Ludmila Seppälä

INTERNATIONAL SALES FORCE IN AGILE SOFTWARE COMPANY

– Management and organizational architecture

TURUN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
TURKU UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Ludmila Seppälä

INTERNATIONAL SALES FORCE IN AGILE SOFTWARE COMPANY – MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL ARCHITECTURE

The aim of this research is to collect consistent, systematic and reproducible information and methodology about a connection between Sales and Software development employing Agile principles. The goal of this work is to explore the connections between these two units in light of existing theory and available research and as a case study for commissioning company.

This thesis presents an overview of existing theory related to sales functions and its evolvement, management of sales networks with regard to company's strategy, position of sales force in the enterprise and its connection with Agile software development. Further, the question about transformation of the overall company towards agility is reviewed, including value co-creation as one of the innovation processes. Enterprise architecture, reflecting inside processes and connections together with its outside ecosystem, is reviewed with focus on the main subject of the study. ARIES framework, for architecting of the future enterprise, is used for the case study. It is one of the latest business models (2015, MIT), considering value creation as a core process of the enterprise existence and operations.

Overall conclusion about the result of the research shows that Agile Methodology helps in organizing work of Software Development department. Management of the interface between Sales and Software development needs alignment and efforts to connect them properly. The roles and targets should be defined to reflect business needs and ensure flawless cooperation between the two units.

KEYWORDS:

Sales Management, Agile Software Development, Organizational Architecture

Ludmila Seppälä

KANSAINVÄLINEN MYYNTITIIMI KETTERÄSSÄ OHJEMISTOYRITYKSESSÄ – HALLINNOINTI JA ORGANISAATIOARKKITEHTUURI

Tämän tutkimuksen päämäärä on kerätä yhdenmukaista, systemaattista ja toistettavaa tietoa myynnin ja ketterän ohjelmistokehityksen välisestä yhteydestä. Tarkoitus on tutkia näiden yksiköiden välisiä yhteyksiä olemassaolevan teorian ja tutkimuksen valossa ja tehdä tapaustutkimus toimeksiantavalle yritykselle.

Tämä opinnäytetyö esittää yleiskatsauksen olemassaolevaan teoriaan myynnin toiminnoista ja sen muuttumisesta, myyntiverkostojen hallinnoinnista huomioiden yhtiön strategian, myyntitiimin sijoittumiseen yrityksessä ja suhteeseen ketterän ohjelmistokehityksen kanssa. Lisäksi arvioidaan kysymystä yrityksen muuttumisesta kettäräksi, sisältäen arvon yhteiskehityksen osana innovaatioprosesseja. Yritysarkkitehtuurin sisäiset prosessit ja yhteydet ulkoiseen ekosysteemiin arvioidaan keskittyen tutkimuksen päämäärään. Tutkimuksen viitekehyksenä käytetään ARIES-viitekehystä tulevaisuuden yrityksen suunnitteluun. Se on yksi viimeisimmistä liiketoimintamalleista (2015, MIT), pitäen arvon luomista yrityksen olemassaolon ja operaatioiden ydintoimintona.

Yleinen johtopäätös tutkielman tuloksista näyttää että ketterät menetelmät auttavat ohjelmistokehitysosaston työn organisoimisessa. Myynnin ja ohjelmistokehityksen yhtymäkohtien hallitseminen vaatii kohdistamista ja vaivannäköä. Roolit ja päämäärät pitää määritellä heijastamaan yrityksen tarpeita ja varmistamaan täydellisen yhteistyön näiden kahden yksikön välillä.

ASIASANAT:

Myynnin hallinnointi, ketterä ohjelmistokehitys, organisaatioarkkitehtuuri

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Agile Methods	Methods of Software Development in accordance with Agile Manifesto (Beck et al. 2001)
BO	Business Owner, role in Scrum process to present business needs for the product(s)
b2b	Business to business
CAS	Complex Adaptive System
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
PO	Product Owner, role in Scrum process to present product related needs
Sales force	A number of salespeople employed and/or managed directly by the company
Scrum	An agile project management method, that has specific set of rules and roles to define how team or a project should work
SME	Small and medium size enterprise

1 INTRODUCTION

Software engineering emerged at the middle of the 20th century as a part of computer science and by the end of it became a separate art on its own and the profession for millions. There are about 18.2 million software developers worldwide, a number that is due to rise to 26.4 million by 2019, a 45% increase, says Evans Data Corp. in its Global Developer Population and Demographic Study (P. Thibodeau, 2013). With the growing number of software developers (software development firms, projects and people involved), the need for effective management principles and tools for software development process emerged. This demanded a new approach and methodology from business researchers and managers. The popularity of Agile Software Development Methods started about a decade ago when in 2001 The Manifesto for Agile Software Development (Beck et al. 2001) was published. It was a result of collective efforts of many programmers practicing different techniques and software research; it was a milestone in Software Development world. The continuously growing attention to Agile Methods from software development specialists confirms that these methods filled the gap for the management techniques in the software development field.

Over the last ten years Agile Methods have reached the mainstream: according to the Forrester study, 35% of the respondents stated that agile most closely reflect their development methods (West & Grant 2010). A significant number of academic research was performed in the areas such as changes in performance of software development using Agile Methods or Scaling Agile for large companies and teams. One of the modern trends is an attempt to apply Agile Methodology for project management, marketing, sales and other activities. Agility is considered as one of the most important qualities of the business processes and the term of Agile Enterprise slowly penetrates business and academic world.

Sales Force is a more established field of research; it probably emerged at the

same time as first enterprises came. Over time, it evolved and changed its meaning. In our days, most attention gets Sales in complex b2b fields, where sales process is rather a consultative collaboration than a direct sales action.

The aim of this research is to collect consistent, systematic and reproducible information and methodology about a connection between Sales and Software development employing Agile principles. The goal of this work is to explore Sales Force in the Software Company using Agile Principles for development in light of existing theory and available research and as a case study for commissioning company. To fulfill this purpose, three main areas would need to be explored: Sales Force management, Agile Software Development and the cross connections of these. On its own, each area is rather well researched. There are many consistent academic works exploring the management of sales force or Agile Software Development. Cross connection of these two areas is less explored and, therefore, presents interest. Thus, the important part of this work is a careful selection of sources and correct definition of the limitations where each theory could be applied.

The research questions of this work are formulated in order from simpler ones to more complex. At first, the functions of the sales force are reviewed and change trends explored, Further, the management techniques and trends for the management of sales force and the place of the sales force in the organization are discussed. After, Agile Software Development and its connections with sales are investigated. The last part of the research targets models of the future enterprise and transformation of the company towards agility. Previous studies' overview forms theoretical part of the research, where each chapter is dedicated to separate research question, starting from a defining function of Sales Force, its management and position inside the company and ending with possible ways to connect with Agile Software Development process and the way to handle innovation process via value co-creation.

The empirical part of the study is dedicated to a commissioned case study. Ob-

jectives of the case study were to gather structured relevant theoretical research, perform analysis of the current situation in the company, compare findings with theories and develop the possible implementation plan for improvement of the connection between the parts of the company. By means of this improvement the company aims to achieve its targets in growth (new customers acquisition, existing customers retention and satisfaction) and in sustainable expansion of the company's product portfolio.

2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research purpose and area

The research was commissioned by the company X. The research topic was decided together with the senior management and reflected current problems the company was facing. Research objective is to understand and improve connection between Sales Force and Software Development. In the last couple of years, since Agile Methodology was applied to Software development process, the company achieved high level of transparency in the process of developing new functionalities. Also the speed of bringing new features and products to the market was noticeably faster. However sales department still operate as before without any notable increase of closed sales deals or greater sales intake. Questions arise if sales should apply the same Agile Methods, and if so how it could be done. Sales role is critical in bringing into the company new clients and managing existing ones. By improving the connection between two main parts of the company, the sales cycle is expected to speed up and better transparency to be provided in account management of existing customers.

To achieve this goal, research aims to provide an overview of currently existing literature on the topic, collect data about the company and analyze it in a structured way. Based on the analysis alternatives for the implementation plans are to be developed, for further considerations of the senior management.

Research area lays on the crossing of the following fields: Sales Force Management, Knowledge Management, Innovation Management, Agile Software Development, Cross-Functional Collaboration, and Organizational Behavior and Design.

Research area is limited to SMEs b2b companies, operating in the field of software products and services development, globally in the international markets.

2.2 Research methodology

The research project presents itself as a theory-driven deductive research. Firstly, objectives of the research are established and research questions refined. Further, these research questions are used to structure the theoretical research part and to establish the basis for the case study.

Practical meaning of this thesis is to make theoretical research about the subject, to collect data for the case study company and make suggestions for the company management, based on differences or similarities between theoretical findings and obtained survey results. This data would serve as a basis for implementation proposals about further organizational changes.

In the theoretical part, literature overview is presented. Special attention was given to the relevance between the sources and the research questions, research limitations, and time of publication of the source research. This way research mostly relies on relatively recent academic knowledge (mostly dated from 2007 to 2015) and one of the latest models (from 2015) to provide contemporariness with the current challenges of the company. Agile principles are relatively new in academic research and sales environment changes very rapidly in the IT era. New trends come almost every year, and therefore the most recent possible literature was selected to reflect the current business environment.

The empirical part of the research is made as a case study. Within the case study, it is possible to take into account the whole ecosystem of the problem. It is possible to review many influencing factors and ensure that the problem is not over simplified. Influencing factors include stakeholders for the particular issues, company background, company targets, and strategy, as well as opinions and beliefs of involved people. A case study explores a research topic within its context (Saunders 2012, 179). Data for the case study was collected from an online survey of target group inside the company and from direct participant

observation. The advantages that come with Internet survey include speed, low cost, data quality and removal of interviewer bias (Malhotra & Birks 2007, 275). The main challenge in primary data connection concerns closeness to the organization and process. It requires strict control over the data to exclude personal opinion and emotions. One the most important issues for insider researchers, especially in case they want to stay and progress in the organization, is managing organizational politics (Saunders 2009, 328). The level of managerial efforts in case of connection between two parts of the company dictates how carefully the study should be presented. In the natural inside company process, it would mean applying the build influencing approach. It requires collecting information and listening, addressing hidden motives and lobbying to achieve a common understanding. However with case study performed on request of the management is more of push approach, when a possible ready solution is presented. This might affect the perception of the researcher by colleagues.

Table 1 presents a summary of the advantages and disadvantage of participant observation.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• It is good at explaining 'what is going on' in particular social situations • It heightens the researcher's awareness of significant social processes • It is particularly useful for researchers working within their own organisations • Some participant observation affords the opportunity for the researcher to the experience 'for real' the emotions of those who are being researched • Virtually all data collected are useful	• It can be very time consuming • It can pose difficult ethical dilemmas for the researcher • There can be high levels of role conflict for the researcher (e.g. 'colleague' versus researcher) • The closeness of the researcher to the situation being observed can lead to significant observer bias • The participant observer role is a very demanding one, to which not all researchers will be suited • Access to organisations may be difficult • Data recording is often very difficult for the researcher

Table 1 Advantages and disadvantages of participant observation (Saunders 2012, 355).

Additional factor that influences research methodology is observant bias, therefore the main focus of the research work in empirical part was limited to research objectives. Any personal opinion or other related factors were left outside of the research conclusions as much as possible.

2.3 Research questions

The research questions were formulated to explore the subject of the research from simple revising of sales task and role towards more complex organizational architecture topics. The term architecture is used to reflect the process of the company design, how it operates and lives inside its ecosystem, instead of simply organizational structure. In the organizational structure, the formal chart of the company presented the option of leaving many processes outside of the view. Firstly, the function and its changes of the Sales Force explored how Sales should be organized internally and what is its place within the company. The function of the Sales Force means what actually Sales Force does, what is its role and impact in the company. At the same time, changes in the Sales environment and trends in Sales Team management are explored. Secondly, basics of Agile Principles and how software development process could be connected with Sales activities are reviewed. In the last part of the research, Agile Enterprise principles are reviewed and the framework for changes in the enterprise architecture is presented.

The research questions are formulated as follows:
- What are the functions of sales force within the company?
- How to organize and manage sales network with regard to company's strategy?
- What is the place of sales force in the enterprise architecture?
- How to connect Agile Software Development and sales operations?
- What makes the company agile or lean enterprise, model of the future enterprise?

2.4 Research design

Each part of the theoretical research corresponds to one research question. In the end of the theoretical part, a summary of the literature review is formulated. This summary makes a foundation for the questionnaire and the case study research. Simplified research structure is presented in Picture 1.
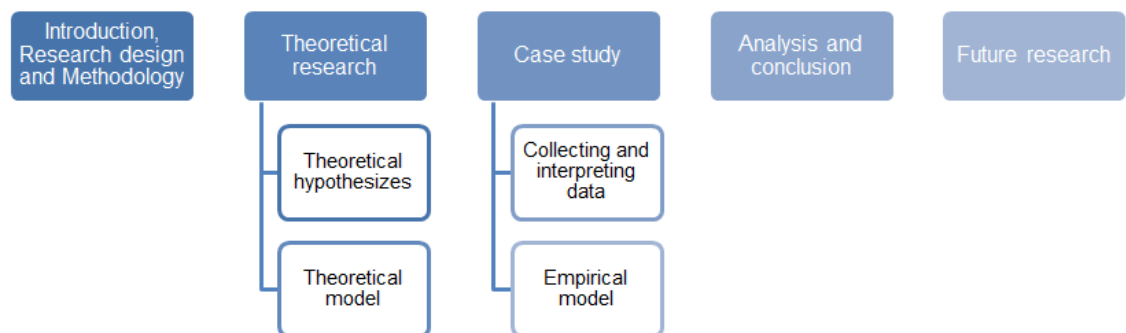
Picture 1 Research structure (Seppälä, 2015).

In the theoretical part, a model and a framework are selected to be used as a guideline for the case study. Data obtained from the survey provides the big part of the input for the framework, additional data is obtained via direct participant observation.

3 THEORETICAL RESEARCH

3.1 Functions of sales force

This chapter aims to find theoretical background for the research question: *What are the functions of sales force within the company?-* by examining key responsibilities of sales force in everyday operations, changes in sales tasks and environment, and requirements for sales force coming from the company's strategy.

3.1.1 Key functions of sales

The function of selling is to close sales (Jobber & Lancaster 2009, 4). Moncrief and Marshall (2005) note that job description of sales positions includes typical primary role set: customer retention, building and maintaining customer relationships, problem-solving and satisfying customer needs. It could be said that the primary role of the sales person is to focus on the interactions with the customer (Flaherty 2011, 54). Salesforce serves as a front line and the connection interface between the company and its potential and existing customers. Due to such position, sales force have the best possibility to understand and communicate customer's needs to a company, and need to stretch creativity to match it with company's possibilities. According to The Sales Educators 2006, the sales function is the natural home for entrepreneurship in a company. Because of their "boundary-spanner" role in the organization, the sales force can gather important market information as customer's product preferences, competitor's new product and promotional strategies, current and potential distributor information, and point-of-purchase promotional effectiveness (Thietart & Vivas, 1981).

Another important role of the sales force, as Lee (2006, 106) stipulates, is to transfer learned information about the customers' needs and preferences to the

product development. Picture 2 summarizes, in general, case the flow of information going through sales force as the interface between the company and its customers. Information, obtained by sales force during interaction with customers and other market players, needs to be interpreted and filtered for the company's needs. In this context, the important role for the sales force, as boundary spanners, is to protect the organization from information overload by filtering, interpreting, and channeling relevant information to appropriate functional departmental areas inside the company (Rangarajan et al. 2004). Salesforce could be compared to a membrane, on the border of two mediums, letting through some particles, but keeping away others. This is where the intelligence of salespeople is tested; they need to be able to identify on the spot what kind of information is worth transferring further, what is repeating already known experience and when a customer is simply over asking. The last one also happens quite often, when some dreamer asks for "a red button" to get all the work done at once, instead of discussing the realistic case.
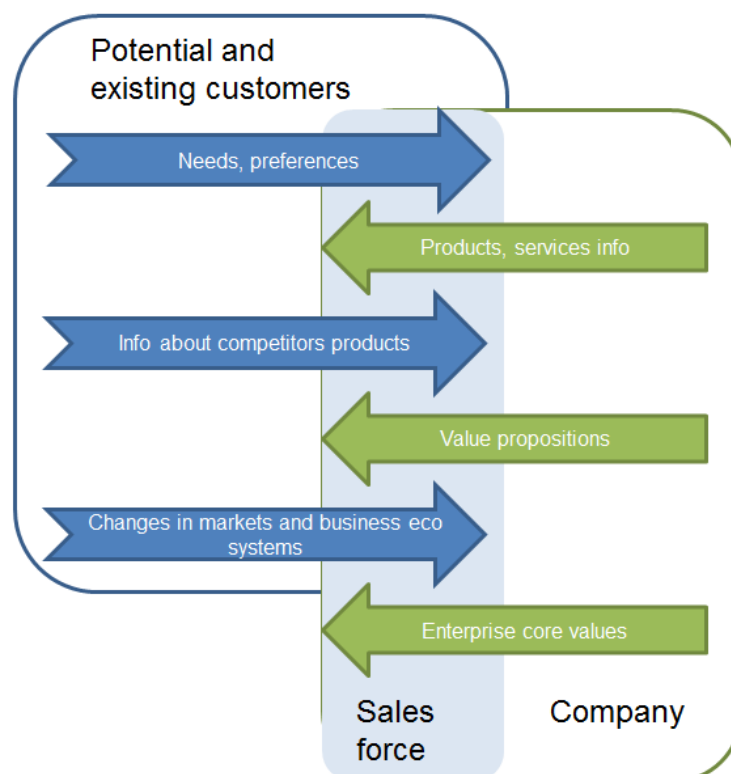
Picture 2 Sales force as an interface between company and potential and existing customers, map of information exchange (Seppälä 2015).

As it was discussed above, the strategically important role of the sales force is to receive the information from the customers and company's outside media (competitor's products, changing markets). Another typical role of the sales force is to present customer's interests to the company. Often, salespeople give promises and engage themselves into a certain relationship with the customers. They commit to providing some value or products or features and, therefore, have some share of personal responsibility. This lead to difficult part of sales process, on one side salespeople need to give some promise to the customer, on the other hand they don't have 100% insurance that the company will provide this value, There might be some delays, internal politics or even simply misunderstanding of product features by sales, all this could lead to customer non-satisfaction and the sales person will be the one to blame personally.

To achieve its goals, salespeople use various techniques and often these require an advanced level of interpersonal communication skills. Lately increased use of technology, made it possible to handle sales online and almost eliminate direct contact between salespeople and customers in case of bulk sales and retail products, leaving complex b2b products outside this shift in business environment. Personal sales interaction remains one the most powerful tool in almost all complex b2b areas. The sales person can answer the questions and overcome objections, make an impression, presentations can be customized for customer needs, sales arguments can be more fine-tuned, and relationships can be built (Jobber & Lancaster, 2009).

Value-based selling, the most commonly used technique in sales, is defined as salesperson behavioral mode, when he concentrates on generating customer value. In consultative and value-based sales, the sales effort creates new value and provides additional benefits beyond the product itself (Piercy & Lane 2011, 28). The meaning of sales is not only to interact with the customers but also to close deals, to negotiate terms and to make agreements. Interacting with the customers is rather a method to achieve company's goals, in simple interpretation, the closing of sales. While people often refer to "sales magic" for closing

the deals, it would be more accurate to say that closing of sales is a matter of time and would happen in a predictable way, if sales person possess sufficient knowledge about product or service offered, correctly communicate its value and adapt value proposition to customer's needs and background.. Adapting of value proposition could be interpreted as a change event: sales person need to modify proposed value (by means of crafted argumentation or by the change in offered product or service). This issue is discussed further in the part related to agile sales.

3.1.2 The changing sales environment

Sales process changes constantly and especially because of increasing role of using new IT possibilities for sales, such as CRM, online systems for ordering, targeting of sales messages using social networks and other online tools. If we consider selling activities as a business process, automation by means of IT infrastructure has been well researched by academics. Many modern tools, such as Salesforce, or LEAN) effectively simplify the work of salespeople. Online ordering system expected to dramatically reduce the hours salespeople spend for routine administrative tasks. In this situation, organizational change caused by employing such systems has been driven largely by economic factors – such as the cost of conventional selling activities compared to electronic alternatives (Piercy & Lane, 2011, 33). This kind of change is one of the most evident factors in the changing sales environment. Yet, however, there are several other factors that impact changes inside sales process and sales environment.

Another factor for changes in the tasks of sales force relates to changes in customer's behavior. Customer's behavioral patterns evolve: accessibility of information about products and experiences of its use give the possibility to avoid receiving this information from salespeople. Customer's become more educated and does not need salespeople just for presenting their products, but to present solutions to their problems. A report by Chally (2006) presented the views of

corporate purchasers and their expectations for the relationship with the supplier's salesperson.

Most desired characteristics of salesperson, resulting from this survey, are:

1. personal accountability for the buyer's desired results
2. understanding the customer's business
3. customer advocacy
4. designing the right applications
5. accessibility
6. problem-solving
7. Creativity in responding to customer needs

This report presents the picture of the customers' environment which is very different from a traditional transactional selling approach and explains contemporary challenges faced by salesforce. An interesting finding from this report is that customers are increasingly unwilling to spend time with suppliers, who do not understand the business, and who see it as the customer's job to educate the seller's people (H.R. Chally, 2006). It is expected that salespeople come with a readily prepared solution for customer's problems. In real life, this is more than the difficult task, at large scale, companies are not going around talking about their problems. This means that salespeople have to know the business areas, current situation in the markets, possibilities of the products they offer and be flexible to apply argumentation depending on the current case. They cannot simply come to the customer and ask what kind of problems they encounter. In its turn, this means that salespeople have no possibility to use "the Build" approach involving customers into value co-creation. But on the longer run, once trust between salespeople and the customer is established, it is the possible approach, since the customers are genuinely interested to get the solution for their particular cases.

The last reason behind the changing environment is the ever-evolving complexity of products and solutions required. The changing role of sales force reflects this constantly increasing the complexity of products and also values of the so-

ciety. Table 2 adapted from Shapiro et al. (1998) present evolution of the sales tasks. Verbeke, Dienz and Verwaal (2011, 425) speculate that change in the global environment leads to "salespeople take on more of knowledge brokering role, transferring know-why (the science behind the products/services) and know-how (what salespeople learn when a market segment uses products/services) to customers". This leads to a more customer-centric relationship between the company and its customers.

Old approach emphasizes:	Necessary new approach emphasizes:
Getting new accounts	Retaining existing accounts
Getting the order	Becoming the preferred supplier
Pressuring the company to cut prices	Pricing for profit
Giving service to get sales	Understanding cost implications and
Managing all accounts in the same way	Managing each account for maximum
Selling to anyone	long term profitability
	Concentrating on the high profit potential accounts

Table 2 Evolution in the sales tasks (Shapiro et al. 1998, 8).

As companies go to market with increasingly complex bundles of products and services, their representatives cease to be mere order takes and become relationship managers (Steward 2006, 10). Slowly, role of sales force changes towards managing relationship with customers and key account management. At the same time, "selling to anyone" tactic cannot provide predictability and needs to be replaced with strategic "concentrate on the high profit accounts". As Lee (2011) suggest, to enable salespeople to meet the rising expectation of customers, and cope with demands of globalization, increased technology use and the changing social environment, salespeople must focus their primary energies on the most profitable customers. Smith et al. (2013, 356) goes further and suggests that, sales organizations are confronted with an increasingly complex

and fast evolving selling environment, where they must demonstrate their agility in navigating complexity and ability to generate unique value propositions.

3.1.3 Agile sales

Agility means being flexible and nimble, quick to respond, and quick to consider change that departs from past choices: For salespeople this means that they are willing to consider new facts and evidence, change direction, and consider adjustments to strategy (Chonko & Jones, 2011, 519).

Agility of sales is often mistaken with adaptive selling. Sales person, employing adaptive selling techniques, need to adapt their behavior and the message during interaction with the customer. Sales force agility means the ability for salespeople to craft value proposition even before the change request is explicitly demanded by the customer. As Chonko and Jones (2011) describe, agility is an ability to be more than adaptive, it requires ability to anticipate customers' needs. In the same work, parallel between handling change management and agile selling is drawn. The better sales person could handle the change, required by the customer, the closer he would be to agile selling. Mastered level of agility would mean handling of change as a non-event. When rapid change occurs, capturing new potential requires agility to develop new value propositions in anticipation of customers' changing needs: change loses its event status and takes on a fluid motion for the sales person (ibid).

Picture 3 presents a framework for understanding the salesforce agility; it is made in a typical framework of connected "providers", "enablers" and "drivers". Need for agility originate from the customers, competition, changes in technology and markets and this needs to be sensed by sales force. On the other hand organization should provide possibility for sales force to be agile by means of organizational structure, culture, tools and products. When these enablers and

providers are available, sales force need to integrate existing value propositions with agility-driven ones.
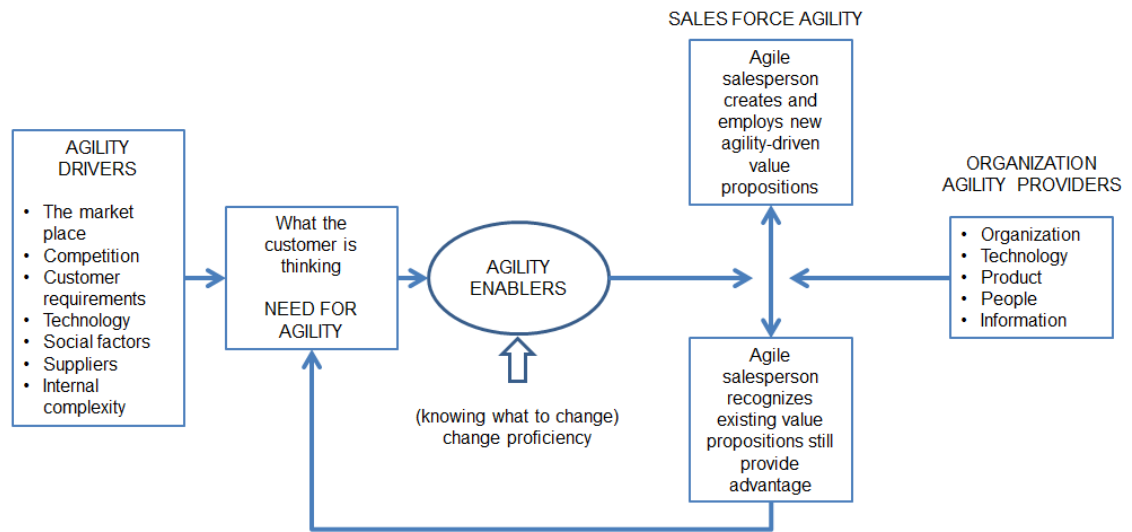
Picture 3. A framework for understanding the sales force's need for agility in the consideration of offering new value propositions. (Chonko & Jones 2011, 520).

Agile salespeople recognize that the greatest value often lies outside the bounds of products and services, what they are selling (Chonko & Jones 2011, 522). Such understanding requires a foundation of deep knowledge of company's products, understanding customers' business and needs, and a wide interpretation of company's strategy. Salespeople need to possess this knowledge and be able to manipulate it as needed. This way, sales act as a continuous integrator of knowledge from different fields and sources.

When Chonko & Jones (2011, 529) analyze source of agility for Sales Force, they use the same "building blocks" of the company, as almost any other business model. Their conclusion is that agility of Sales Force could be found mostly in exploration-driven value propositions, due to lack of flexibility in other strategic elements. Summary of Strategy-Agility Challenge is presented in the Table 3.

Purpose/Values Management tenets	The organization's reason for existence, along with the core values that provide meaning to activity over the long-run, along with the constraints, polices, and rules of the organization
Strategy	The "what" and "how" the organization as it fulfils its purpose. Strategy is often slow to change
Resources	Knowledge, skills, core processes that are used to implement strategy over time. These can be reconfigured to create new value propositions
Structure	Allows for internal relationships and interactions. Sales support and service personnel, for example, must be aligned to offer new value and new value proposition
Sales/Customer interface	"real-time" information provided by customers to salespeople and other customer contacts personnel. Customer information about change in customer's needs, wants, and preferences may be inconsistent with the selling firm's strategy
Value proposition	The offering that has value based on a combination of strategy and customer circumstances in "real-time"

Table 3 The Strategy-Agility Challenge (Chonko & Jones 2011, 530).

The great paradox in today's selling environment is that "salespeople are expected to be both flexible and steadfast in their strategic thinking" (Chonko & Jones, 2011, 519). Sales force need to be responsive for change needs, but at the same time stay within working value proposition network defined by firm – the context within which firm identifies and responds to the customer's needs, solves problems, reacts to competitors, and seeks profit (ibid, 531).

3.1.4 Strategic sales

Sales force is not anymore just a tactical operation responsible for executing strategies created by others. Indeed Piercy & Lane (2011) argue that a strategy building role is critical in importance of sales involvement in the generation and evaluation of marketing and business strategy. This explains the origin of the bias of sales force role: strategizing info about the customers for the company versus staying within the limits of company value proposition strategy. Demanding customers require more and more, and this needs to be reflected in the company strategy. But on the other hand, salespeople cannot satisfy all the

demands simply because it might be not company's field. For example, customer buying software, might as well require hardware to be supplied at the same time by the same supplier. This could be handled by

Complexity of b2b products, escalating competition and enhancements of IT infrastructures change the point of view to sales, from considering it just a tactical to strategical issue. It calls for managing customer relationships and value co-creation approach. As Piercy & Lane (2011) summarizes: strategic customer management focuses on the shift from sales as a tactical activity, concerned only with implementing business and marketing strategy, to a strategic process that aligns corporate resources with customer needs and confronts complex, important, and hard decisions about investment in customers and the risks in dependence on major customers. Perhaps, for smaller companies, where sales are directly driven by strategy and even often performed by the same people who define company's strategy, this is evident. However, this is often forgotten issue when company grows and scales its operations. Often sales considered as almost independent operation of the company, and has little, if any, influence to strategic directions.

Strategic decisions of management should be reinforced by organization design to force sales into needed direction. For example, if company wants to enter a new market or bring a new product to existing customers, it is essential to tailor sales strategy to stimulate execution of new strategy. Without proper organizational design, reflecting company strategy, salespeople would tend to concentrate their efforts on the easiest targets. Especially in cases when reward programs designed to stimulate sales intake exclusively.

3.2 Management of sales network with regard to the company's strategy

Second part of the theoretical overview attempts to find current knowledge about management of sales networks and find an answer to following question:

How to organize and manage sales network with regard to company's international strategy?

3.2.1 Sales force organizational structure

"Sales force structure decisions ultimately affect company results by directly influencing salespeople and their activities" (Zoltners et al. 2011a, 135). Sales Force structure is one of the critical factors to be taken into account for achieving company's goals. There are several possibilities for approaching structuring of sales departments, and below main ones are explored.

Sales Force Structure	Sales Force Systems, Programs, and Processes	
	Sales force size	Sales manager selection
	Territory alignment	Data and tools
	Recruiting	Incentive compensation
	Training	Goal setting
	Culture	Performance management
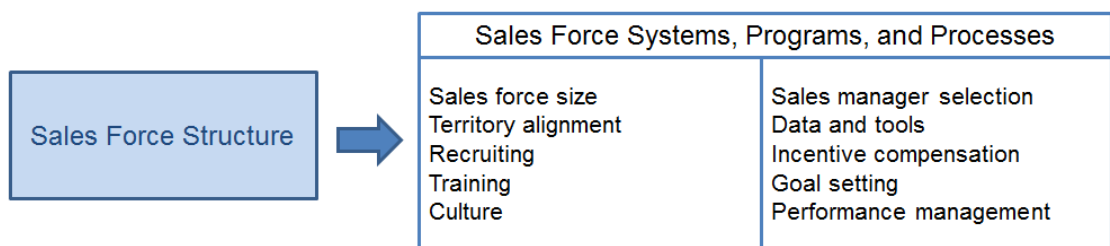
Picture 4 The influence of Sales Force Structure on Sales Force Systems, Programs, and Processes (Zoltners et al. 2011a, 136).

Picture 4 summarizes factors affecting sales structure, where sales force size, territory alignment, tools and culture are among the main ones.

One of the main questions, concerning sales force structure is division of sales responsibilities between salespeople. This could be territory or area responsibilities or product related responsibilities. As company's product portfolio and complexity of products grow, it becomes more difficult for sales persons to stay up-to-date with all the new features and changes in the value proposition. On the other hand, international markets require extensive travelling to meet customers that also take significant share of salespeople time. These factors affect decisions about structuring Sales Force.

Zoltners et al. (2011a) introduce definition of sales person brandwidth – the limit to how many products, sales activities, and types of customers an individual salesperson can understand and be effective with. The brandwith cannot be calculated or defined precisely, but could be estimated based on understanding of company's strategic goals, products portfolio, types of customers, and markets. Possible approaches for the company with several products and wide sales territory are generalists - salespeople selling all the products of the company in certain territory (geographical or just certain defined number of clients), or specialists – salespeople selling only one particular product, but without strict limitation by the area. Picture 5 presents a framework for understanding specialist versus generalist specialization.
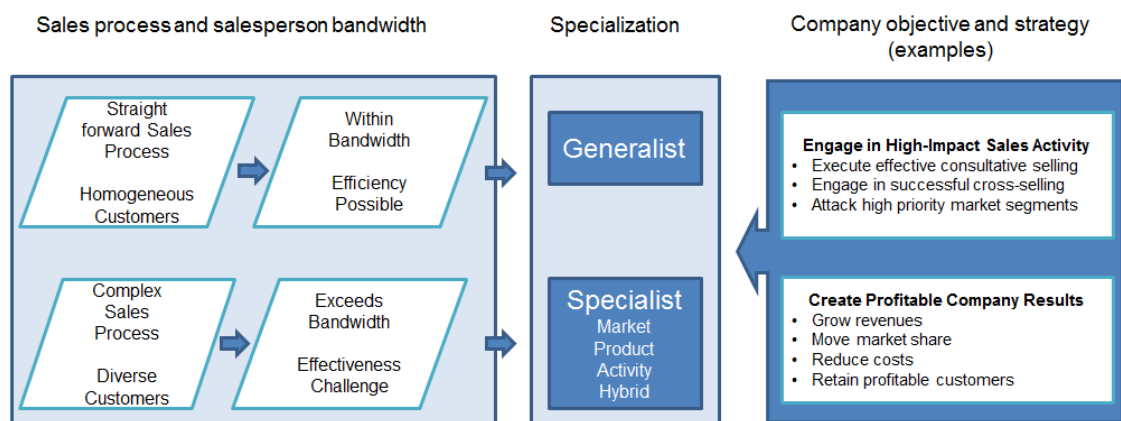
Picture 5. A Framework that guides the Specialization Decision (Zoltners et al. 2011a, 138).

Decision about generalists or specialists in salesforce affect reporting structure as well. two main alternatives are presented On picture 6: one where product division dominates and the other one where regional division dominates product division. Third possibility is so called hybrid, when there are two teams, specialist dealing with several areas and sales persons taking care of one defined area and receiving support from product specialists. The customer intimacy and effectiveness that hybrid specialization can create for a company can be significant source of competitive advantage, but requires processes, systems, and team-oriented sales culture to manage complexity (Zoltners et al., 2011a, 154).

Other possible arrangement is mirrored territories, when for example the same product specialist works on several territories taken care by several market or industry specialist salespeople. Such arrangement facilitates team work and knowledge sharing, making possibility to achieve greater awareness about customer's needs.
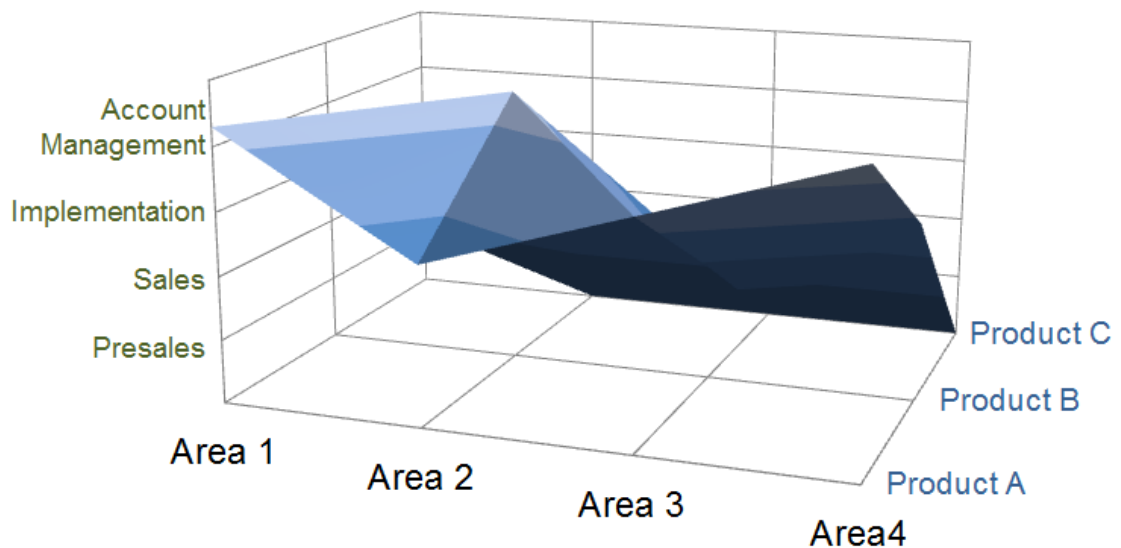
Picture 6. 3-dimensional background for sales: product lines, geographical areas and activities (Seppälä, 2015).

In general case, company's strategy is international, it means that since salespeople need to be close to the customers geographically, they would have to be located close by or travel regularly. The need for close connection with the customers could be achieved either by travelling, or by growing local presence, making partnerships, relocating people or hiring local representatives and establishing local offices. Approach with generalists provides possibility to facilitate travel efficiency, while specialists could achieve deeper understanding and contact with clients and provide technical expertise. Hybrid structure appears to be very effective, but requires additional managerial effort to support team work. No matter what structure is employed, it is important to keep in mind that as business matures and business's needs change, sales force structure need to evolve. In this case hybrid structure is the most flexible and change-friendly,

because salespeople don't become too "attached" to their areas (Zoltners et al. 2011a, 155).
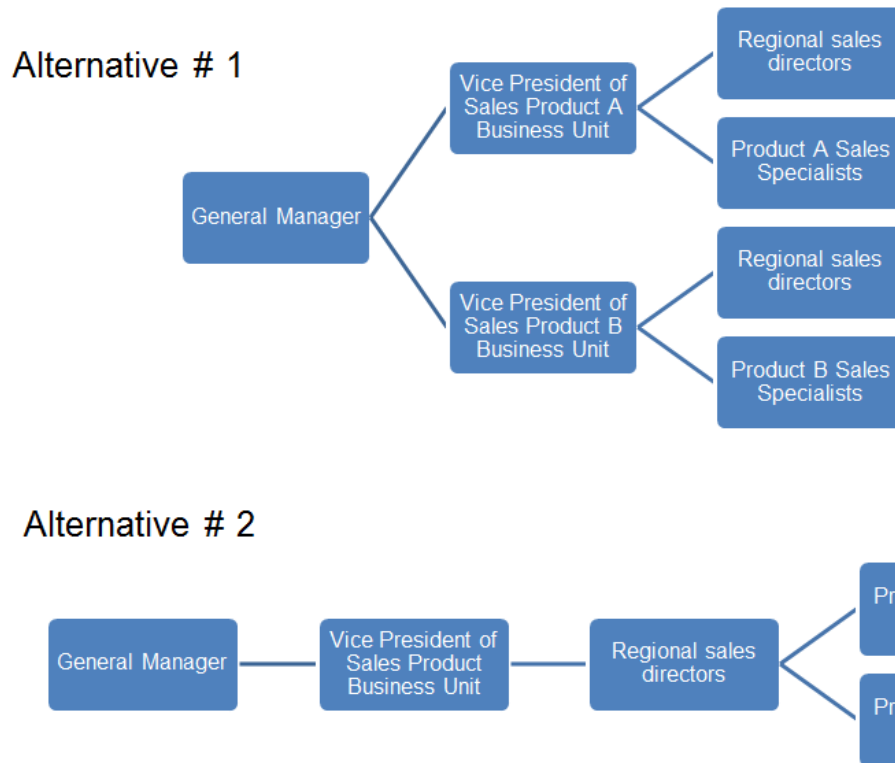
Picture 7. Two Alternative Reporting Structures for a Sales Force Product Specialists (Zoltners et al. 2011a, 133).

Often customers become more knowledgeable and savvy as market matures, and may no longer require the specialized sales force support that was needed when the market was new (Zoltners et al. 2011a, 167). While in new markets it is essential to have specialized salespeople, who have needed knowledge about products, values and markets. When market situation matures, this could be changed for generalists (ibid).

Decision about specializing salesforce lies in 3-dimensional background formed by products, markets and activities sales force performs. Picture 6 visualizes this background. Depending of the company's goals and possibilities, it is pos-

sible to combine all three dimensions in generalists' knowledge or provide enough people to specialize in each dimension.

As said before, structure of sales force and decision about specialization of salespeople needs to be re-evaluated often. As business evolves and responds to ongoing challenges and opportunities, sales force structure change is inevitable (ibid, 166).

3.2.2 Size and territory design

Both, the right size and the territory design are critical to sales force operations and management process. Determining the right sales force size for the comp and level of coverage is critical to maximizing profits (Zoltners et al. 2011b, 289). Undersized sales force leads to overload of salespeople that might have negative impact on orders intake. When salespeople are too busy, customers might feel lack of attention to their needs and some important opportunities might stay unaddressed. Across companies and industries, territory potential is often a better predictor of territory sales than any other characteristics, including the salespersons' experience, ability, or effort (Lucas, Weinberg, and Clowes 1975, Ryans and Weinberg 1979, 1987, Zoltners et al 2011b, 299).

Sales force size is traditionally considered as very difficult parameter to estimate. Zoltners et al. 2011b suggest that following methods to determining if the size of salesforce is sufficient for company's goals:

1. Customer test can provide insights on how customers see company's salesforce, do they get needed attention, is it easy to reach salespeople, picture 8 presents main ides of such test.

What would customers say about your sales force?

If the sales force is too small

- My sales person is not available to meet my needs
- I can't reach my sales person when I need him
- I am considering switching to a supplier that will give me better service
- I don't know who my salesperson is
- I can't recall seeing my sales person in a long time

If the sales force is too big

- My sales person is a pest
- I avoid meeting with my salesperson and I don't return his phone calls
- I prefer to get what I need through the company's literature, web site, or telesales group
- Is all attention I'm getting showing up in my price?

Picture 8 The Customer Test of Sales Force Size. (Zoltners et al. 2011b, 284)

2. Sales Force Morale Test, checks when there are too many or too few salespeople and in salesforce morale suffers, picture 9 presents this test.

What would your good salespeople say about their job?

If the sales force is too small

- I barely have enough time to take orders, let alone determine how customer needs might be changing or provide solutions to these needs.
- I'm overworked
- I have too much travel and I'm never home
- My quota is too high – I'll never achieve it, no matter how hard I work

If the sales force is too big

- I don't have enough customers to make good money in my territory
- Opportunity is spread too thin
- I'm no longer stimulated by my work

Picture 9 The Sales Force Morale Test of Sales Force Size. (Zoltners et al. 2011b, 284)

3. Selling Activities Test – how salespeople spend their time, how much time spend contacting with customers versus routine support tasks, it is summarized in picture 10.

How do salespeople spend their time?

If the sales force is too small

- Salespeople struggle just to keep up with basic tasks like order taking
- Sales people rarely probe customers; they lack the time needed to develop complete solutions
- Sales people spend too little time with important customers
- Sales people spend too little time prospecting for new customers
- Sales territories are very large and sales people spend too much time travelling

If the sales force is too big

- Salespeople spend too much time on non-critical activities (administrative tasks, internal meetings, paperwork)
- Salespeople spend too much time on activities that should be performed by others within the company, such as handling customer service problems
- Salespeople spend too much time with small, low potential customers

Picture 10. The Selling Activites Test of Sales Force Size. (Zoltners et al. 2011b, 284)

4. Competitive Position Test – compare with other competitors investments in sales force and their results. This test requires data about the company's product sales and number of salespeople, but also the same data form the competitors. Such data is often difficult to obtain.

5. Financial Test is a break-even analysis where annual cost of a salesperson compared with estimate of the gross contribution and ROI compared. This test is also demanding to required data and need significant calculations.

Sales force size depends on complexity of products, international strategy, company's goals in new markets, competitive density and external economic outlook. Due to complexity of factors influencing effectiveness of the sales force and external nature of these, often decisions about sales force size are based on common sense rather than on analytical data. There are several market-based sales force sizing models, which were developed over the years.

For example, one of the latest ones, presented by Zoltners, Sinha and Lorimer (2011) based on four different approaches: Activity-Based Analysis, Pipeline Analysis, Target-Return-per-Call Analysis, and Sales Response Analysis. All these methods provide tools for decisions about sales force size based on facts and analysis of data, instead of manager's gut feeling that is used very often.

Territory design affects the need for salespeople travelling. Which on its turn affect travelling costs, travelling time and work load of the salespeople. Poor territory design makes it impossible for the sales force to give all valuable customers the attention they deserve and, at the same time, underutilizes many talented salespeople (Zoltners et al., 2011, 297).

When leaders underestimate the importance of the differences in sales territories potential and treat salespeople as if their territories were identical, sales force morale suffers (Zoltners, Sinha and Lorimer 2011a, 299).
Companies often make the mistake of designing sales territories around the needs and desires of individual salespeople, while sales territories are best designed form a customer and company perspective first; then the salespeople can be wisely matched with jobs that are consistent with long-term business needs (Zoltners, Sinha and Lorimer 2011a, 299).

Territory design has other important influence, not all geographical areas contain same level of sales opportunities. Therefore management concern should be to design territories responsibilities in such way that each sales person has about equal opportunities. As Zoltners et al (2011b, 309) mention, by improving sales territory design, most companies can add 2-7 percent to their revenues every year without adding salespeople.

3.2.3 Sales teamwork and leadership

Due to independent nature of sales functions, sales team work is relatively less covered topic in academic research. One of the most important conditions for team work is to have common goal for all team members. Of course, at larger meaning, such common goal for all salespeople is to ensure overall sales intake. Far more commonly used task for sales is to achieve targets for certain territory or type of the product or type of the customer. In case of sales force, people's personal accountability is always used as motivational factor and its importance emphasized.

Team work is well researched subject in business studies, there are known parameters for making group work a team work. These include: common goal, established roles of team members and facilitation process of team work.

Working group	**Team**
- Strong, clearly focused leader - Individual accountability - The group's purpose is the same as the broader organizational mission - Individual work products - Runs efficient meetings - Measures its effectiveness indirectly by its influence on others (such as financial performance of the business) - Discusses, decides, and delegates	- Shared leadership roles - Individual and mutual accountability - Specific team purpose that the team itself delivers - Collective work products - Encourage open-ended discussion and active problem-solving meetings - Measures performance directly by assessing collective work products - Discusses, decides, and does real work together

Table 4 Working groups versus Teams characteristics (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993).

Table 4 present thoughtfully formulated differences between working groups and teams. Personal accountability, work result of individuals and the same common target as the broader company's target makes sales to have much more in common with groups rather than teams. Based on these characteristics, Sales Teams in traditional understanding are groups, requiring managerial efforts to become teams.

As was mentioned before, team work could help to facilitate mirrored territory design responsibilities with specialists and generalists. In traditional sales, there might be division between pre sales, sales, and after sales functions. Sales team could divide these tasks according to their preference. If we consider the overall cloud of sales work from Picture 6 formed by 3 dimensional task-areas-products directions, team would need to define how to handle these tasks. Team leadership plays important role in teamwork facilitation. Depending of the organizational structure, role of team leader could be performed by head of sales department, or could be taken by other team member or members.

Flaherty (2011) in her work "Strategic Leadership in Sales" identifies three modes of leadership approach: Command Mode, Coach Mode, and Sponsor Mode. Different level of control of sales force actions over strategy defines level of involvement of salespeople in shaping strategical actions. Summary of this framework is presented in Table 5.

Processes that directly affect team management are knowledge management and motivation programs that are discussed below.

	Command Mode	**Coach Mode**	**Sponsor Mode**
Defining Leadership	Influence group to work toward the goal, Transactional leadership	Heroic or Visionary leadership; Transformational leadership	Dispersed leadership; Lead others to lead themselves
Strategic Focus	Strategy driven by top management	Strategy driven by mission/vision	Strategy driven by initiatives from the bottom-up
Sales Manager Focal Activities	Provide clear direction; Evaluate and control	Motivate, empower and inspire	Endorse and support; Remove obstacles and create opportunities for salesperson
Sales control System	Process control	Combination of output control and clan control	Clan control
Sales Person Focal Activities	Competence deployment	Competence modification	Competence definition

Table 5. An Integrative Framework for Strategic Leadership Process in Sales (Flaherty 2011, 66).

3.2.4 Knowledge management in sales force

Learning, both individual and collective, is important feature of sales force competency (Johnston & Peters, 2011, 461). In the absences of learning, sales organizations and sales personnel are destined to repeat past practices and behavior – irrespectively of their effectiveness (Chonko et al. 2003).

Being positioned closest to the customers, salespeople have access to big amount of information. They are required constantly process this information, adapt it for current situation and share further inside the company. As boundary spanners, the sales force may help integrate market sensing and customer information into the organization through their ability to constrict and contextualize

meaning and not simply act as information providers (Johnston & Peters, 2011, 472).

If we consider traditional territorial division of sales responsibilities, each sales person would possesses the knowledge about customers, markets and competitors in the separate area. This might lead to salespeople being concentrated on local cases with little regard to overall company operations. From a business point of view, it is important to fine tune the work of sales force for seamless process of information sharing inside sales team. In globalization era, most of the customer's business will not be limited to geographical areas. Therefore sales have to adapt working methods for managing relationship with the customers. While local representatives could have significant amount of their efforts concentrated on local customers, sales team operating globally need to have reliable mechanism for sharing knowledge inside the team and with other parts of the organization.

Knowledge has been treated as something that is more concerned with the firm's potential for success (Hong et al. 2003). Possession of the information and possibilities to interpret it, become more and more important as a trend of IT era. The knowledge became more important asset of the company than the product, while ability to interpret information became company's core process. If we would consider a parallel with industrial production, information could be compared to raw material, and interpretation to technology of processing. The knowledge gained and transferred is an operant resource that is fundamental to competitive advantage and performance (Johnston & Peters 2011, 468). Knowledge is an organizational element that comprises the competences, explicit and tacit knowledge, and intellectual property resident in the enterprise (Nightingale & Rhodes, 2015).

Knowledge and competence management is important process inside the organization; it is enhancing company's competitiveness, support strategical directions and needs to be aligned with the human resource policy. Knowledge Management, as Hong at al. (2003) define it, means transformation of ideas to

knowledge as well as transformation of knowledge to added value. Traditionally, knowledge management was a centralized function in that management controlled the transfer of knowledge by distributing tasks and resources and then monitoring the execution of these tasks and the use of these resources (Bonifacio et al. 2002).

Processes to support knowledge Management serve as well for facilitating organizational learning. Primary goal of these processes is to improve operational goals of the company, for example ensure knowledge sharing, innovations, and continuous improvement of the organization. These processes needs to be supported by management and include, for example, established routines for storing information, access to data for all involved parties and meeting practices.

Culture of the company plays an important role in knowledge management process. It depends on cultural difference or similarities of employees but also need facilitation as a separate entity. Company's culture (in terms of knowledge sharing, team work and cultural diversity)has big impact on sales force and need special attention before any changes in sales force are considered.

Recent trends in co-creation value together with the customer place more importance on the ability of the company to manage knowledge and competences including customer's as not only source of information, but also as a participant in collaboration. Common trend could be seen often of shift of product centered business to service centered business, and even more recent trend of value co-creation. This means that more and more often companies do not come to the market with ready product, but invite potential customers to participate in its creation. This new approach to value creation, in which customers co-create value through their interactions with the organization, requires organizations to manage knowledge within organizations and between organizational network partners (Johnston & Peters 2011, 468). I would add to this, not only with network partners, but with customers as well. The service design logic presented

by Vargo and Lush (2008) state the application of specialized skills and knowledge to be the fundamental basis of exchange. This way Knowledge and Competence Management is not only a process inside the company and directed by strategy, but also a critically important activity of the company. Company is constantly generating and accumulating the knowledge, managing it, integrating it with new knowledge coming from the outside of the company boundaries, interpreting it, and converting it into value for the clients.

3.2.5 Motivation and reward programs

Many managers believe that motivation is a direct way to improve performance. This is not true, because motivation is one of the factors that influence performance. Poor performance may be more a function of outdated work flow, political behavior or a conflict (Kreitner & Kinicki 2010, 76).

Two of the most important elements in sales management are providing the tools for salespeople to improve critical skills (knowledge about the products and markets, selling techniques and team work for achieving big targets) and creating a reward platform that motivates salespeople and encourages success, while offering financial security (Johnston & Marshall 2009). When it comes to motivational programs of salespeople, it is often assumed that one of the best tools is bonus based system. However, for complex b2b sales, with traditionally long sales cycles and high dependency on product knowledge, it is impossible to rely on bonus system exclusively. In this case providing the financial security is far more important factor that motivates people to work.

There are different types of motivation defined in organizational behavior: through goal setting, job design or intrinsic motivation. First two are well structured and known approaches, but best results with these motivational strategies could be achieved for simple work responsibilities (Kreitner & Kinicki 2010). Intrinsic motivation occurs when an individual is "turned on to one's work be-

cause of the positive internal feelings that are generated by doing well, rather than being dependent on external factors (such as incentive pay or compliments from the boss) for the motivation to work effectively" (Cohen & Wills, 1985). In case of sales force, this type of motivation is the most desired. Sales job provide all five main characteristics: skill variety, task identity, task significance and autonomy (Kreitner & Kinicki 2010, 358). Manager task is to provide meaningfulness and responsibility of the outcomes of the work and knowledge of the actual result.

There are two main modes of defining KPI for sales: hard and soft. In case of hard way, the exact impact of salesperson performance to company's performance is looked at, for example the sales intake from new clients in his/hers sales areas. This might provide clarity in the definition of the criteria for calculation of the bonuses, but don't leave space for stimulation of team work and emphasize personal accountability for the results. In case of poor territory design there is dangerous possibility to leave outside motivational programs hard working salespeople who were unlucky with sales area or suffer from work overload due to undersized salesforce. In such cases hard work will not result in high performance results, due to reasons outside the sales person influence (territory design, unreasonable high sales quotes, or too heavy reporting structure).

It is relatively easy and strait forward to establish KPI and motivation programs based on salesperson's results of work, but in most of the cases these results are not measurable. It could be facilitation o innovation process via value co-creation, or establishing long term relationship. These activities might make impact on other parts of business and bring measurable results in a long term, thus be forgotten in the motivation programs. The importance of the sales force in establishing relationships and informing innovation may not be recognized or rewarded by the organization (Johnston & Peters, 2011, 461). Traditional performance measures (e.g. sales contact efficiency, conversion efficiency, and repeat orders) simply do not capture the new role of the sales function as a facilitator of value co-creation with customers (Johnston & Peters, 2011, 484).

3.3 Position of sales force in the enterprise architecture

This part of the theoretical research aim to establish position of Sales inside the company, how it is related with other functional departments and processes of the company. The research question corresponding to this part is: *What is the place of sales force in the enterprise architecture?*

3.3.1 Sales and Marketing: roles and responsibilities

Traditional division for Sales and Marketing departments is more common for bigger companies. As of its function, Sales focuses on short term outcome, gaining new customers. Marketing is in charge of collecting information about the markets, conducting customer's surveys and generating marketing materials. Sales rely on Marketing for marketing research reports, customer satisfaction survey results and advertising and sales support materials to be used in the field by the salesforce, conversely, Marketing relies on Sales for information form key customers, ideas for new products, and for information on competitive activity (Meunier-Fitzhugh & Massey, 2011, 542).

Johnston and Peters in their work "Organizational Commitment to Sales" (2011), introduce definition of Marketing as Grand Competence. The concept and differences are presented in the Pictures 11-13. Authors draw attention to the marketing role of facilitation organizational learning by focusing organizational efforts on enhancing customer knowledge, competitive strategy and market and industry value propositions. This way, "role of marketing goes beyond that of simply connecting the firm to the marketplace" (Johnston & Peters, 2011, 464).

Marketing as a function

Undeveloped and unappreciated, marketing is a short term and reactive departmental function. It is primarily responsible for communication with the customer after the core competences in the firm have created the value to the customer
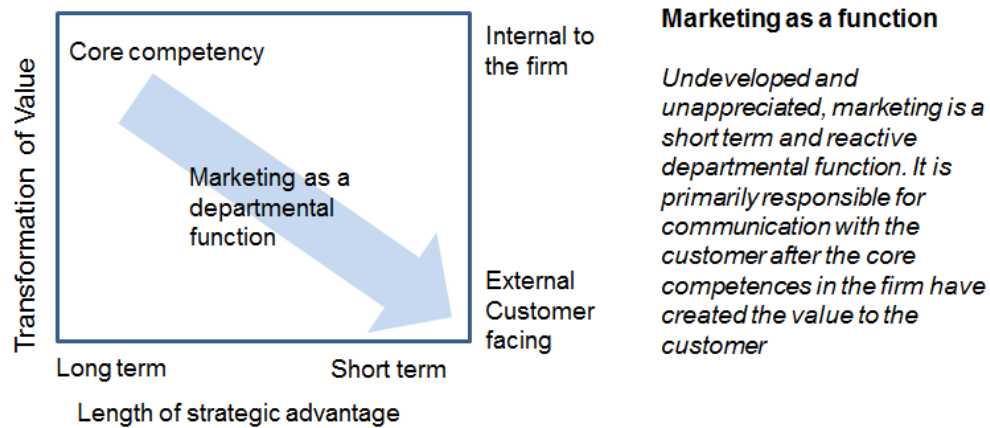
Picture 11. The Development of Marketing's Contribution to the Value Proposition of the Firm. Marketing as a Function (Johnston & Peters, 2011, 463).

Marketing as translator

Through knowledge of the customer's needs and the firm's value proposition created trough core competences, marketing becomes the great translator. Organizational learning by marketing primarily focuses on customer needs and operational excellence for the firm.
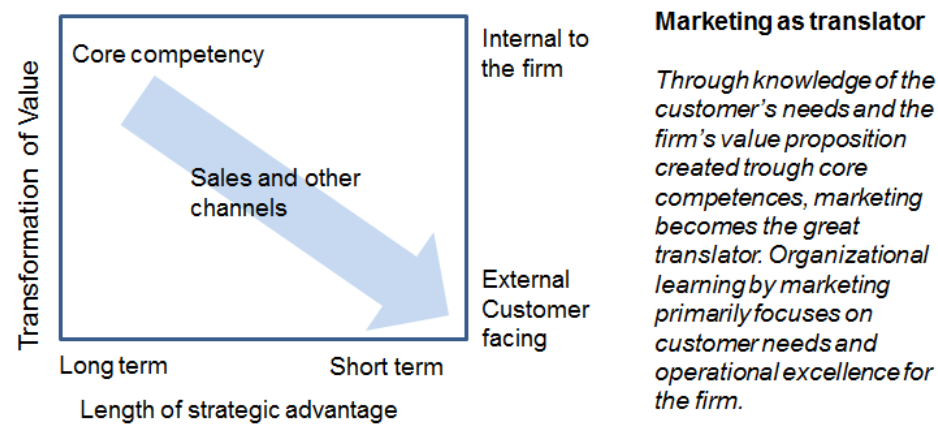
Picture 12 The Development of Marketing's Contribution to the Value Proposition of the Firm. Marketing as Translator (Johnston & Peters, 2011, 463).

Marketing as Grand Competence

Marketing becomes the core competency of the firm. Other functions can be outsourced. Organizational learning focuses on customer knowledge, competitive strategy, and market and industry value propositions. Networking with other firms as partners often results.
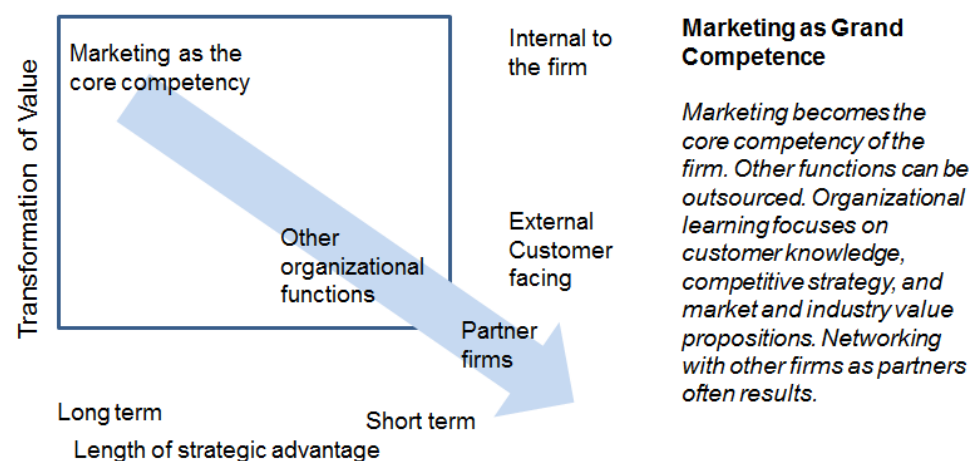
Picture 13 The Development of Marketing's Contribution to the Value Proposition of the Firm. Marketing as Grand Competence (Johnston & Peters, 2011, 464).

The main motive of this approach is possibility to concentrate company's efforts on generating core knowledge: value of the company's products for potential and existing customers. Other functions, such as communications, could be outsourced. This approach confronts traditional understanding of marketing as a function or as a translator. On the other side, to fulfill its role of translator ,marketing need to have a full understanding of the message which is going to send outside. Concentrating on efforts to clarify the message and the understanding of what value company provides and to who, gives possibility to use less educated or specialized means to communicate it to outside the company. Highly developed IT tools for publishing and sharing content, such as responsive web technologies, social media, and visualization tools, are supporting idea of this approach. For example, if the company could clearly state its vision, the value proposition, its target areas and markets in the strategy, the practical ways to communicate these could be done via subcontracted graphic design and web design, to prepare all marketing materials upon need.

Overall, Sales and Marketing departments have very different philosophies and strategies to fulfil their roles within the organization. These differences are a critical factor in their success as a department, and can even impact on the overall success of the organization (Holmburg & Jensen, 2007). However, this interrelation was explained the best by Capton (2011, 571) considering marketing as the anchor for sales, comparing marketing to the architect and sales to the builder. In the same article, the importance of good integration underlined between sales, possessing knowledge about the customers, and marketing, provider of the direction for positioning of the company's products.

3.3.2 Cross-functional collaborative relationships

Traditionally, sales force is a separate department or a unit in the organizations. It has evident ties with marketing (or even include marketing as one of its functions).it's the connection of sales to production or software development is

more complex. This connection is about between different departments, but also between different functional dedications: creating product and selling it.

Departmentalization in the company can be based on: functions, products, geography or customers. Respective reporting relationship need to ensure that subordinates have one superior, and that he has manageable number of subordinates. This is not only related to direct reporting structure and process to handle practical terms, such as vacations arrangements, workplace organization and so on. Reporting relationship means commitment of person. On short term any person could be included in various teams and projects, but on a long run some permanent assignment of people to group is needed. Hierarchy based organizational structure provides clear division between departments and visible managerial level in charge of cross departmental relationship. One of the possible arrangements is matrix structure when two dimensions of products and functions form a frame for the company. Another recent trend of decentralization often results in flat structured companies with project based work groups or teams.
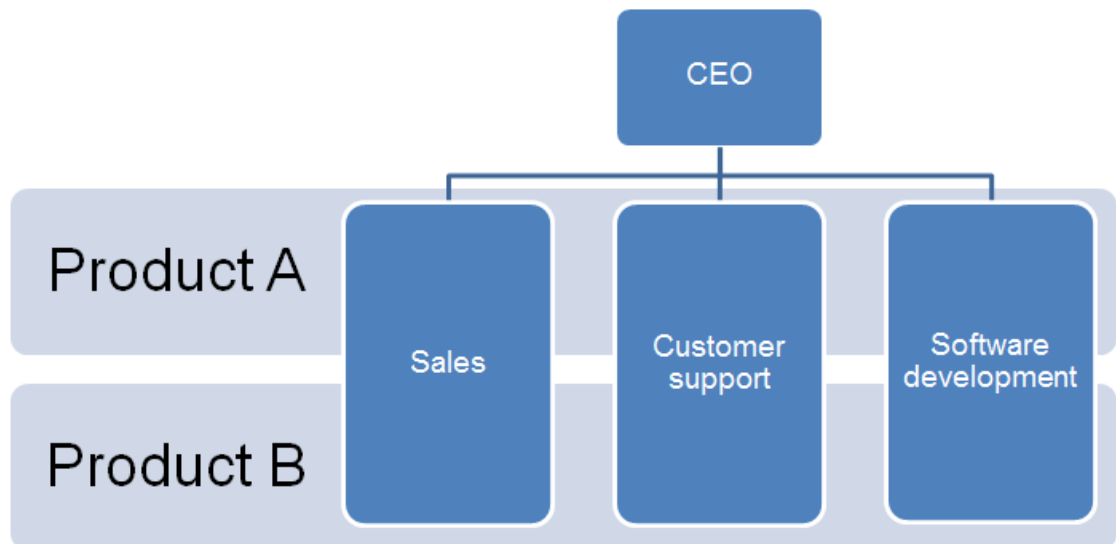

Picture 14 Example of matrix structure in the company with three main departments and two products (Seppälä 2015).

Matrix organization popularity began in end of 60th, together with growth of companies and increasing level of complexity of the products. Since that time this type of organization was thoroughly researched and analyzed. In one of the classic works, "Problems of Matrix Organizations" Davis and Lawrence (1978) list following major problems encountered in matrix organizations: anarchy, power struggles, grouppists behavior, excessive overhead, sinking to lower levels, uncontrolled layering, and decision stagnation. Overall they conclude that very often matrix type organization perform well in times of growth, but frequently fall in time of economic crunch. In the conclusion the article, the expectation expressed that when matrix type organizations will be more common and more experience would be gathered in management level, this type of the organization would become a common place.

Since that time, more than 35 years later, matrix organization didn't become a common place, it is used sometimes or on limited level, but it doesn't present a mainstream. Several academic researches (Galbraith 2009, Kreitner & Kinicki 2010) still point out numerous problems of matrix type organization, and recommend it only with precautions and for large organizations

What gained more attention recently is a horizontal design organizations, where collaboration is at focus. This way company focuses all the attention on work process and emphasizes cross-functional team work on project basis.
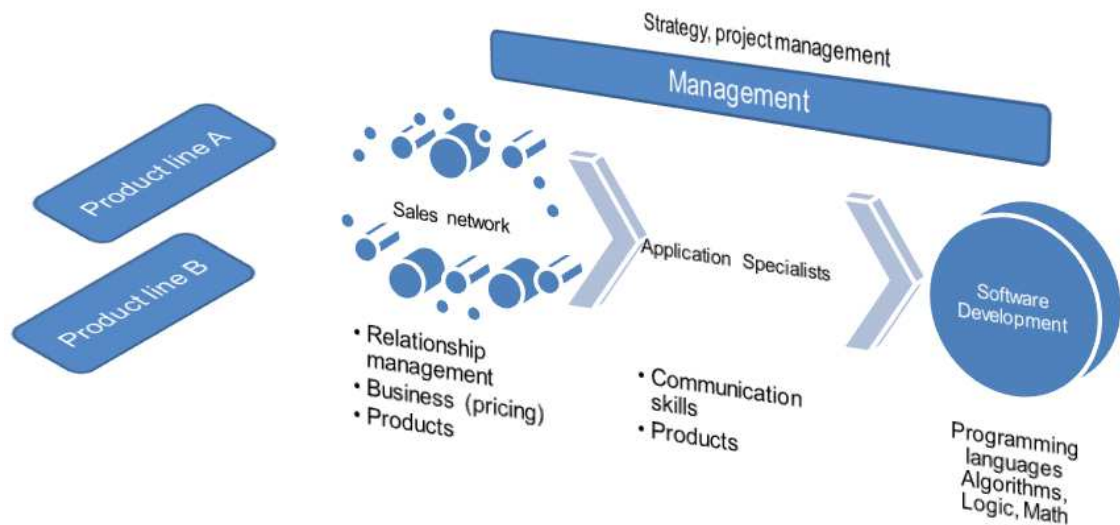
Picture 15 Example of knowledge flows for a software company (Seppälä 2015).

At pictures 14 and 15 example of typical software company presented with two main product lines and three functional departments in a matrix type organization. Second picture shows also flow of knowledge inside the company. On one end of the organization is a sales department, with extensive knowledge about business situation, customers' relationships and only limited knowledge of the products, and on the other end software development, where skills about how to create products prevail. In the middle, application specialists or customer support people have both, some skills about programming, extensive knowledge about products and some about the customers and business. This is somewhat typical organization structure for software companies providing complex products for b2b areas. Mostly, these companies would have the core product, developed though many years of the company existence, and operate in narrow markets for knowledge demanding b2b tools. In this example, cross functional team work is needed for the work process (after sales close a deals, customer support need to continue with implementation and software development should get involved if some customization is needed) but this is difficult to arrange due to complex reporting relationship between different departments.

Other emerging trend is use of virtual teams, which are actually in broad terms the same as flat structure with work related project cross-functional teams, but

often additionally containing different locations. In this case usage of IT tools should enable collaboration between team members.

Some of the most common tools to enable cross-functional team work are the same as for team work support processes: establishing common goal and roles inside the team, providing team support person and regular check points for the progress. Other tools, including physical location of team members and attention to cultural differences inside teams are not proven factors for success, but might play a role in it.
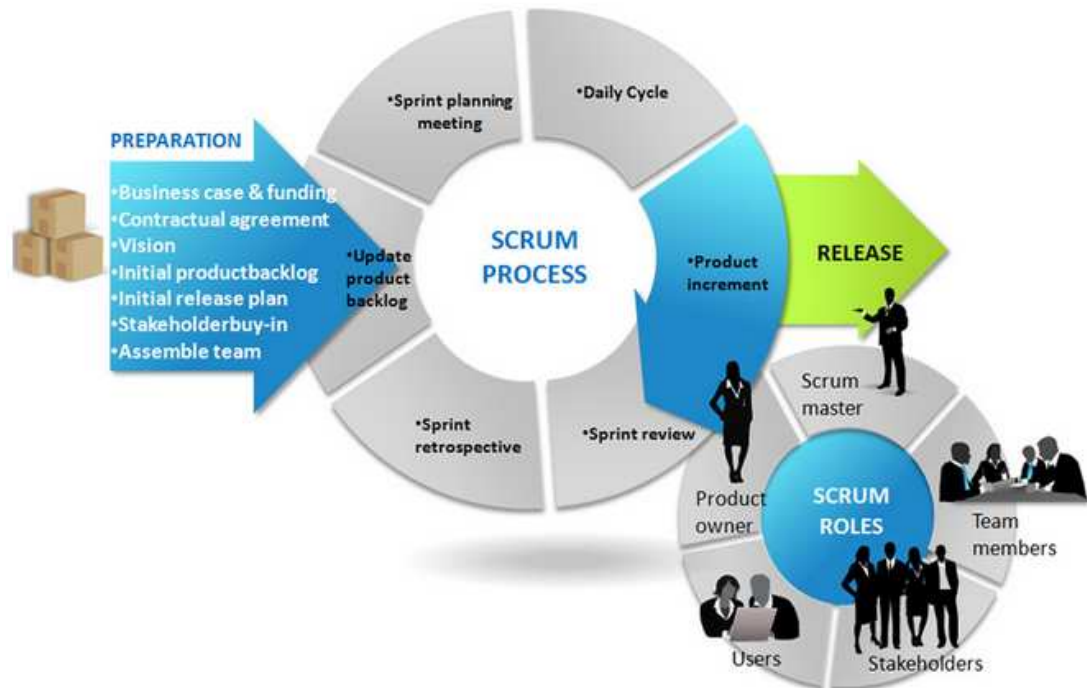
3.4 Agile Software Development and Sales Operations

3.4.1 Principles of agile software development

Already since 1950 software development companies started to look for methods to organize their work. Several research works relying on software development point of view were conducted. One of the first business process researches was conducted in 1986 by Hirotaka Takeuchi and Ikujiro Nonaka – The New Product Development game, addressed issues related to organization of the software development, comparing it with rugby game strategy (Takeuchi & Nonaka 1986). Historically this was an important milestone, a first attempt to split up work process and consider it as the iteration based flow.

In 2001 Agile Manifesto (Beck and others, 2001) was published by and since then there was a great number of research, books and other materials, such as models, role training procedures and other, created by thousands of researches and enthusiasts. Almost immediately, discussions started related to scaling agile principles to the whole organization and applying it for different disciplines.

Picture 16 Example of simplified structure of agile/scrum software development. (Source: https://www.cprime.com/resources/what-is-agile-what-is-scrum/).

Basic principles of agile and scrum software development state that developers should be able to be in close contact with the end customers. The role of Product Owner define person who keep close contact with customer, collect information about needs and give priority for development tasks using different techniques. This fits perfectly needs of small companies, who have limited number of customers. At the same time, this principles support product development together with the customers or value co-creation, leaving aside more common case when already developed product marketed and sold by presenting its value.

By its origin, agile principles were created by "bottom-up" process, made by programmers themselves to facilitate their work and bring order to their processes. Agile principles define only broad framework for general direction. When it comes to practical use, there are several more and less popular approaches, such as Scrum, Extreme Programming and others. Picture 16 presents simplified picture of scrum software development process, where roles are defined and looping process phases explained.

From organizational behavior point of view, Scrum and other methods could be compared with team work facilitation.

Scaling agile often understood in meaning of involving more teams into use of agile methods. This could be divided into two main directions: one is about bigger software development teams with large amount of developers involved or distributed location of teams, other about applying agile for non-software development activities. Another often employed tactic is to use scrum of scrums, when leaders of several scrum teams form scrum team themselves. Researches, such as (Laanti, 2012), state that, level of success of using agile frameworks on a large scale is dictated by how much the same principles are shared within the organization as a whole

Other practices include attempts to use agile methods for non-software development activities, for example often in our days to hear about agile project or product management, marketing or agile sales. However, in agile sales, agility is understood differently. It doesn't mean that Agile principles are applied to sales, it rather used definition of agile as synonym of being nimble.
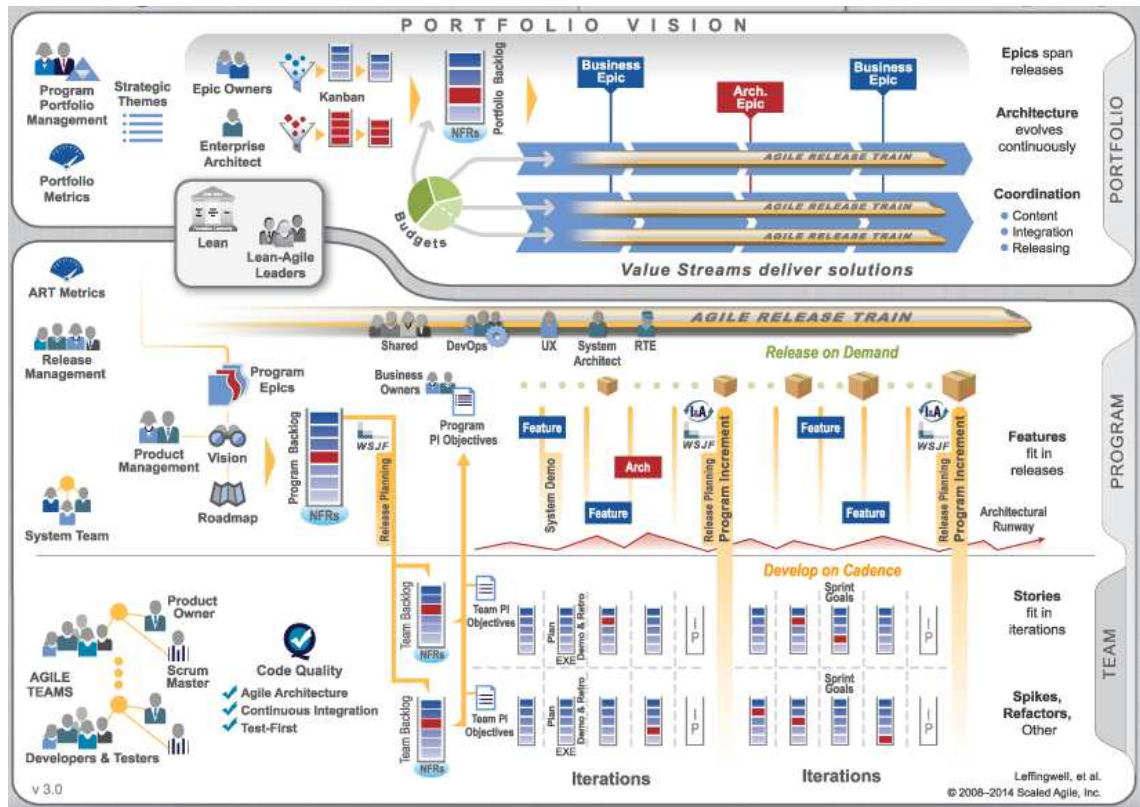
Picture 17 Leffingwell et al. 2011-2014 Scaled Agile Framework® (SAFe®). (Source: http://scaledagileframework.com/).

Significant number of research were performed in field of scaling agile for software development, count of research articles only about Nokia experience goes up to hundreds. One of the most complete works is academic dissertation of Laanti M., 2012 – Agile methods in large-scale software development organizations. Work suggests that level of success of using agile frameworks on a large scale is dictated by how much the same principles are shared within the organization as a whole (Laanti, 2012). Picture 17 shows one of most popular and often used Scaled Agile Framework (Lefindwell et al.). This framework presents bigger picture of the Agile Frame, with identified roles in Portfolio Management and Agile teams. Several other researches were performed to study scaling of Agile however, most of these works focus on Software Development, leaving outside business processes and especially connection with Sales force interface.

3.4.2 Connection and interaction points between sales operations and agile software development

Agile development process expects to have connection with business needs through the person with role "Product Owner" and less often "Business Owner". In case when business portfolio consists of several products, each targeted to different business segment, however interrelated technically with each other, it become complicated. When business needs are driven by sales team question arise how to link knowledge about customers and needs accumulated by sales team with product and business owners.

Table 6 below presents difference in definition of "Product Manager" and "Product Owner". These two roles have a lot of differences: Product Owner is rather a team facilitator and is tightly connected with Scrum process. Product Manager is broader and more business oriented concept.

Product Manager	Product Owner
Market/customer facing	Solution/technology/team facing
Collocated with, and reports into marketing/business	Collocated with, and reports into development
Owns Vision, Roadmap, pricing, licensing, ROI, and Program Backlog	Contributes to Vision and Program Backlog. Owns team backlog and implementation.
Drives Program Increment and Release content via prioritized Features	Drives iteration content via prioritized Stories
Establishes feature acceptance criteria	Establishes story acceptance criteria, accepts stories into the baseline

Table 6 Difference in definition of "Product Manager" and "Product Owner" (Source: http://www.scaledagileframework.com/product-owner/).

Sales force attention can become focused on products that have aggressive product managers, and not necessary on products that have the highest strategic importance (Zoltners et al. 2011a, 156). That is why, it is important to understand the connection between Sales Force and Product Managers or Product owners, setup efficient mechanism for this connection, and to integrate it into the organization architecture. Presence of Business Owner, somebody who's priority is business outcome from the area could ensure that company is not

focusing on products, but on business. However presence of this role is not a sole solution for the issue.

Other roles, as for example, Stakeholders, should be also clearly defined in the scrum process. In classic cases Product Owners should consider Sales Team as their customers and Business owners as stakeholders (Leffingwell et al. 2011-2014).

Concluding this part, scrum is a proven tool for executing company's strategy. It is designed especially for software development and provides effective control over the process with predictable outcomes. From business perspective, usage of scrum brings transparency into the software development process, and should be carefully implemented into the overall company's architecture. Roles need to be established and defined and overall business process considered, especially on the level of Product Owners/Managers and Sales operations.

3.5 Transformation of the company towards agility

Definition of an adjective agile is: able to move quickly and easily or able to think and understand quickly (Oxford Dictionary, 2015). The most often contemporary use presented by the following sentence: Relating to or denoting a method of project management, used especially for software development, that is characterized by the division of tasks into short phases of work and frequent reassessment and adaptation of plans: agile methods replace high-level design with frequent redesign (ibid).

Forrester defines business agility as the quality that allows an enterprise to embrace market and operational change as a matter of routine (Le Clair, 2014). Constantly changing requirements that customers put on the software companies are exactly such ever changing environment. The new demands on organizations underline following qualities: agility or numbness over bureaucracy; flat organizational structures over pyramids; collaboration, innovation and partner-

ship; information and knowledge-based work; internal and external networks; and new ways of motivating new types of employee over traditional approaches (Cravens & Piercy 2009).

3.5.1 The meaning of Agile enterprise

Definition of the company shifted lately from a unity that has clear boundaries with external world to integrated part of market or business environment. A continuous learning environment fueled by round-the-clock customer insight and feedback demands teams, environments, decision-making structures, and funding models that exhibit the true meaning of the word agility — resilience, responsiveness, and learning (Gothelf 2014).

There are many dimensions of Agility. Ideal Agile Enterprise has no limitations on excelling its agility and employing lean thinking in any of its operations, products or strategies. This idea traces back to Lean Manufacturing and Lean Enterprise.

Definition of enterprise capabilities

Adaptability	Ability of an enterprise to sustain values delivery by transforming itself to respond to changes in its ecosystem
Agility	Ability of an enterprise to shift rapidly from one strategy to another to sustain enterprise value delivery
Competitiveness	Ability of an enterprise to deliver products/services that provide value to stakeholders equal to or greater than that of competing enterprises
Evolvability	Capacity of an enterprise to transform by leveraging successful features of the current architecture
Replicability	Ability to reproduce enterprise entities (e.g. products/services. business units) effectively to create or sustain value delivery
Resilience	Ability of an enterprise to cope effectively with changing circumstances and recover from disruptive events
Responsiveness	Ability to respond in a timely and effective way to emergent stakeholder needs, threads, and opportunities
Robustness	Ability to sustain consistent value delivery in spite of changes and perturbations in the enterprise ecosystem
Scalability	Ability to expand or contract the enterprise to meet changing circumstances in order to sustain values delivery
Sustainability	Capacity of an enterprise to endure over time as related to environmental, economic, and/or social dimensions

Table 7 Definitions of enterprise capabilities (Nightingale & Rhodes, 2015, 38)

There are many models attempting to capture company's processes, as for example Hugos (2009) on Picture 17 present loops of processes in the company. Other increasingly popular model of LEAN canvas was presented by (Osterwalder & Piqueur 2010). It could be applied for start-up to get inside of possible outcomes of the business, or to starting new product development of even to make decision about the change in the organizational structure.

Table 7 presents example of different definitions of the enterprise capabilities. Agility is among these ten capabilities. Depending of the company's strategy and specifics of its operations any of these adjectives could be selected as the main one. It is not easy to define if Sustainability is more important than Agility or Robustness for example. Term Agile Enterprise is not so commonly used now in academia and only sometimes used in business media, mostly as exten-

sion of Agile Software Principles extended to whole business. However if in case of Agile Software Development using "agile" means complying with Agile Manifesto Principles, then in business meaning, Agile is closed to original adjective, being nimble and quick to respond.
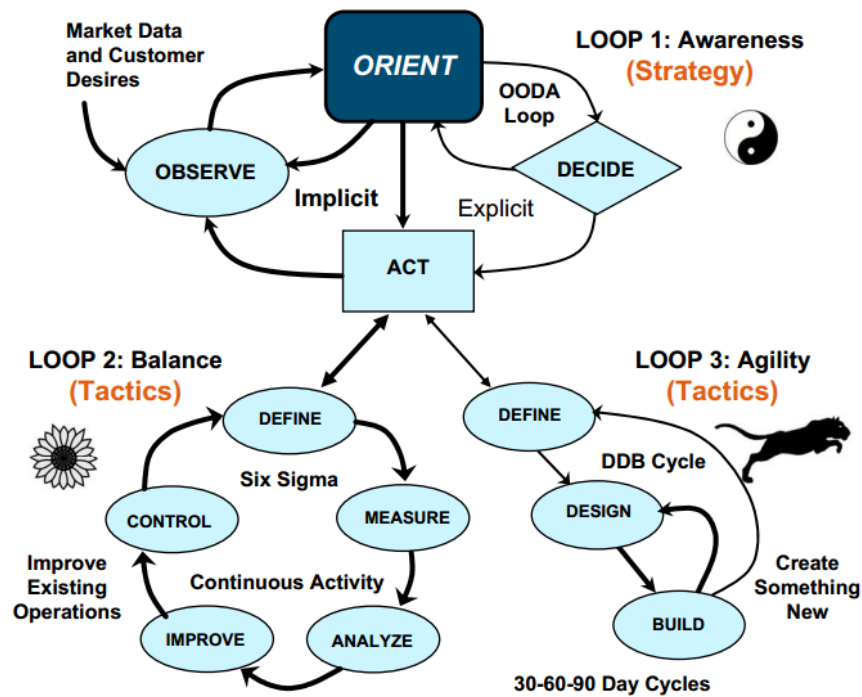
Picture 18 Process model of a Responsive Organization by Michael Hugos, 2008 (Hugos, 2009).

Most of the general business models in our days employ OODA loop (Observe, Orient, Decide, Act), as a natural basis behind canvas (such as LEAN canvas as one example) and strategic decision making. This cycle presented in the Picture 18 and it was originally developed by John Boyd during his research of military tactics and strategy (Coram 2002).
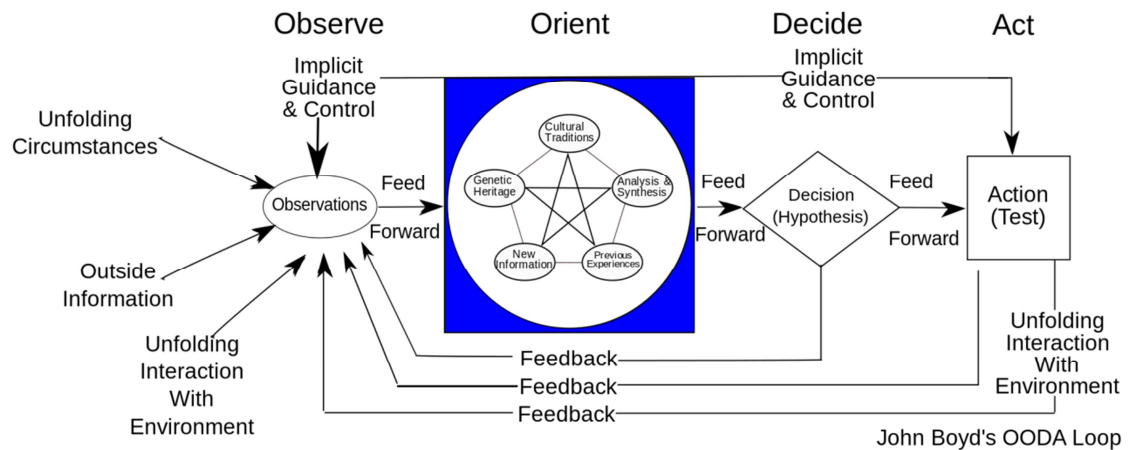
Picture 19 John Boyd's OODA Loop, adapted (Coram 2002).

The OODA loop appears to be the best basis for strategical decisions. Observations provide input of information and data, orientation process serve for generation of alternatives and computing outcomes, decision is selection process of next steps and action itself would trigger next loop starting with observation of result of previous actions. Such loops could be as small as few seconds when person think what to say next or as long as several years to observe how strategic decision of the company works.

On the lower level of Hugos Responsive Organization model is tactical operation, and that could be Agile, or Balance, or Robustness, or any other tactical way to execute strategic decision. This links with general definition of Agile of the process of replacing design with incremental redesign, and general critique of Agile as approach lacking architecture.

It is a normal part of organizational development that specific forms and structures evolve and change as the outside world changes, as demands on the company reconfigure, and as management priorities shift in line with new strategies, looking for the best ways to enhance performance (Piercy & Lane 2011, 31).

Sales personnel are on the front line of organizations, and are therefore in the best position to facilitate organizational change by implementing the firm's strat-

egies and learning about changing customer preferences and needs (Chonko et al. 2003).

3.5.2 Value co-creating with the customers

Agility of the company as a tactic could be interpreted as willingness of the company to quickly adapt to changing environment and this way to innovate the products. Innovation process could be split into three main categories: outside-in, inside-out and value co-creation. First two are rather strait forward, company either invite outsiders (people, companies, events, or institutions) to bring knowledge and understanding to create products or services, or cultivate inside own boundaries innovations that further presented to the outside world. As complexity of the products growth it is rather seldom to see complete inside-out innovation in practice. More often companies engage in outside-in type of innovation. These could be classified depending of level and amount of involved parties as "elite-circle", "innovation mall", "innovation community" or "consortium" (Pisano & Verganti 2008). Consortium type, where participants to define own rules to select problems and approach for solving of these, could be called value co-creation process.

Value co-creation is relatively known trend. Value co-creation with the customers is one of very interesting topic in this context. Through involving customers into creation of the value (or products in simple cases) company is not a sole owner of this value anymore. Business models plays central role in this innovation process: sharing profits, co ownership of patents, and infrastructure (strategy, projected financial models and company culture). Most of traditional marketing and sales theories and approaches, even from b2b field, were not designed for complex, consultative and collaborative, technology-based company-customer relationships where, the "product" or the "service" is being created jointly by buyer and seller as it is being "sold" (Piercy & Lane 2011, 20).

If Sales Force would be directed by strategy into fostering value co-creation, it would face another complication. As Nigel & Lane (2011, 37) point out: customers are increasingly unwilling to spend time with suppliers who do not understand the business. Customers don't accept spending time teaching seller's salespeople to understand their business.. Thus, value co-creation is not a sales approach; it should be rather company's strategy, executed not only by Sales, but a company as whole. Actually value co-creation is an innovation management process, or one of possible types of it. And it calls for appropriate business model to be profitable.

3.5.3 Model of the future enterprise

In the work "Guide to Organization Design" Stanford (2015, 28-32) makes review of six systems models (McKinsey 7-S Model, Galbraith Star Model, Weisboard's Six Box Model, Nadler and Tushman's Conguence Model, Burke-Litwin Model, and Leavitt's Diamond) including main elements, strength and limitations of each. In the same work five new models presented: Fractial Web, Ralph Klimann's Five Track Model, Ken Wilber's AQAL Model, Nadler's Updated Congruence Model, and Holonic Enterprise Model. These newer models were created roughly between 2000 and 2005.

There are certain similarities about these models, all of these try to formalize process of selection, a way to guide thoughts and a way to justify intuition. What is common about these models, they try to take into account several different factors and processes. We could consider company as a Complex Adaptive System as well. All the processes inside the system would be related with external behavior of the systems. Mathematical models provide possibilities to predict behavior of such systems and Systems Thinking approach could be future research possibility.

What is common about these models is that both attempt to provide information about the processes inside the company or startup. Very often, SME company's senior management focus on organizational chart as a company's skeleton, that makes difficult to see beyond that, to visualize processes inside the company and to track where flows of information goes or where and how value is created.

In this research yet another model will be used as a main tool: ARIES model of the future enterprise. ARIES model was developed by at MIT and present synopsis of latest research in the field of organization architecture. ARIES stands for: Architecting Innovative Enterprise Strategy (Nightingale & Rhodes, 2015, 11).
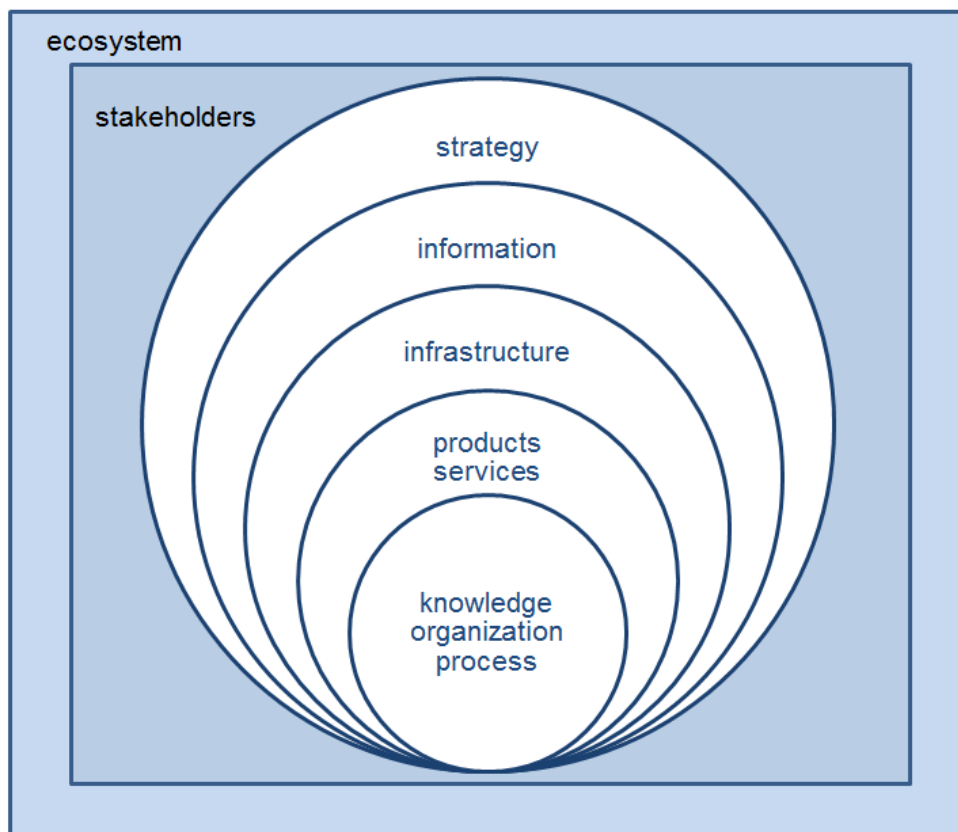

Picture 20 ARIES enterprise element model (Nightingale & Rhodes, 2015, 16).

Architecting is a process of creation, visualization, and understanding, capturing, and interpreting surrounding reality. As Nightingale and Rhodes (2015, 11)

put it, it is "the act of creating a "blueprint" to follow for achievement of desired vision the future". This process has nothing to do with organizational charts. Stanford (2015, 2) uses another term to define the same process, organization design, and defines it as "how people and work are organized to carry out an organization's strategy and achieve its aims". First definition is more complete, since it suggests using a vision as a guiding light, and strategy could be a result of architecting efforts.

ARIES model, presented on the Picture 20 utilize definition of the value as the reason for the enterprise's existence. Therefore the whole architecting approach based on value-driven perspective (Nightingale & Rhodes, 2015, 42).
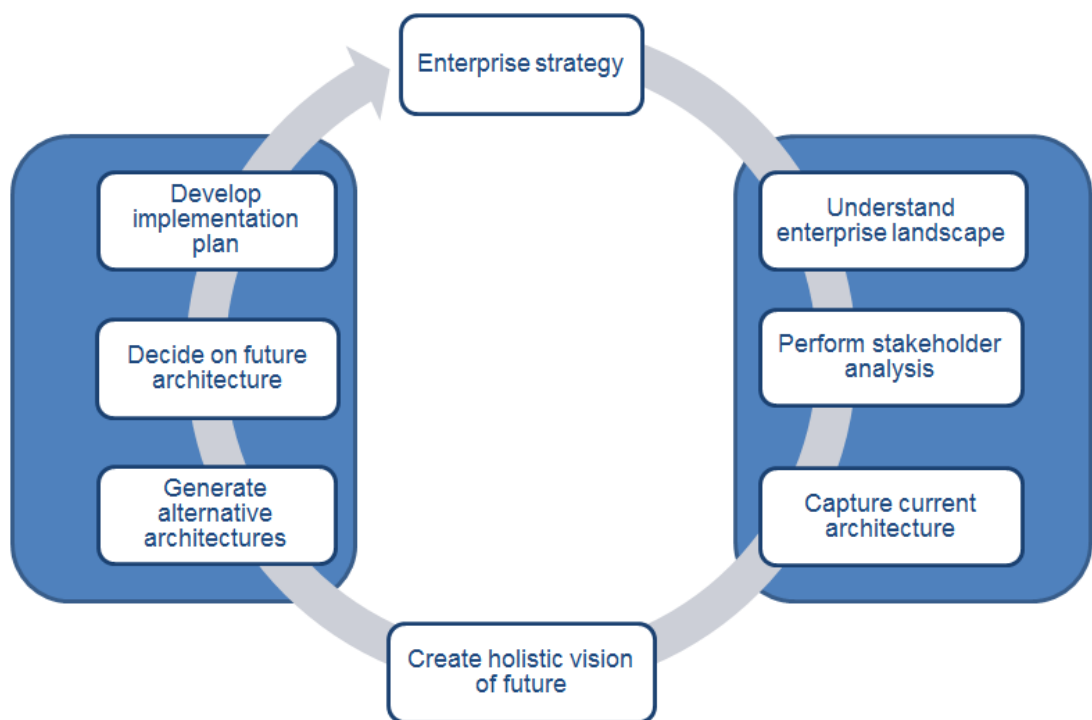
Picture 21 ARIES process model (Nightingale & Rhodes, 2015, 23)

ARIES framework, as described at Nightingale & Rhodes (2015) contain seven activities, these are presented on the Picture 21. Performing these activities in turns guide the process:

1. Understand the Enterprise Landscape

2. Perform Stakeholder Analysis
3. Capture the Current Architecture
4. Create a Holistic Vision of the Future
5. Generate Alternative Architectures
6. Decide on the Future Architecture
7. Develop the Implementation Plan

This framework could be used for strategic decisions, and evaluation of change scenarios from start point of defining architecting scope. The same way as in buildings, the need might be to completely rebuild the company or just to make minor adjustments in some particular part of it. This framework also based on the OODA loop, firstly observation data is collected: company's eco system, stakeholders, current architecture, after alternatives are generated (on the stages of "creating holistic vision of future' and "generating alternative architecture"), decisions needs to be takes and implementation plan drawn for exact steps to be made. After these steps, the cycle starts again with the observation.

3.6 Theoretical research summary

Following summary could be presented, based on the theory exploration. It is structured according to the order of the research questions.

What are the functions of sales force within the company?

Key functions of sales are communication of products/services values to potential customers, customer relationships management, and transfer of knowledge from the customers inside the company. IT tools (CRM, online ordering systems, etc) might significantly increase sales force time use efficiency. The changing sales environment calls for sales to focus on managing the relationship with the customers. Agility of sales is the ability to align change required by

a customer with company's possibilities, staying within company's value proposition area, as part of the everyday sales process. Sales should have a significant role in shaping company's strategy.

How to organize and manage sales network with regard to company's strategy?

Sales organizational structure design should take into account number products and /or territories to match sales person's bandwidth (generalists vs specialists), hybrid and mirrored structure could be the most beneficial but requires established processes inside the company for knowledge sharing and team management. Sales force size and territory design could be defined using several methods and should be in line with company's strategy. Sales team work requires team processes support and should be justified by needs of the company and aligned with company's culture. Sales force motivation programs should aim for behavioral motivation.

What is the place of the sales force in the enterprise architecture?

Sales Force mostly focuses on the short-term outcome (securing new customers and areas intake), while marketing target long-term growth. Marketing should serve as the grand competence of the company and be one of core activities. There are different possibilities for organizational structure design: functional/departmental, matrix, or flat. Each type has own limitations, flat type appears to be the best for supporting cross-functional collaboration.

What is a connection between Agile Software Development and Sales Operations?

Agile Methods focus on frequent and repetitive redesign process over complex upfront design. The cycle of software development shortens and become more predictable. But to achieve this result process around the scrum in the company

should be well established. The connection between Sales and Software development should be enforced on the level of Product Owners or Managers and Sales Team. Both sides should participate in strategy shaping and have the reliable process of sharing knowledge.

What makes the company agile or lean enterprise, the model of the future enterprise?

Agility is one of various possible characteristics of the company. Agility is related to the way company handle changes; therefore it is a tactical operation that should be guided by the strategical decisions. There are many strategical business models with different approached and limitations, most of them uses OODA cycle as a fundamental mechanism. Value co-creation is one of the innovation processes variations, it requires commitment from the organization and thoroughly defined business model. One of such models and frameworks, ARIES from MIT, was selected for the case study analysis.

6 FUTURE RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

There are several topics that were discussed this research that reflect cur-rent academic research directions, such as the evolution of sales force role and product-service shift. These topics originate from our evolving society and its values and require a collection of more information and research in the area constantly. This area of study is not easy to research since mostly it concerns confidential business issues and companies are not willing to share data about their sales publicly. However, companies could benefit from gained theoretical understanding in this area, the same way as this research was commissioned to gain a deeper understanding of possibilities to manage Sales Force.

Agile Methodology appears to be reaching saturation phase of interest and re-searched application fields when most of the possible areas are investigated and tried, and clear boundaries of these methods established. In this research, one of the conclusions is that Agile Principles could be considered as main principles of teamwork particularly for software development process. Since these methods applied at large in most of the companies, interesting area for future studies is to see how other parts of the organization could be aligned with software development that uses Agile, and how a company as a whole could benefit from it.

Value co-creation with the customers is another trend that has many dimen-sions: social responsibility of companies, co-financing of new products involving various fund-rising mechanisms, and pricing of the co-created value. Partly it is related with Agile Methodology, but this trend is much wider than the tactical application of Agile. The process of creating value (inside or across the compa-ny borders and networks) present a point of view for business models creation.

ARIES model of the future enterprise used for the case study research is one of the latest models that attempt to capture enterprise architecture using value-based approach. The framework provides practical tool for evaluating enterprise

in-side its ecosystem, understanding its current architecture and creating the vision of the future. This framework could be used for wide variety of tasks, strategic decisions, transformations, and building future of the companies. Future research could be directed for application of this model for various tactical and strategical areas.

Systems thinking the approach could be considered as well for application to business administration, to understand underlying structure and including bigger picture into consideration for predicting its behavior. If the analysis has more retrospective direction when existing phenomena are researched in an attempt to predict what will happen with it further, systems thinking the approach could be considered as a prospective view.

From a general point of view, any company could be considered as a Complex Adaptive System (CAS) and, therefore, its behavior could be predicted. Any element of CAS makes an impact to the whole system. Investigating the elements and connections between these could help to understand how the system performs and how it could be influenced. In mathematics there are many existing models for CAS, some are very successfully used in other fields of science, for example, physics and sociology. Direct application of these models towards business administration could be more complicated, however, need more research in this area. There are various possible branches if this research area, such as the organic growth of the companies as evolving systems, self-organization of system as a whole and its parts, and interactions with other systems in the society.

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