objective is to acquire improved quality of data, and business analysts, whose focus is on generating income and profits, is noted. Relying on machine-generated solutions in uncertain environments can lead to costs, in terms of failed business initiatives and

missed opportunities. The importance of matching the appropriate form of decision-making to the scenario is, therefore, emphasised by these authors.

The use of digital platforms for marketing brands is addressed by Wichmann et al. (2022). These are said to comprise two principal types: platforms where multiple brands and suppliers reside in a digital 'marketplace' (such as Amazon); dedicated platforms to exclusively promote one brand (such as Nike). The problem of loss of control by the brand owners, in respect of the first instance, is possibly addressed by the latter with the exclusive arrangements.

The 'marketplace' platform may lead to competition on a narrow range of criteria, such as price and promotional offers, in a situation where multiple brands are present and multiple suppliers may be offering the same branded products at different prices. The focus is on the transaction and the control is with the platform provider and customer. Marketing is limited here as competition is principally based on price, for instance. Customers may still be attracted to brands but may have choices of the same brand, offered by different suppliers at various prices and with various promotional offers. The customers will tend to use these 'marketplace' platforms when they require a product or service and return only when they require another instance of the same product or service, with the example of purchases of trainers being given. The suppliers and the brands have minimal control in this environment.

The dedicated platform may have developed in order to counter this lack of control, in order to give the brand and supplier primacy. This is setup by the brand in order to exclusively promote their products and services. The aim could be to create and develop a community of customers and provide a brand 'ecosystem' to attract and retain customers. Complementary products, services and activities are offered, in order to encourage participation. The example given is a running club, where a brand of trainers is promoted, and customers are engaged on a long-term basis. The latter may also contribute to the platform, with comments and

questions. Other suppliers may also contribute with complementary products and services, such as health monitoring, sports clothing and nutrition. Users could also contribute their stories, run times and fitness advice, for example. This should foster brand loyalty and permit a high level of product differentiation. The brand should be in a powerful position here, although the problem of other parties potentially causing issues was highlighted, if they are allowed to contribute to the platform activities. Negative comments and disagreements between these parties are examples of such potential occurrences. The dedicated platform, though, can provide a strong marketing position for brands, according to these authors.

An article by Chandrasekaran et al.(2022) considers the impact of technological change on markets, using statistical data. These authors examine the effects of disruptive technologies, in respect of products, customers and suppliers. The rate of conversion to the new technology can be slow, so that this exists as well as the former technology. This reduces the impact of the disruption on the supplier of the older technology, as there is no rapid fall in sales. An example provided was the move to mobile smartphones with a large number of older customers purchasing these devices and retaining their landlines, namely the former technology. The opposite trend occurred with music CDs and the potentially disruptive innovation of digital music downloads. The latter was viewed as the preserve of younger customers and so the CD market was expected to continue with substantial sales. This did not occur and the innovation quickly captured the market, causing a steep decline in CD sales, it was stated. These trends, therefore, affect sales and market shares of new and old products. The example of the electric car was also given, with Tesla becoming the car manufacturer with the highest valuation and other companies, who preferred to invest in hybrid cars, falling behind due to increased focus on the environment.

The authors suggest that there are several discrete groups of customers, who can be profiled based on their behaviour with the new technology and attitude towards the potential change. They comprise: 'leapfroggers' adopt the new technology

but did not want the old technology; 'switchers' have already adopted the old technology then decide to switch to the new technology product; 'dual users', who purchase the new technology and decide to keep the old technology as well; 'opportunists' would have had the old technology but delayed this purchase and adopt the new technology instead.

The growth of the total market, in respect of sales to new customers, is represented by the sum of the sales to the 'leapfroggers' and the 'opportunists'. The impact of the disruption caused by the new technology is determined by the size of the 'dual users' group and the duration that they keep both new and old technologies, together with the size of the 'switchers' group and the speed they switch technologies. The combined effects will comprise the total demand for the existing technology, considering the new, potentially disruptive technology in the market.

These groups can be targeted with tailored marketing campaigns, to address the particular customer profile and segment of the market. The company policies on these products can be determined by the leaders' views of the trends regarding potentially disruptive technologies. The outcomes will affect investment, production priorities, stocks and, ultimately, revenues and market shares, for example.

The use of new technologies in marketing is considered by Hoffman et al. (2022) in their article. The influence of technology is noted in respect of creating new products and improved mechanisms, including strategies, for marketing, better communications with customers, improved data with data analysis for decision-making and superior tools for managing marketing projects, for example. The potential contribution of academia in encouraging and developing the trends in technology is noted, together with the accompanying theory to help to comprehend and develop this sphere. Several areas are cited as examples of areas of development and further investigation. The use of digital platforms, artificial intelligence, technology transfer techniques and dashboards in marketing, for instance, comprise such areas of innovation.

The importance of flexibility in this nascent research is stressed. The need to liaise with practitioners using an agile perspective and being adaptable in the use of research methods, to provide appropriate means of investigation, is mentioned, perhaps utilising a mix of research methods.

Methodology

This research was conducted using qualitative methods to gather the data and a 'grounded approach', in order to analyse the results and present the conclusions.

A review of several of the principal journals was enacted and several articles on the topic of marketing projects were selected and reviewed. The key themes were noted from this literature, using inductive methods. An empirical study was undertaken, comprising an interview with several marketing professionals, who also taught this topic. This was conducted utilising semi-structured questions, in order to allow the respondents more discretion in their responses. The central point of the questioning was to consider the properties of successful marketing projects. The interview notes were then analysed in order to extract the key themes. These were gathered using an inductive approach, without a predetermined coding scheme. This data was then organised into a hierarchy of themes, in parallel with the literature (Blair and Pagano, 2021a and Easterby-Smith et al., 1991), using a project management 'learning' format to categorise the results (McClory et al., 2017). A framework for delivering 'agile marketing projects' was then constructed, from the results of this study, in order to assist practitioners and summarise the learning from the research (Blair, Pagano and Burns, 2019).

Results and Discussion

Three marketing experts with both practice and academic experience were interviewed. This was a group interview, comprising semi-structured questions. The key theme of these questions was 'what makes a successful marketing project?' The main themes were then extracted from the interview and linked to the appropriate literature, in order to provide further analysis.

Organisation

A respondent stated, 'Internal politics needs to be understood and the culture should be onside in order to launch a new product.' The importance of aligning all of the internal resources, especially staff, in order to effectively implement the marketing project, is highlighted. Power issues within the organisation could jeopardise success, especially rival priorities and opposition to the project. The culture should be positive and supportive, in terms of the project objectives. It is important to manage the risks in respect of this environment (Blair, Woodcock and Pagano, 2021).

'There should be a strong customer-focus. Power issues may cause problems with this, for example if the IT department determine the budgets. Homeworking could also lead to poor customer service.' The need to maintain focus on the customer is stated. There is a recognition that this could be weakened by 'office politics' and working practices within the organisation. The determination of budgets by other departments could lead to conflicting priorities, as the IT department focuses on systems rather than allocating sufficient funds for marketing and customer support. Homeworking may lead to a poorer customer service, perhaps in respect of standards, together with quality and speed of response. The hybrid office configuration needs to be considered (and the virtual working aspect is discussed in: Blair and Pagano, 2020; with training for virtual teams in Blair and Pagano, 2021c).

An interviewee stated, 'Check demand and determine who are the target customers. Verify their requirements. They may require a different product per segment of the market. Also there may be more customer expectations regarding sustainability and CSR.' This stresses the importance of recognising customers and potential customers and determining their needs. These may be separated into groups that can be targeted with different or amended products. The changing nature of expectations is noted, with customers demanding more sustainable products and wanting organisations to adhere to socially responsible practices (and have Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR. Sustainability issues

are considered in Blair and Pagano, 2021b). Failure to do so could lead to customers transferring their business to other companies.

A respondent said, 'You need to create a persona, comprising a customer type. There should be one of these per profile'. This is a preliminary to putting the market into segments for specific target marketing. The profile will comprise the key characteristics of the customer group and should assist marketing with specific offerings for that group (Chandrasekaran et al., 2022).

'It is important to build relationships with customers. This could be via online communications or in-person. It is vital to resource this properly.' This indicates that obtaining sales is not enough. Relationships with customers should be paramount, encouraging loyalty to the company's products and services. Technological tools can be used to aid communications with the customer, via online features, such as chatbots. Different aspects of technological change are considered by, Blair, Grant and Woodcock (2020), Blair, Morris and Pagano (2023) and Blair and Pagano (2023).

The principle of progressing after the pandemic was contained in the statement,

'Never use the pandemic as an excuse.' Organisations should, thus, seek to make progress after this period and not blame any failings on the restrictions of the period of covid. Leadership in the post pandemic environment is considered by Blair, Barratt and Pagano (2021).

Process

The marketing of new products and services and definition of the customers is mentioned. A respondent stated, 'A new brand should be defined and the appropriate customers targeted. Differentiation should occur for the market segments, as required.' The requirement to define the market image and customers is noted. The latter should be separated into discrete groups, in order to target them more accurately, in terms of offers and advertising. This should lead to improved results, in respect of sales. The use of global resources and acquisition of customers may occur, depending on the scope of the project. (The management of such

global projects is studied in Blair, Woodcock and Pagano, 2023b.)

The requirement for internal efficiency is mentioned by a respondent, who suggested, 'Organisations must avoid creating 'virtual silos', for example, using a ticketing system for queries.' The problem indicated here is that departments and teams can fail to communicate, as queries are recorded with an email that cites a 'query number ticket' and there is no dialogue on the matter. These systems could also be used for customer queries and enquiries, potentially alienating the customers with impersonal replies and lack ownership of their item. The need to develop the requisite skills in staff is noted (Blair, Woodcock and Pagano, 2023a).

One respondent said, 'Outputs can be measured but outcomes are harder to specify. Quality should be defined in order to understand this aspect of the product or service.' Output can be measured as quantities but this does not account for the quality of the products and marketing aspects. It is essential to comprehend quality and decide how this will be assessed, in order to gather feedback for the project. An improvement process can then be formulated, as required, then delivered utilising the change management models (Blair, Barratt & Pagano, 2022).
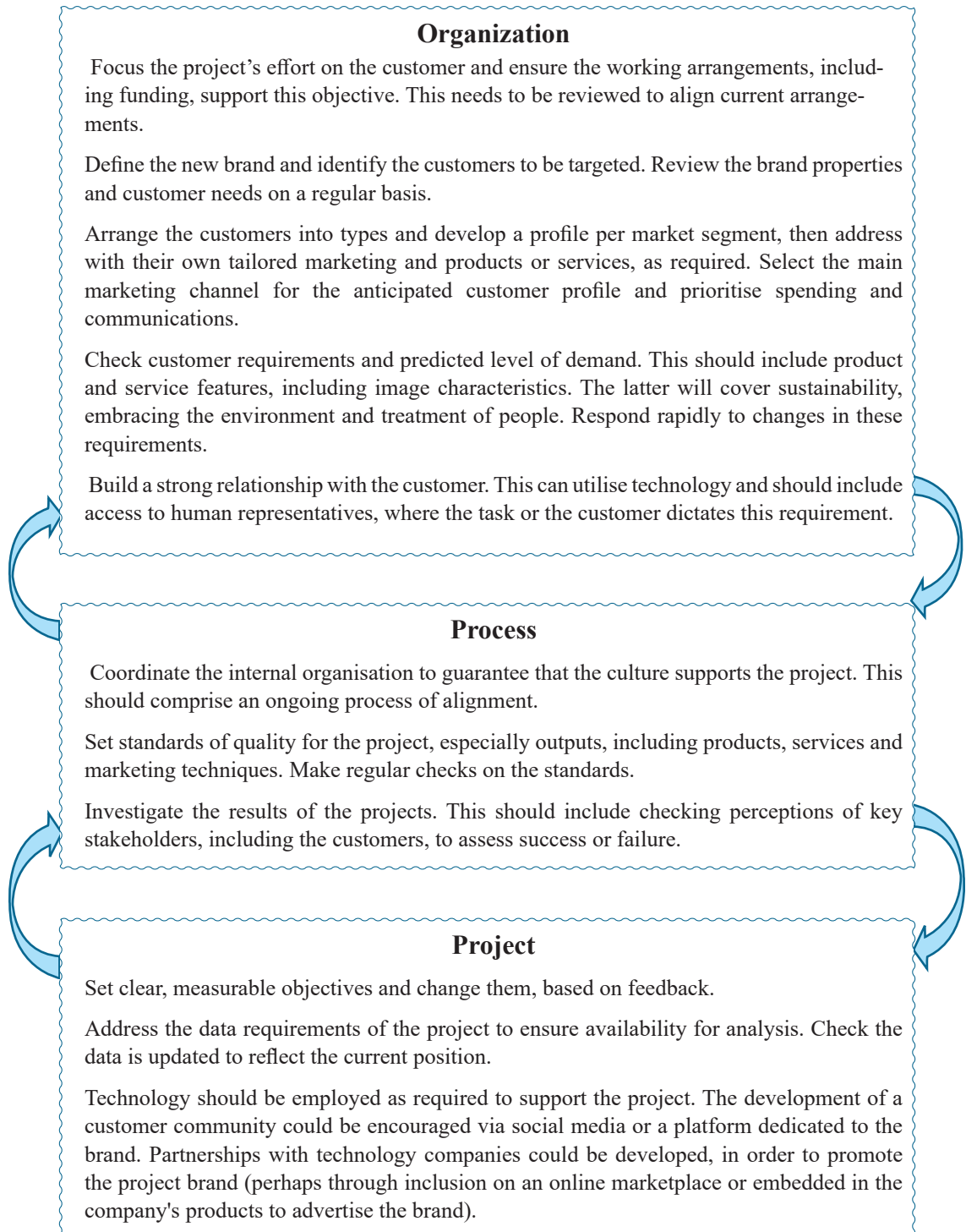
Project

One respondent stated, 'It is important to have clear, SMART objectives and understand the current issues.' The objectives of the marketing project should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely (SMART). These should, therefore, be clearly defined and quantifiable, thus capable of being measured, in the current environment.

The data requirements of the project should be addressed and a clear view of the function obtained, as stated by a respondent, 'Ensure access to internal information and audit the marketing and sales areas, in order to get the required understanding.' The data could enable technology to be applied to the project, in terms of analytics informing process improvements. This will probably involve outsourcing some of the activities to trusted partners (Blair, Woodcock and Pagano, 2022).

The need for focused enquiry was stated, as 'managers need to ask questions in order to understand why their organisation got the specific results.' It is important to analyse both success and failure. This will help to direct the organisation in a suitable response to prevailing circumstances. The aspect of framing the appropriate questions is addressed by Fantini and Narayandas (2023) and agile leadership by Blair, Barratt and Pagano (2023). There wide scope of research mainly in developing countries focusing their approach for different products such as laptop, cement and real state as investment is more in the area (Mishra & Chaudhary, 2018: Mishra & Aithal, 2021a) and even its applicability in internal project management and operation such as safety management (Mishra, Lama & Sah, 2019: Mishra & Aithal, 2021 b & c) could a new area of research for academics and professional.

Discussion

A framework to deliver 'Agile marketing projects' was developed, using the research results. This comprises the recommendations from the empirical study, supported by the literature, to assist in performing such projects. A format for learning in a project management context (McClory, et al., 2017), is utilised as an organising device. This proposes that knowledge can be acquired at different levels, during a project. These are: project; process; organisation. This article suggests that projects can possess 'triple loop learning', that comprises learning at these different levels. This learning is iterative, as each part of the project is completed then knowledge is acquired and used to inform the next part of the project. This occurs at each level and the learning can be transferred to the other levels, as appropriate. An example of the latter would be a decision to adopt more sustainable policies at the organisation level which is then implemented at the process level. The revised procedures are then utilised in the project. The recommendations from the research were categorised at these levels and presented in diagrammatic form (see Diagram 1 below).

Organization

 Focus the project's effort on the customer and ensure the working arrangements, including funding, support this objective. This needs to be reviewed to align current arrangements.

Define the new brand and identify the customers to be targeted. Review the brand properties and customer needs on a regular basis.

Arrange the customers into types and develop a profile per market segment, then address with their own tailored marketing and products or services, as required. Select the main marketing channel for the anticipated customer profile and prioritise spending and communications.

Check customer requirements and predicted level of demand. This should include product and service features, including image characteristics. The latter will cover sustainability, embracing the environment and treatment of people. Respond rapidly to changes in these requirements.

 Build a strong relationship with the customer. This can utilise technology and should include access to human representatives, where the task or the customer dictates this requirement.

Process

 Coordinate the internal organisation to guarantee that the culture supports the project. This should comprise an ongoing process of alignment.

Set standards of quality for the project, especially outputs, including products, services and marketing techniques. Make regular checks on the standards.

Investigate the results of the projects. This should include checking perceptions of key stakeholders, including the customers, to assess success or failure.

Project

Set clear, measurable objectives and change them, based on feedback.

Address the data requirements of the project to ensure availability for analysis. Check the data is updated to reflect the current position.

Technology should be employed as required to support the project. The development of a customer community could be encouraged via social media or a platform dedicated to the brand. Partnerships with technology companies could be developed, in order to promote the project brand (perhaps through inclusion on an online marketplace or embedded in the company's products to advertise the brand).

Diagram 1. A Framework for Delivering Agile Marketing Projects

Conclusion

This research proposed a framework for the delivery of 'agile marketing projects'. The objective was to contribute to theory and practice in this sphere. The potential improvement of practice in marketing is, thus, addressed. This work can be extended by interviewing a wide range of marketing academics and professionals from different sectors and other global locations.

Acknowledgments

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