# Increasing the material management platform usage rate

**Ella Häkkinen**

2021 Laurea

Laurea University of Applied Sciences

# Increasing the material management platform usage rate

Ella Häkkinen
Leading Transformational Change
Master’s Thesis
May, 2022

**Laurea University of Applied Sciences**
Leading Transformational Change
Master of Business Administration

Ella Häkkinen

**Abstract**

**Increasing the material management platform usage rate**

Year 2022 Number of pages 62 62

The purpose of this thesis was to find ways to increase the customer usage rate of an advertisement material platform, commissioned by Sanoma Media Finland. The goal was to identify the issues with the platform usage and to create a development plan for the company.

The theoretical framework consists of behavioral themes, such as change leadership and behavioral economics, as well as more technically oriented themes, such as customer onboarding and user interface experience and design.

The method used for gathering information was gathered from literature sources as well as company policy documentations. The main method for information gathering for the development phase was semi-structured interviews of internal stakeholders.

The key finding was that while there are many practical steps that can be taken to help increase the usage rate of the platform, the most pressing issues are foundational. Internal confusion can lead to an inconsistent customer experience. Based on the findings and the theoretical framework, there are suggestions for moving forward with getting more customers to use the platform independently.

Keywords: customer experience, platform development, material management

Contents

# 1 Introduction

In this section the purpose of this study and the development project will be introduced. The scope of the study, key concepts and limitations of the study will also be discussed.

## 1.1 Introduction of the case company

This work has been commissioned by the Finnish media company Sanoma Media Finland. Sanoma Media Finland is a part of Sanoma. Sanoma has 4,800 total company employees and 11 operational countries, with a net sales of 1,062M€ (Sanoma, 2020). Sanoma's key businesses include the media business in Finland through Sanoma Media Finland, and the learning business in Sanoma Learning. Sanoma Learning is a publisher of learning materials and services for students, teachers and schools. The learning business is deeply rooted in the digital transformation of education in Europe, especially digital learning platforms (Sanoma Learning, 2020).

Sanoma Media Finland, which is the case company of this study, has around 2,052 employees and net sales of 563M€. It's the number one in Finland in news, magazines, childrens' content, online, mobile, and commercial radio, tv and online video network – Sanoma Media Finland's different medias reach 97% of all Finns every week (Sanoma Media Finland, 2020). For the purposes of the study it can be identified that Sanoma Media Finland publishes a total of 34 printed publications including magazines and newspapers. Print media is a big part of Sanoma's portfolio with net sales of almost 300M€ in 2020, with a growth percentage of 7% compared to fiscal year 2019 (Sanoma Annual Review, 2020).

The focus of this study is Sanoma Media Finland's B2B media sales department's material handling process and a carefully identified case from the process in the local newspaper client advertiser segment. The media sales department sells media advertising space to all Sanoma's different media categories including print, digital, video, TV and radio advertising. The end-to-end advertising product development, sales and campaign production are all handled in the B2B media sales department as well.

## 1.2 Purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to identify why a certain customer segment's usage rate of an advertisement material management self-delivery platform is significantly lower than other customer segments. Another objective is to identify ways to increase said usage rate of the self-delivery platform in this defined customer segment.

The Sanoma Media Finland B2B media sales department uses a material management platform for multiple purposes revolving around advertising material management. A material management platform is a digital platform which in itself is a tool but also integrated to other software systems connected to media campaigns. The same platform is used as a campaign production queue, campaign monitoring tool and  for material feedback; is the material arriving on time or late, is the material valid and so on. The platform is used for material management on different media categories such as digital, video, radio and print materials. Around 70% of materials go according to process and customers successfully upload them to the material management portal. Of the 30% that go past the material management platform for some reason, a huge part are print advertisement materials by the same customer segment.

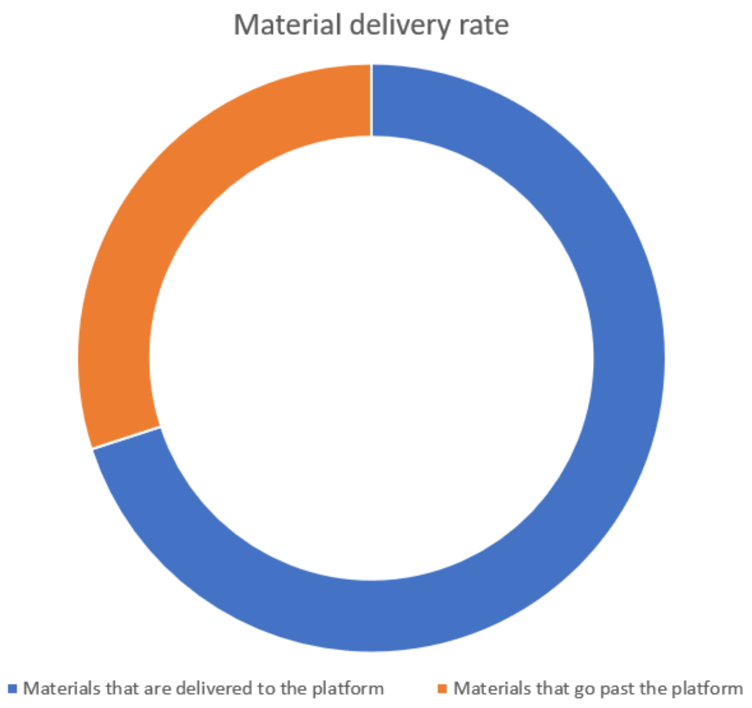


Figure 1 Material delivery rate

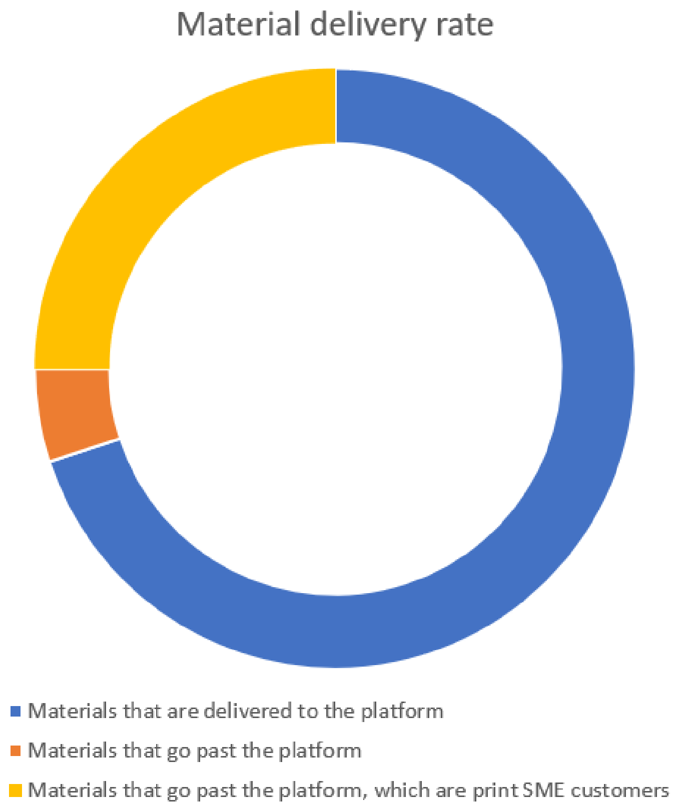


Figure 2 Material delivery, print materials that go past the platform

One of these dimensions is that advertiser clients and client's material contacts can use the platform to deliver advertising material straight through the platform: they receive an email automatically from the system from a noreply address once their media campaign order is confirmed and booked in another platform, where all advertiser client orders are booked and invoiced. The email contains campaign details, material instructions and deadline for the material delivery, as well as contact details for different client handling teams that may help if problems arise, and also a link to a separate website containing more in-detail instructions for material delivery through the platform and further material instructions. The email contains a link to the material management platform, and the advertiser client can upload all their materials straight to Sanoma's advertising campaign management teams through the upload link in the email. Clients can either deliver ready campaign materials that are ready to be run as is, or they can deliver raw material for material production. The material management platform also sends the advertiser client material contact several automated emails around the campaign deadline, if the material has not been delivered in a timely manner or if the material has not been uploaded to all the campaign items (campaign items are for an example in print media different publication dates, and each separate publication date has their own line items where different campaign materials can be uploaded unless otherwise informed, ie. the customer has told them they want to use the same material on several different publication dates).

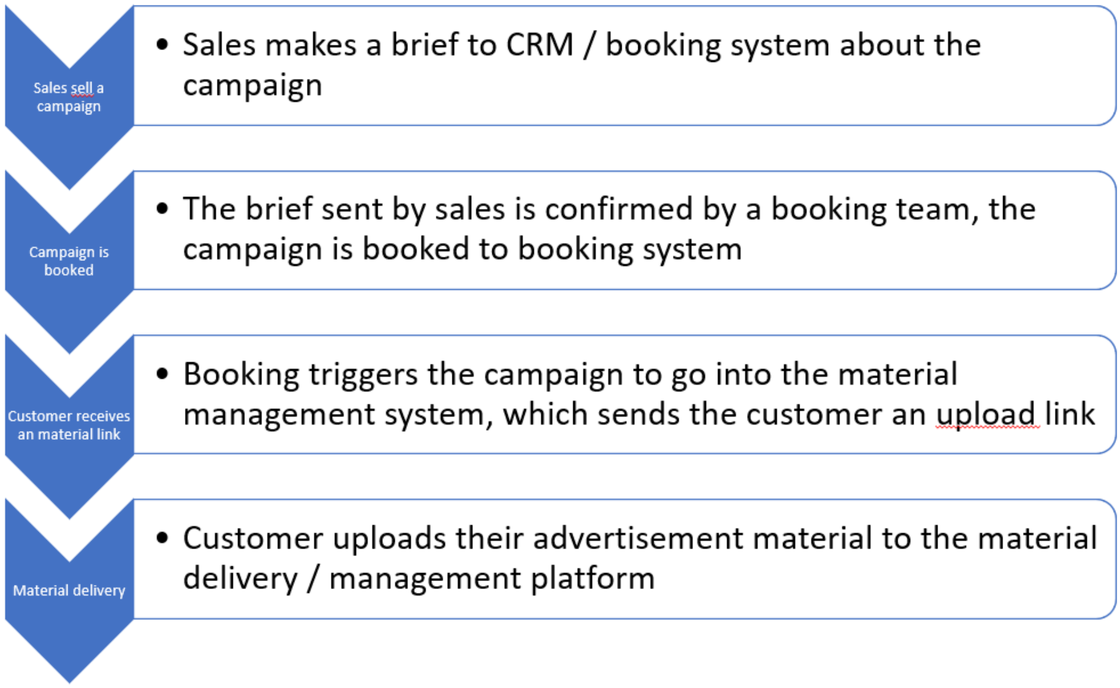


Figure 3 Campaign life cycle to material management

**Campaign info:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Customer | ADvendio Test Advertiser Oy AB |
| Campaign ID | ON-339524 |
| Campaign name | Ellan testi |
| Start date | 30-11-2021 |
| Delivery deadline | See all deadlines on the upload page |

Hei,
Voit lähettää kampanjan kaikki aineistot alla olevan linkin kautta.
Latauslinkki on kampanjakohtainen ja sen on voimassa koko kampanjan keston ajan.

**Aineiston lähetys tästä.**
(Tuetut selaimet ovat Edge, Firefox, Safari ja Chrome. Tiedoston nimessä ei voi käyttää erikoismerkkejä)

**Aineistoihin** liittyvissä asioissa voit olla yhteydessä:
Printti: printtitrafiikki@sanoma.com tai puh. 040 151 1942
Digi: digitrafiikki@sanoma.com tai puh. 040 552 0741
TV, radio, video, supla: tvradiovideotrafiikki@sanoma.com tai puh. 040 704 7870

Figure 4 An example of an ad delivery link.

For this study, we’re taking a closer look at a client segment that’s been identified as not for some reason having taken the material management platform in to use as much as other advertiser client segments, but opt for more traditional ways of delivering materials instead, ie. through email or other possible means. This is a small segment when looking simply at the number of advertisers (these advertiser clients are mostly small and medium-sized enterprises) but large in campaign volume. What’s also interesting is that these customers mainly book and deliver print campaigns and print advertising materials, so in terms of material format that they can deliver to Sanoma production they only have a few options: pdf format for ready advertising materials and simple picture or text documents for raw materials meant for production.

Most of the client contacts come by email to a team that handles these specific requests, and they typically also receive the materials from clients. So for booking a campaign customers have two routes: either through their sales contact or by emailing the booking team. Especially in the previous group, customers often send the materials attached to the same email or they send the materials as a reply to the confirmation email they receive from the booking team. In the former case, sometimes the customer doesn’t receive a material upload link at all but the booking teams send it to themselves and upload the materials when they have booked the whole campaign, and send an order confirmation straight to the customer. Because the material management platform is for the customer to upload materials, they can also use it to update materials and see the status of their advertising campaign, this is not optimal. In the latter case, the customer receives the upload link but for some reason doesn’t use it or attempts to use it but fails and contacts different customer-facing teams through email or phone. Sometimes the phone instructions help the customer upload the material through the platform, but not always. Some customers are also repeat offenders: they may for some reason not want to use the platform but opt for email even after receiving personal instructions on how to proceed. This is inherently bad for the customer as well: the material platform ensures that the campaign material goes to the right campaign at the right time and minimizes the possibility of human error and also makes errors more avoidable and trackable. It also makes tracking materials easier to see whether something’s missing and the customer needs to still deliver the material. So it’s actually not only bad in terms of material process handling but also for the customer, if the material falls through the proper process.

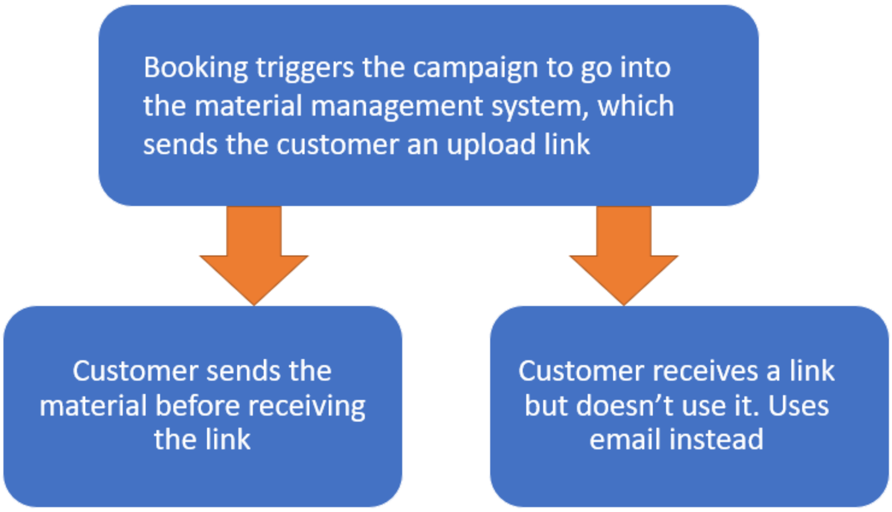


Figure 5 Two different scenarios where the material delivery doesn't go according to process

## 1.3 Scope of the study

The main goal of this study is to identify which measures can and should be taken in order to increase the usage rate of the material management platform among customers in the aforementioned customer segment: Small and medium-sized enterprise advertisers, who mainly buy print adverts in local news media papers. The situation can be divided into two different parts: there are cases where customers simply do not use the material management platform through the material upload link they reserve; and on the other hand, sometimes the customer sends the order and their materials on the same order email and the team handling the booking orders takes the link to themselves and the customer never receives a material upload link, but gets a confirmation link that the order has gone through our process and the advert is ready to be printed in the paper.

This issue will be approached by several different theories that may prove useful in identifying how the issue in hand ("small and medium-sized enterprise local print news media buyers don't use the material delivery platform as much as other client segments") could possibly be solved. An overall look on the theory of transformational leadership will be conducted to better understand how customer-facing teams can be led to working towards strategic goals. A closer look on behavioral economics will be taken on the way our thinking forms and how we end up making the decisions we make. On the other hand, because this is also an issue of customer onboarding, some onboarding theories will be introduced as well as a look at how digital customer experience and user interface design might affect why customers take a different route than originally thought.

After this, several interviews of key stakeholders in different parts of the sales and campaign operation process will be conducted and drawing from the theory and the interviews, next steps will be developed and suggested how to go forward with this issue in order to perform better in this particular client segment in the future. It's possible that there may be a few different possible solutions.

A word on the chosen media category, print, as it may seem counterintuitive to develop the process of a print material handling process. Even though the decline of the printed press seems inevitable, it's still a longer way than one might expect and with the rise of digital products bundled with printed products, it's still a book that hasn't been closed (Lunden, 2008). It's interesting to make a case of a part of a process that's been handled a certain way for a long time, with the possibility that even though the product is a printed one, maybe clients need to get used to more digital processes – how can they be steered to the right direction with efficiency, but without losing the sense that they're still getting good customer service.

## 1.4 Concepts

Advertising product: the space in which the ad material is run, and the material format with possible combined elements, like bundled products where you can buy print and digital ad space together for an example.

Customer segment: a particular sample of customers who behave the same way: in the context of this thesis, a customer segment refers to advertiser customers, not B2C customers.

Display: advertising on networks of publisher websites, like HS.fi.

Material management: the whole process of advertising material handling.

Material delivery platform: a platform through which customers communicate advertising material to different stakeholders that handle the material.

Material management platform: the same platform as the material delivery platform, but used in a wider sense where the same platform is also used in production teams on different parts of the material's life cycle before and after a campaign.

Media: in the context of advertising and publisher sales, media doesn't usually refer to the traditional journalistic content but rather to the advertising space that's usually in the same space as the journalistic content. Ie. print newspaper including journalism and paid content.

Media category: different types of media, for example print, display, video, TV, radio, out-of-home.

Media sales: sales of advertising space in media, should not be confused for an example with journalistic media content.

Print: printed advertisement space, like the front page of Helsingin Sanomat.

SME: small- to medium sized entrepreneurs.

### 1.5 Limitations of this study

Due to the developmental nature of a very hands-on process that's in the center of this study, there are a few limitations I'd like to address. First of all, as the subject seems to be quite straightforward on the first look, it was a surprise there's actually a few different routes you can take when approaching the issue. Should this be approached as a leadership situation of a customer service team, or should it be first and foremost approached as a system development process? If taking the findings to practice, not all suggestions should be applied simultaneously to achieve measurable results and see what actually works. It's also due to the developmental nature of this study that no findings could be applied to practice within this study. However, it was determined that as time was one factor, it's more important to get suggestions and a full development plan rather than wait longer to apply the whole plan to practice. This is also due to the changing nature of different processes in the background that could not be forecasted in the beginning of this study.

There also could have been more people interviewed and the sample size of whose opinion was considered could have been bigger. For this study, the people interviewed were key stakeholders who hold authority over processes and leadership within the teams that work with the case chosen; however, for a bigger impact, another interview with more people who work closely within this process could be conducted to see if another angle arises that could not be identified in these interviews. For this study more people were not interviewed because their team leaders have a very good touch on the issues that their teams face in their daily work and the feedback they receive from the customers.

Another limitation of the interviews was that one of the key stakeholders, customers, couldn't be interviewed. The interviews consist of internal stakeholders only due to limitations from the commissioner.

## 2 Theoretical framework

In the following chapters, the theoretical framework of this study will be gone through. The social themes of change management and leadership and behavioral economics will be explored, as well as more technically inclined themes of customer onboarding, user experience and user interface design.

## 2.1 Change management and leadership

In order to understand change leadership, let's take a look at the concept of leadership. In the dissertation Manager and employee conception of good change leadership (Laurila, 2017) the concept of management versus leadership is defined as having the difference that management is probably someone in the middle management of an organization or specialized change management – it also refers to managing things instead of people. Logically, leadership then is someone on the upper step of the organizational structure, like the highest leadership of a company ie. an executive team or board, with the authority to lead the company vision and possibly take risks. Leadership is also defined as people leading, in comparison to management being managing things. Both of these roles are needed in the hierarchy and they can complement each other and the functions they lead or manage. Leadership takes focus on leading people's feelings, thinking and the relation of these to the working environment and roles; whereas management is more about planning, organizing, controlling and overseeing things. At least three different things set leadership and management aside from each other further; in supervisory roles management is more about the aforementioned controlling and planning, whereas leadership supervision is focused on cheering on the employer, setting the way and promoting know-how. Secondly, another thing setting these roles apart from each other is the way they see change; leadership sees development and creating new as central focus, and management's goal is to keep up order and keep things running. Third thing is time perspective between these roles: leadership has to try to see into the future and see the long game; management is about keeping up daily routine and overseeing things in the short run (Laurila, 2017).

The concepts of change management and change leadership also differ. Change management usually refers to planning how to organize and coordinate things and implementing plans. Change leadership deals with motivating people and tackling things that might create resistance. The role of change management usually tends to be what the conversation goes around when defining change leadership; organizational structures and processes and systems are the focal point of the focus. However, change leadership, the notion of leading the people and their feelings and getting them on board might be even more important and at the very least change management and change leadership complement each other. Both of these, managing things and leading people, may occur in the same roles and often are hard to set clearly apart. Supervisors and team leaders may be tasked with planning the daily routines, but they're often times also tasked with sharing information to their teams and keeping their spirits up, which goes on the territory on leadership instead of simple management, so the dividend between management and leadership roles in an organization isn't always straightforward (Laurila, 2017).

On the issue of whether leadership is change leadership or just regular leadership, the situation defines which is in question. As leadership in itself is change-oriented in nature – it's a relationship between someone who leads and someone who is being led – towards common goals, the situation in which change leadership occurs is what sets it apart in normal, everyday leadership. Change leadership and the need for it occurs when an organization is in the middle of a change of transformation phase. Change can be and often is a part of a strategy where the goal is to take the organization to some point where it currently is not. Defining this means that change in leadership is leading people towards a defined goal. Good leadership is defined as being the right action that's perceived as wished, and that's something that works everyone towards the goals previously defined. Good leadership is successful implementation of an organizational change. An organizational change is when it's deterministic, intentional and it's also defined by the way it's conducted. It also takes into account the fact that who or what's the target of change, the different layers of change and the magnitude of the change (Laurila, 2017).

Transformation is something a little more concrete than change and it's also conceptually different from organizational development. Transformation aims to change the whole organization in a way that changes it holistically. It can target the organization's core mission, strategy, goals, structure and processes, but it also affects the community and cultural norms of an organization and its' individuals. And organization's members have to recognize the need for transformation and its more psychological side, transition. To name examples of organizational changes big enough to reach the magnitude of transformation, a transformation may occur when an organization is downsizing, going through a merger or an acquisition or when it restructures or reorganizes processes and personnel. Transformation is usually conducted in a hierarchical view up to down and it's goal-directed and intentional. Even so, there's always a psychological side to a transformation process and a lot of organizations tend to focus on the technical side of a transformation and fail to address that even if for example organizational restructuring may be implemented, it still takes interaction between people to change the organization's culture (Laurila, 2017).

One aspect of change leadership is cultivating a culture of assessment by means not necessarily only mechanical. Assessment shouldn't only be seen as doing assessment, but as a driving force for utilizing information to drive change and learn. When a culture of assessment is a part of an organization, it's a vital part of planning ahead. John Kotter's eight-step model for organizational change encourages steps that also can be used to enable a culture of assessment. Kotter's steps include establishing a sense of urgency, forming a guiding coalition, creating a vision and communicating that vision and empowering others to act on that vision as well. But it also includes planning and creating wins in the short term, consolidating improvements to create even more change and institutionalizing new approaches. As these have mostly been used to lead change up to down, many organizations and individuals working in them can also apply these methods to change behavior in order to create a culture of assessment by themselves. Still, a good leadership recognizes the need to respond to changes in the environment even if it’s not in the handbook. A culture of assessment is needed to plan change and use assessment to improve – this can be achieved by organizations ingraining this action into their culture and habits, as people tend to fall into old habits eventually. This is why organizations need to make sure the organization’s habits and culture are ones to encourage assessment needed to drive change (Farkas, 2013).

Myths about change leadership include that change starts at the top, it’s perfectly predictable and manageable. Oftentimes, however, change isn’t predictable and happens unintentionally with unintended consequences. Most leadership research focuses on processes and the management side, the actions of organizations and its’ individuals during a crisis. However, a focus shift has been evident as more of it has been on the people instead of companies and organizations as a whole. This is a good shift in focus as people and the people's issues are usually at the core of change management. Organizations consist of the people and their relationships and dynamics (Dumas & Beinecke, 867-875).

One angle to look at successful leadership is the leaders’ emotional intelligence and leadership skills that comes with it. Components of emotional intelligence include self-awareness, that’s the ability to understand emotions and how they affect others; self-regulation, which is the ability to regulate impulses; self-motivation, which manifests itself in the individual ability to find motivation in intrinsic things rather than use money or status as the main driver; empathy, that enables the carrier of this quality to understand the emotion of others and treat them due to their emotional reactions; and social skill that means one’s ability to create and maintain relationships and build rapport. Emotionally intelligent leaders create a safe environment for those affected by change. Today’s work environment is focused on teams; leaders who want to implement change successfully need to create a feeling of community instead of trying to implement change by themselves. Trying to lead change by oneself usually does not end in success. Instead, people who work together towards a goal is more likely to succeed and create a feeling of being in it together: a group of people can also work together in the transformation process and share problems and opportunities. This is especially important in being able to avoid resistance. Resisting change is very natural for humans, but two different types of resistance have been identified when people resist change; irrational and rational resistance. People who have rational resistance arguments are more likely to be persuaded to the change efforts. Rational resisters rationalize their resistance by having feelings of doubt about their own position in the organization or doubt that their value is being recognized, for an example. They can be fearful of losing something.

Emotionally intelligent leaders can help overcome these rational fears and persuade these people to become change positive instead. They can also use their skillset to overcome irrational resistance as well by supporting their cohorts and helping everyone cooperate by displaying emotionally intelligent behavior such as empathy towards whatever feeling is behind resistance, be it rational or irrational. Managing the emotional landscape of themselves and those who struggle, like people who resist change in the first place, helps in the overall change process more than simply overlooking the importance of emotion that's a part of every transformation. With change of organizations for example, people have to change too, and emotionally intelligent leaders can help with this process (Issah, 2018). This can also simply be stated as that change leadership should be conducted by looking at the process from the viewpoint of those who have the role of follower in the change process (Hechanova et al).

Commitment to change has been extensively studied. Because organizations consist of their people, the success of change is dependent on the people and their willingness to support the changes. Fear and stress and other negative reactions often manifest when people are facing change. To support positive feelings instead, organizations should provide extra support for whenever employees face difficulties. Simple steps like communicating change and its goals early on, planning responsibilities and roles and just generally preparing everyone well for the coming change can make a huge difference on the success of the change process and how the people in it perceive it. Making sure everyone who needs training on new technologies and also making sure management itself is generally visibly on board with the change is what is seen as building stones for successful change. Defining stakeholders in the change enables gathering important information from them, such as comments on the planned changes and other possible feedback. Also, if change is greater than just one organization, giving space to alter it to fit the cultural needs of the organization helps establish the change overall. For example, in Singapore an educational reform was conducted in the form of a new curriculum. Different stakeholders were identified and they were able to give feedback and take part in the process of creating a new curriculum. For the schools to want to adopt the new curriculum and make sure everyone did, they were given the freedom to customize the new curriculum according to school culture. However, research shows that there's no one size fits all solution to all organizations; what works in an academic context may not work in a business environment and vice versa. However, studies also support the implication that understanding change leadership schemas helps manage change – coherence also helps with how change management is viewed in organizations and that leads to better commitment to change in followers. Leaders that know their employees' schemas on change and the organization's culture are better equipped to lead change (Hechanova et al).

Failed change processes can get quite costly for organizations. For example, the UK government canceled a huge IT change project after spending 4 billion dollars and ten years on it. One aspect that adds to the costs of a transformational change process is the decreased employee engagement during transformation processes: employee engagement decreases during change and takes years to recover to the same level it was before the change. To combat these negative and expensive effects that come with change processes, research shows that good leadership is vital to make sure everyone knows why the change is inevitable and needed and everyone sees and knows its benefits. Transformational leadership practices support the successful implementation of change and increased employee engagement. Transformational leadership behavior is the most successful during change. It's also to be noted that as employees tend to value value based leadership, values can be used as a way of grounding change and minimizing instability and the feeling of chaos and complexity that's inevitable to come during change. Values of the organization should not be forgotten during change and a transformation process: change does not mean the same as forgetting core values (Caulfield & Senger, 927-945).

One way of approaching the complexity of change leadership and management is the compass model that illustrates the paradoxity of leading change and what different stakeholders value in good leadership. The compass model shows leadership styles that cross each other and their matching pairs: vertical and horizontal communication and action centeredness and emotional centeredness, and coaching and engaging change leadership and inspiring and emancipating leadership. The point of this model is to help navigate different expectations from employees to employers and leadership. It's not unusual that different people expect and value different things from management and leadership, even though usually in leadership research it's been approached as a linear process, which it's most often not in practice (Laurila, 2017).

Emancipating leadership is better suited for a smaller development environment, whereas implementing wide-scale leadership often calls for clearer guidance. Different leadership styles are not mutually exclusive, but the same transformation process than an organization is going through, may call for different takes on leadership at the same time. It's actually possible that more than the whole process, focus should maybe be on which part of the process calls for which kind of leadership; there's some research that supports the notion that to start a transformation process, guidance based leadership is needed to start off the process of transformation and strategic positioning, but in the implementation phase consultative and engaging leadership is better for employee commitment and making the changes stick. In transformation processes different feeling-based leadership styles are also crucial, as emotional leadership for example helps employees deal with the possible negative emotions that may occur when they're going through a change process and all the feelings that may be associated with it. When taking a look at the whole transformation process, it's good to be noted that instead of thinking of it as a linear process it's a complex and sometimes paradoxical process where expectations may vary depending on people and phases of the process. Especially compared to previous research on change leadership, it seems to the importance of emancipating leadership should be valued higher. Its effects on the handling of negative feelings and, in turn, their negative effects on the change process could be higher than previously anticipated. Emancipating change leadership doesn't yet have an established position in the discussion regarding change leadership, but its role should be discussed further. Research does show that a manager's feelings can affect their employees' feelings. This fact is closely linked to the fact that research also shows that in general, people tend to have a tendency to want to communicate the negative feelings they may be going through within the change process, but a lot of organizations don't encourage talk about negative feelings but encourage good attitude and bringing out positive feelings instead. However, suppressing feelings – positive or negative – may have negative effects on both mental and physical health. To help managers and leaders navigate the complexity of the change process and the feelings associated with it, organizations could offer training on recognizing different situations and feelings.  (Laurila, 2017).

## 2.2 Behavioral economics

When having a goal that's directly linked to affecting someone's behavior, it's impossible to simply pass by what behavioral economics has to say about affecting behavior and if it's possible to do without being intrusive or losing the possibility to make choices. And how do we make choices in the first place?

Rational economics (Monahan, 2018) doesn't take psychological factors into consideration and thus has a hard time explaining some behavior that doesn't seem to have economic incentives, for example. Rational economics can't really explain why open source code and platforms emerge, where people share information with others without generally getting anything in return. For rational economics it's hard to explain how someone could find poorly paying jobs motivating; however, a hospital janitor may be happy with their contribution to the hospital's overall mission and thus feel just as motivated as someone that's driven by economic incentives. Studies have shown that monetary incentives don't necessarily produce better results; even the opposite might occur, especially if there has previously been monetary incentive that's then taken away (Monahan, 2018).

Behavioral economics seeks to answer some questions left unanswered by rational economics theories, as we as individuals do not always act rationally as rational economics theories usually lead us to believe. Rational economic theories don't also account for the feelings and emotions that may affect people's actions in the workplace, for example, and don't really include the inner workings of individuals affecting their work. Behavioral economics argues that human behavior is often irrational but not necessarily unpredictable, as behavioral economics mixes psychological research with environmental factors and other things that may affect the decisions made in everyday situations. Different kinds of limitations on the information we have is one thing that can greatly affect the kind of decisions people make, and a myriad of other kinds of factors as well. In the workplace some information may only be available to a limited group of people and this will affect the kind of decisions that are made, as well as whether the decisions are made individually or in a group setting. This leads to a situation where the decision-making environment is often imperfect and uncertain, as well as people's own tendencies, such as whether they're risk-averse or not, for example (Monahan, 2018).

It's been found that what affects our thinking is that people have a two-way system for our thinking process including how we make decisions, for example. Our thought process begins with us having two systems that are called system 1 and system 2. System 1 helps us humans survive in a world of a lot of stimuli: system 1 makes fast decisions and assumptions and reactions to different things that occur in our daily lives. It helps us put some things on autopilot, like for example, we all can answer automatically to the question what equals one plus one? Even better for the fast system 1, if you see the question in a written form: 1 + 1 = ? System 2 is a slower and more deliberate thinking process, more like a background program that processes things more slowly and takes on more complex projects that take more focus. An example of system 2 thinking is when you're told to look at something with a specific characteristic: look for a man with black hair. These two systems help us make sense of the world around us and also explain how we make decisions and assumptions and overall just explains to extent the way our thinking process is inherently built (Kahneman, 2011).

Bounded rationality is a phenomenon that explains further what affects our decision-making. It's usually that we tend to filter out unnecessary background noise when making decisions. However, this means that when we make decisions, our rational ability is limited. For example, the complexity of the task in hand affects how well-informed decisions we're able to make, as well as how much time we have to make the decision, and how much information we have to make the decision. The rationale behind the decisions we make is also tied to our values and risk preferences. Bounded rationality makes us look for solutions that are satisfactory to us at that given moment with the information we have – however, we don't always have all the information that might be necessary to make a really well-informed decision (Bazerman & Moore, 2013).

Cognitive dissonance is a phenomenon where a person has an existing mental model of something and something else conflicts with a pre-existing model or belief, resulting in a recreation of the pre-existing mental model. Mental models help interpret the world around and when that interpretation is interfered with, dissonance occurs. An example of this would be that you believe that the Earth is round, but you're suddenly given evidence that it is, in fact, flat. A feeling of uncomfortableness probably occurs. Irrational behavior can sometimes be because of the uncomfortableness and a strong motivation to maintain cognitive consistency, to achieve this one may try to ignore facts and logic. Another phenomena that also explains why it's sometimes difficult to learn something new or take in new information is called confirmation bias – in a similar manner to the discomfortable feeling or cognitive dissonance, confirmation bias exists to confirm things one already believes in. Decision-fatigue occurs when an individual has to make many decisions. A great example of this is that it's been researched that a judge's ruling is affected by the time of day when they make a decision, instead of the offender's background, for instance. More favorable rulings occurred in the morning, when less decisions had been made for the day, and the opposite of this occurred in the afternoon when a full day of decisions was already behind. The three limitations mentioned lead to a bias called status quo bias. The status quo bias is what follows when individuals are experiencing fatigue and discomfort; when going through these emotions, it's easier to lean towards a known option instead of seeking change. Maintaining the status quo is the easier option. In the corporate context this can be dangerous: it's tempting to keep doing whatever was done that initially led to success in the past, even though it might be better for future results to seek improvement (Monahan, 2018).

Different biases and fallacies affect our decision-making process a lot. There's information available of a number of different biases that, in retrospect, affect most of our decision making but if different biases are recognized when in the middle of a decision-making process, it's easier to understand why we tend to lean towards certain the action and maybe make overall better, more well-informed decisions.

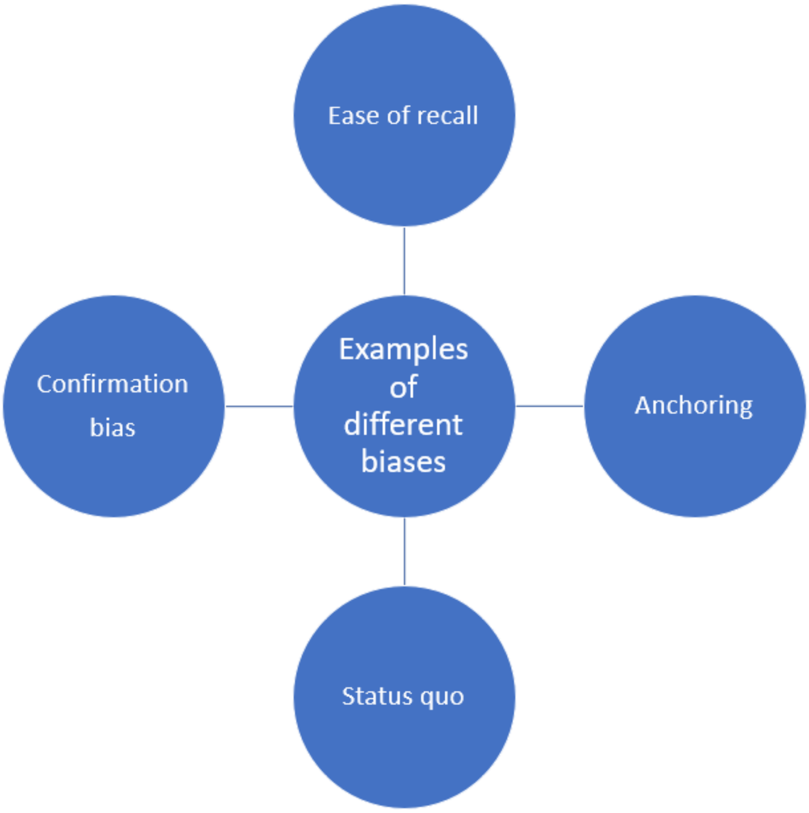


Figure 6 Examples of biases that affect our thinking.

Examples of additional biases are for instance biases based on memory structures and recency and vividness. The latter, for example, a bias called ease of recall is what most marketers call top-of-mind: when given a set of options, we're likely to lean on the one that sounds the most familiar. Another example of this bias is that if you're given a least of different causes of human death reasons and asked to rank them from the most common reason of death to the least common reason of death, people are more likely to rank war higher than respiratory diseases like pneumonia, simply because we read more often about death caused by war on the news than death caused by respiratory illnesses. Another example of a bias is a bias called anchoring. If given a random number to think of before asking whether something is likely to be smaller or larger than that number, whether we like it or not, the first given number is likely going to affect what we answer. For an instance, if asked to think of the last three digits of your phone number, and then adding number one before it to make it a year, that year is going to affect what we're going to estimate is asked when Taj Mahal was built and if it was later or after the completely random year drawn from our phone number (Bazerman & Moore, 2013).

Learning can be affected by something referred to as cognitive load. Studies have shown that learning in classroom settings can be greatly affected by outside distractions like in one study a group of researchers found out a school had varying learning outcomes that completely depended on what side of the school the class was sitting at. The other part of the school pupils that did generally well, sat in classrooms that faced the school's inner yard and had no outside distractions. The other side, on the other hand, sat in a classroom that was affected by a rattling noise of trains passing by on a regular basis. This side of the school did generally not well, learning-result wise. When the noise problem for the train-facing side of the school was fixed, learning results improved and got on par with the other side of the school that sat on the silent inner yard side of the school. Similar to outside noise distractions, inner distractions are a very real distraction as well. A state of scarcity can have a great impact on the general ability to focus on a task. A study was conducted where it was determined that dieters were generally not able to focus on a simple task very well if they were shown a picture of food. This triggered a mental response that took away focus. Internal distractions can be very real. Cognitive load is related to another thing that can greatly affect decision-making and that is emotions in general. As emotions and cognitions have been found to be linked – emotions can trigger physiological responses – they affect the ability to make decisions deemed rational. Research has shown that a study participant's ability to successfully complete a task based on whether they were asked to recall a happy or a sad memory before asking to do the task. In work context it therefore shouldn't be forgotten either that people generally can't be asked to just act rationally, as their emotions need to be taken into consideration as well. Positive emotion can enable people to learn better, whereas negative emotion like stress or anxiety can similarly create bad learning results (Monahan, 2018).

As already slightly discussed, outside factors can affect decision-making as well. Not only individual limitations and emotional responses and states of mind affect the kind of decisions people tend to make, but the influence of others is a factor as well. As individuals are prone to seeking knowledge of behavioral norms in a given context and as such they're social learners, information signals affect the individual decision-making process a great deal. A study conducted by Forbes found that a whopping 81% of consumers consult with and trust their friends and family's opinions on purchasing decisions. While already naturally swayed by others opinions, peoples' decisions are even more greatly affected when perceived power comes into play; how they see the other party and whether they admire them or are intimidated by them, or the other one's perceived expertise is large. This can be very evident in business contexts where not everyone agrees and not everyone holds the same position in the hierarchy, be it absolute or perceived. Herding behavior pushes people in group settings to lean towards the general opinion of the group even if their original opinion might have been completely different. A phenomenon called fear of missing out is closely linked to peoples' natural herding tendencies; a good example of this is when perfectly rational individuals make bad investment decisions based on overheated speculation in the fear of missing out. Social pressure can also lead to self-censoring which can be seen in settings where the group’s preferences differ from those of the individual, and instead of voicing an opinion the individual opts for staying silent instead. Self-censoring can manifest in order to protect one’s reputation, but it’s also one reason why poor decisions are made. If there’s no psychological safety to voice an opinion in a group setting, an individual may ponder that it’s better to keep self in line with everyone else instead of stepping out or disagreeing with the group or the group’s most powerful individual. Especially in organizations this can lead to harmful groupthink where a lot of people self-censor in order to maintain the group’s harmony. This is especially harmful when the majority of the group might actually disagree with the decision made but none of them step up so everyone assumes everyone else agrees (Monahan, 2018).

Learning new things isn’t only mentally hard and hard to encourage, but it can also be encouraged by a number of factors, intrinsic motivators being the key component. External motivators can have an even diminishing result on performance and results; as determined earlier, an example of this is that if a group has had a monetary incentive and it gets taken away, they are likely to perform a lot less well on a task on both occasions (when they are given incentive and after it gets taken away) than a control group that’s asks to just complete the same task twice for sheer gratification of completing it. One dimension of intrinsic motivators is autonomy with social support. In the workplace, a feeling of autonomy is achieved when an individual feels like they can make decisions regarding their own work. This, however, does not mean a lack of leadership – autonomy with support means that in the workplace the employees’ autonomy is supported by mechanisms that encourage autonomous behavior but also supports decisions that benefit the company. Research supports this; a study in the 1970s was conducted where two groups of nursing home patients were given different levels of autonomy. The first group could determine their own schedule and move furniture around as they liked, the second group was told they had access to nursing staff that did all these things for them. The study concluded that not only did the level of autonomy improve the well-being of the first group, they also lived longer than the second group. The sense of autonomy has positive overall results; however, research has also shown that the opposite can occur when an individual loses a sense of previously felt autonomy. Losing autonomy can lead to active protest against the feeling of losing control. The tendency to resist control is why researchers have found a sense of autonomy to lead to better learning outcomes (Monahan, 2018).

Improved learning outcomes can also be accomplished by encouraging an environment of growth. Studies have shown that in the workplace, the need for growth is the single biggest motivator in all different levels of an organization. This is due to the fact that the human brain produces dopamine when perceived individual growth or learning happens – humans are naturally inclined to pursue growth and learning new things. This also explains why organizations that encourage personal growth are more prone to knowledge sharing among employees and innovation and development happens more than in counterpart organizations that do not encourage growth or learning. Another area of focus in organizations driving for better outcomes should be the perception of the meaning. Due to the significant amount of time people tend to spend at work, for most people work is also the primary source of identity and meaning. Meaning or purpose answers the question why we do what we do. Studies have found that meaning is more important in performance at work than knowledge about what benefits the employee receives at the workplace. An individual's perception on the purpose and meaningfulness of their job can affect performance, engagement and overall well-being as well (Monaha, 2018).

Another aspect that can greatly affect an individual's decision-making is the need to belong. This aspect has been widely overlooked in rational economic theory, but the impact of social dynamics is important as individuals do not make decisions completely privately, devoid of the influence of other people's opinions. The ability of doing what's mostly usually encouraged by companies – learning, sharing knowledge et cetera – is widely affected by whether the environment enables or constrains it. Individual cognitive processes exist, but not outside of the individual's relationship with others and their environment. People have a natural inclination to conform to social norms. There's a lot of examples of social experiments where an individual has received information on how others have acted in the same situation – one of the more famous ones being hotel room messages about how many others opted to preserve water and used the same towel more than once. People are constantly assessing what is the social norm and customary in different settings, and wanting to act according to what's the norm. This is especially important to factor in in organizations that work in teams – and at the same time it's interesting how it's possible to affect individual action as well with the perceived action of others by simple messages in a situation where there's no other people around (Monahan, 2018).

Considering individual's actions and the psychology behind it, bounded rationality alongside the need for intrinsic motivators explain away some of the why's in why we act a certain way in different situations and what drives specific action and decision-making processes. While individuals tend to assess their relation to others and how different action changes the dynamic and their social position, individuals are also naturally a bit hesitant to change and the uncomfortableness that usually occurs with it. To drive change in the decision-making process, behavioral economics research offers some tools that better take into consideration the natural inclination to do what people do (Monahan, 2018).

With the knowledge obtained about a human's natural tendency to try to appeal to others and keep up social norms and relationships, this can also lead to dishonesty especially in settings where individuals know they're being observed, or they're asked to describe their own behavior without observation at all. The prevalence of dishonesty in research settings or others is partly due to a person's preference: some prefer honesty over dishonesty more than others. This preference to lie aversion can greatly be affected by outside factors just as other dimensions of a person's actions can be. For example, a deeply religious person may be more lie-averse than others, because many religions deeply condemn lying. A person's tendency to act honestly may also be deeply related to the social norm of the context they're in: if honesty is normative behavior and it's expected of everyone, people may be more inclined to act according to the norm. If honesty is expected of everyone, then people are more likely to conform by the norm (Bucciol, 2019).

Knowing how our decision-making process can be affected by a number of more or less seemingly completely random things, is it possible to affect the seeming randomness and maybe create an environment where we could be led towards better decisions? The term nudging that has been coined by behavioral economist Richard Thaler and legal scholar Cass Sunstein refers to a concept of affecting behavior with positive reinforcement or indirect suggestions – creating and affecting a choice architecture where we're nudged towards certain decisions (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009). An example of positive reinforcement could be one of Thaler's studies where people were automatically enrolled to a pension savings plan as opposed to not being enrolled at all and having to do it themselves if they wanted to be a part of a pension savings plan. They could opt out of the automatically enrolled and pre-chosen plan or change it to another plan more to their liking – however, if they wanted to do absolutely nothing or didn't think of this at all, they'd still be part of the basic savings plan if they didn't make the effort to opt out of it. This, of course, made the number of people saving for pension skyrocket (Thaler, 2017).

This kind of nudging is intriguing; it's simply so that you change the basic setting of the situation to get to the more desired outcome, without being very intrusive. In the context of this thesis' case, maybe it could be changed so that the customer gets an upload link whenever they book a campaign with materials (that are not old materials the company already has and can use) – so even if they send the materials with the order, they receive the upload link anyway which might make them wonder if some action is required of them.

Thaler's nudging has also faced some criticism. In 2015, the Australian government announced the formation of a new behavioral economics unit inside their Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet. The more critical voices voiced their concern on whether at worst, the unit could lead to meddling and over-regulation, as well as not lead to real action but maybe instead the nudges may just prove to be a tad too trivial or more like shoves than nudges, as nudging isn't supposed to do more than just affect the choice architecture in which we can still do bad choices as they're not eliminated like a nanny state probably would. An example of the Australian government's nudging unit in action was that late taxpayers received a letter urging them to join the millions of Australians who have already paid their share in supporting the happy Australian way of life. This proved an effective message, as payment rates increased. However, some actions introduced as nudging were deemed less impressive, like sending a text message to taxpayers - the argument being that does a text message really count as behavioral economics or is it just regular debt collection. It's been argued that maybe behavioral economics and nudging shouldn't just be applied from government to citizens, but from government to policymakers as well (Berg, 2015).

Another critical angle to nudging is the question whether nudging is actually ethical or not. As people we make decisions based on the choice architecture we have and the very essence of nudging is to manipulate that choice architecture in order to steer us to make better (or desired) decisions. By default, private and public institutions provide us with a default set of choices and this default creates preferences and outcomes. Even if it's unavoidable for institutions to not set default choice architectures, it's already a question of ethical issues of its own. Even choices that seem spontaneous usually have a nudging effect behind them. On top of this it can be identified that on the ethical side there are four categories that can greatly be affected by nudging; welfare, autonomy, dignity and self-government. An example of a welfare-reducing nudge could perhaps be an educational campaign that actually persuades people to buy insurance they don't need. A choice architecture is however inevitable; when you walk into a store, you see some products first and others later and this may affect what you walk out of the store with. Different kinds of nudges can be identified with similar goals: others are to protect people from their own mistakes, whereas others can be designed to steer people in a direction that's supposed to make their lives better. These nudges can be judged by pondering whether they increase welfare or not. The reasoning behind the nudges used is a big part of the question whether the nudges applied are actually ethical or not; if a choice architecture is altered, what is the reason behind the alterations and nudges and what are they designed to do? As a warning is a nudge, an example of a nudge with illicit reasoning that goes against social norms would be to warn people against a certain minority group, suggesting they have some evil (non-existent) plans (Sunstein, 2015).

To avoid the aforementioned ethical repercussions of affecting people's choice architecture, a good step to take is to encourage a choice architecture environment which requires active choosing, which encourages people to actively make a choice without requiring to do so. A choice architecture should also be transparent. If it's a government issue, it should also be open to public scrutiny. However, these conditions still do not justify a nudge in themselves. A nudge should still be considered according to the reasoning behind it to see whether it's actually ethical or not. It is however important to notice that a nudge does also not automatically be ethically right if it doesn't have illicit goals – when added an aspect that states a nudge can be determined to be right if the welfare of its' chooser is bettered, and they see it so themselves as well, that's a better standard for judging a nudge. This is a hard rationale as there isn't an objectively good life, but people define the standard for themselves, themselves. This also begs the question whether the choosers' opinion should be asked before or after the nudge – if the latter, the very same people who define the choice architecture might engineer the judgment instead of the chooser. Another question is preferences; first-order and second-order preferences, which mean that people might one to do one thing but not want to do it. For an example people might want to eat delicious unhealthy foods, and also not want have that want to eat them – there's no clear answer which order of preference should be better, but if the second-order preference is in line with our rationale of and logical System 2 thinking, then it looks like they're the superior order of preference. (Sunstein, 2015).

The father of the term nudging, Richard Thaler, has also coined its' counterpart term sludging – it's a concept that answers to the aforementioned criticism as well by citing that with the well-meaning nudges that may help people save for retirement, can turn into not-so-well-meaning sludges that, for an example, can only be meant to plug sales by questionable means. Thaler explains that the goal of the nudge is to help people by affecting the choice architecture to make better choices for themselves, but if used wrong it can be reversed to sludging that can discourage behavior that could be good for and individual or encourage behavior that's outcome is bad, like investing in a bad deal (Thaler, 2018). In the context of this case it's noted that if the concept is utilized, nudging isn't meant for any other purpose simply than maybe bettering the material process and minimizing risk around mishandling of materials – the story might be different if it would be utilized to encourage or trick customers to buy things they don't need.

## 2.3 Onboarding

Customer onboarding is a crucial point in any given sales process, but it's also in the center of this case study's process that needs to be taken a further look at. Since we've lived on a down market for a long while now, we know a down market is a buyer's market and the key point to successful customer onboarding is taking it slow and doing this on their preferred pace (Miller, 2011).

In the book Practical Customer Success Management : A Best Practice Framework for Rapid Generation of Customer Success by Rick Adams (2020) onboarding is introduced as a part of a whole customer success management framework – PCSMF framework, which is short for practical customer success management network. Onboarding is defined as the initial stage of getting the customer to know the solution they're going to use and help the customer start getting value from their purchase from the get-go (Adams, 2020). It should be noted that even though onboarding is usually defined as a part of a process of a customer taking upon a purchase like a whole new software, in the context of this study onboarding is still important in its traditional sense; as onboarding is defined by Adams as what's the root of fruitful relationship between the customer and the service provider, the same goes for this study’s case: we’re taking a look at onboarding of new customers who should take on the whole material delivery process through a material management platform, and most customer tend to buy not only one but several print ads, so the issue is ongoing if the customer doesn’t for some reason take on to using the material management platform. So in the same sense as traditional onboarding, this study is focused on a part of a process that’s supposed to be an ongoing part of the process and customer relationship (Adams, 2020).

Adams describes two different approaches to onboarding. The first one – generic onboarding - is that you can provide the customer with a set of onboarding documentation – the pro of this approach being that the customer is provided with a lot of information. Generally, this is recommended if the product or solution is generic and there’s little room for customization, and if it’s also low enough in value that it doesn’t make sense to provide every customer with a customized onboarding service. The second one, customized onboarding, entails doing a tailored onboarding process for each customer’s specific need. This takes infinitely more effort, as it’s first needed to consult with the customer enough to get a broad enough sense of their specific needs. Combining these two onboarding models would be for an example that a generic onboarding process is created and it’s developed due to different customer needs. This could be the case with solutions that have different client-side groups affected by the solution initially. In the context of the case of this study, something between the generic and combined models would probably come to question – the case ticks both criteria for the generic process, being non-customizable and having to be scalable. Interesting idea, however, would be to log all customer segments into different categories, determine each one’s expected onboarding needs, create an onboarding plan for each one and then go into detail how to customize, if needed and possible to do (Adams, 2020).

One part of managing the onboarding process is suggested that the customer be scored to specify their individual needs. Adams discusses the four influencers of onboarding that help understand the customers’ onboarding needs: product or service complexity itself, customization work required by the customer, customer needs for adoption of the service and its’ requirements for the customer to fully utilize the service or product, and customer maturity levels for adopting and utilizing the service or product. To score a customer’s needs due to these influencers, Adams suggests giving the customer a score from 0 to 5 for each point, and the higher the number, the more the customer needs onboarding customization (Adams, 2020).

It’s also suggested that onboarding could and should be treated as its own project wholly, with a project management plan as a tool for the successful completion of the onboarding process with defined activities for each part of the plan. The plan should follow the steps of a regular project management process, where different steps of the process and key stakeholders and timetables will be described (Adams, 2020). See table below.

Table 1 Project management process, modified from Adams, 2020.

| | |
|---|---|
| Activities | What will be done |
| Assets and resources | Assets and resources needed, where do they come from |
| Timing | Delivery dates of different phases, start and end dates |
| Dependencies | What must be done before the start of the onboarding process? |
| Roles and responsibilities | Who will do what |
| Targets and measurements | How success will be measured, what target defines the process completed |
| Risks | Possible risks & plan to manage them |
| Reporting | Who needs information of different steps of the process and in what format will that information be delivered? |

After looking at more concrete tools to the onboarding process and defining customer needs, another angle is onboarding strategy – as explained with a case assignment for Tieto invoicing & onboarding their customers, students were asked to provide a strategy for Tieto to onboard business partners with. An onboarding strategy can be created and define its impact on market structure (Penttinen & Rinta-Kahila, 2017). A case presented by Dunkin' Donuts showed success by having Dunkin' Donuts always positioning customers at the center of everything they do. The company found that by streamlining and automating its internal processes it could focus more time to deliver on unmatched customer experiences. Their key finding was that "customers expect seamless and personalized experience from the companies they do business with every step of the way." (PR Newswire, 2016). So how to create that onboarding strategy further than with the tools mentioned before and how to streamline that customer journey?

SIS (service interaction space) Framework is a framework created for streamlining customer engagement to reach a more streamlined process for customer touchpoints – a characteristic of a successful customer interaction is that a customer feels no bumps along the way when they pick up where they left originally, no matter what part of the process. It's meant to deepen the understanding of service interfaces that facilitate customer-firm interactions. The concept of SIS refers to possible points of customer-firm interaction, with a universe of possible variations for the point of customer interaction; the points can be mostly human or mostly automated, or something in between these two (Sing et al, 2021).

A great possible point of frustration for a customer and an aspect that greatly can affect customer satisfaction is the dysconnectivity between when a customer may need service and the devices, they use may vary from those they are trying to reach, creating gaps in the time and space when a customer is trying to reach their agent, for an example. A growing number of devices can prove to be difficult to be able to provide seamless customer engagement. To combat this, companies tend to map their customer journeys at least to some extent, even though most companies also agree a one-voice customer journey is imperative. In order to address these issues, the SIS Framework and a one-voice customer journey is suggested; organizations should be thought of as “social communities, that specialize in the creation and transfer of knowledge [intelligence]”, the creation in this meaning learning and transfer meaning coordination. There’s a duality between human and machine and the framework is meant to combine these two to develop learning and coordination for organizations to reach competitive advantages. To further elaborate, the learning capability is defined by the firm’s ability to gather intelligence through human learning for example through customer agents and on the other hand, what data companies can gather from their automated customer interaction points. The next point forward is the company’s ability to coordinate action according to the intelligence gathered and create a service environment where everyone and everything works like they were able to predict each other’s action beforehand. Integrated processes instead of silos is the key to the process of creating a one-voice customer engagement journey, however, it’s important to recognize which combination of human/machine fits the organization and its goals best. It needs to be identified how intelligence is gathered in an organization (is it human or machine generated), and how that intelligence is coordinated (human or machine coordination), and how different combinations of these human and machine functions mesh with creating a streamlined one-voice strategy (Singh et al, 2021).

An industry that keeps an ever-evolving onboarding process going on is the finance and banking industry, that has mandatory due diligence for its customers. Know-your-customer, or KYC, is a process where the customer’s identity is verified and possible risks are evaluated that can possibly affect the business relationship, especially risk associated with corruption (Doig, 2011). In comparison to regular onboarding processes, KYC is defined by its regulatory state and the fact that banks and other financial institutions have no option but to carefully vet their customers before doing any business with them. There has been criticism around the fact that the KYC process is costly and outdated which leads to hindered customer satisfaction, which has led to research on more modern KYC processes especially with the endless possibilities of modern technology. One such suggestion is utilizing DLT (distributed ledger technology), of which maybe the most famous example is blockchain technology used by crypto currencies such as Bitcoin and Ethereum. According to design science research, one goal is to create a technology solution to a business problem, and in the case of banking for an example the business problem is very similar to this case study's problem – the old process is not scalable without being costly and leaving customers unsatisfied. With technology like private blockchain, it could perhaps be possible to create a revised KYC process where different banking organizations in the need of the same information from the same customer could share costs by creating a shared private blockchain where one could add the information from the customer and others could benefit from the same information, without having to go through the same KYC process with the same customer from the start again (Moyano & Ross, 2017).

## 2.4 User experience and user interface

Another dimension that can't be overlooked when talking about an issue that revolves around a platform's usage, is user experience and user interface, which are both closely linked to how a customer sees and interacts with a platform.

A way to manage better user experience is to create user experience maps. In the book User Experience Mapping (Szabo, 2017) this idea is explained further. There's a slew of different kinds of user experience maps for different situations and goals to be achieved by trying to better understand how users are going to navigate what process is under scrutiny. In an attempt to understand mapping, it's good to note how software design has changed; in the early days of commercial software design, a waterfall model for project management was kicked off by creating a requirements document that was usually lengthy and tried to address every possible user need and situation before the project could proceed. It was usually also a product of compromise; the analysis for the software needs was written by people such as business analysts and product owners, who approached the project with different needs in mind. As we already know, it's hard to think of every possible scenario beforehand and it's also very hard to avoid miscommunication and follow along requirements documents to a tee in different departments working on the project. It also takes away some responsibility for changing requirements. Instead, it's better to improve communication to achieve shared understanding between different stakeholders in the process. Maps are one way of creating better understanding of a shared vision. While maps shouldn't be created as an only deliverable without having conversation around them, it's good to understand how to create a simple map to begin with. A most simple way of trying a hand in creating a user experience map is to define the output of the map – what happens when because of the map. Then the outcomes should be defined as well: the results of the map's usage, and then finally the opportunity is what we wish to achieve with the help of the map we've created. The goal is to maximize opportunity and minimize the output by visualizing what the users want. It's also important to make sure the map is actually a visualization of something viable by means of limitations like budget, resources and other possible constraints. It's not supposed to be a dream map but a tool to simply help visualize what can be achieved with the resources at hand. To further make the map and the process itself work, it's important to create a backlog or simply put a prioritized list of things. At the very first phase of visualization, time estimates of the backlog items is not important, but at later stages this becomes very crucial. A very popular tool for categorizing backlog items is the Three R format, where you assign the role, the requirement and the reason for each item to help prioritize (Szabo, 2017).

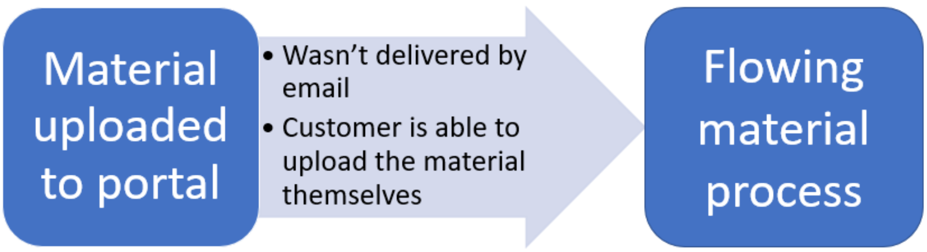


Figure 7 Example of a simple map - output, outcome and opportunity.

Let's take a further look at a few different kinds of maps that could prove useful, keeping the case of this study in mind. The most popular type of map and also perhaps most used, is the user story map. They're meant to create better products by keeping the user in the center by solving the user's problems. To create a user story map, is to create a good story – we all love stories and they're easy to comprehend. One goal of the user stories is to identify surplus of anything in the process and eliminate possible things that most of the users don't even use and thus shouldn't be prioritized in the first place. Less is more (Szabo, 2017).

The first step on creating this kind of a user story map is to think of the audience and their problems. Who are they and how would their specific target group find this story engaging? A good story starts with action and less backstory than might first come in the mind. Simplification is also important, as too much detail will destroy conversation. If we think of the previously examined simple map, a story should start with an opportunity to engage and show passion. A good user story follows the INVEST principles. I stands for independent, which means that every user story should not be dependent on the other stories and therefore their prioritizing or eliminating shouldn't be dependent on the other stories. N is for negotiable. Each story should be open for discussion, and as a result of the discussion, any story could be rewritten or dropped. V is for valuable. The goal is to create something that has value for someone, and hopefully that someone is both the user and the business. E is for estimable – it's for making some sort of an estimate to when the storyline could be implemented, without forgetting that estimating is generally hard and the time estimate needs to be open for changes. S in INVEST stands for small; a good user story is small. Smaller stories encourage discussion whereas larger ones destroy it. T stands for testable. It encourages smaller user stories as they're easier to test, and also if something is testable, you understand it well enough. If it doesn't seem testable, there's probably not enough information. And finally to create user story maps is usually done with story cards that can be easily moved around. After this, it's time for a conversation where the cards can be moved around. In this part it's necessary to involve different stakeholders of the process, not just developers, for example. Finally, as the stories have been discussed, it's time for confirmation. Creating user story maps is simply arranging cards in order to create stories (Szabo, 2017).

The second type of user experience map is a journey map. It's a tool meant for understanding user's behavior when they go through a certain route trying to accomplish whatever goal they have. While a lot of user experience maps are called journey maps, a journey map is defined by taking a look at a route through a solution. It's also sometimes good to take a look at competitor solutions by creating journey maps of them. To begin creating user journey maps, personas are needed – the journey maps are always based on these. Personas are made-up short characters that represent the users that have a goal they want to achieve in the map. To create these personas, it's vital to investigate existing and potential users through user research. There's a lot of different ways to gather this information especially on existing users, the least budget-friendly but most valuable being user interviews. Other options include making use of whatever existing data can be drawn from, like existing databases or analytics such as site analytics. After this each identified behavior should be rated depending on their likelihood to occur. When different personas have been created, one of them will be selected as the  primary persona and everything will be developed keeping the primary persona in mind and if something needs to be prioritized, the needs of the primary persona will be the one that gets prioritized. When the personas have been created, task models will be created as well. Task models are stories of what the aforementioned personas do at different points of their journey. The task model serves as the question asked by the persona – it gives a specific route with our solution. The task model is created using the same research that was used to define the different personas. User journey is the path through a system that the user takes and the map shows the different interactions along that path. The goal is to design to maximize the opportunity and minimize the outputs (Szabo, 2017).

One type of user experience map is very much in line with the behavioral economics and nudging that's been discussed earlier in chapter 2.2 Behavioral economics. It's called a behavioral change map and its goal is to push users to change their behavior to something that is more beneficial for them. While we've already gone deeper into behavioral economics, it's not time to take a look at how to plan and map change in the context of user experience. The first step to thinking of a behavioral change map and creating is thinking of how important to affecting behavior is credibility. High credibility leads to higher influence on the users – for example, if the site they're entering looks scammy, they probably click themselves away and nothing further action from them is not recorded. While it's not the only criteria that affects behavior, higher credibility helps (Szabo, 2017).

A classic model for behavioral change is the cue-routine-reward framework. There has to be something that triggers action (cue), something that maintains consistency in repeating the action (routine), and a possible positive event in the end (reward). As routine doesn't require conscious thought but it just happens, the cue-routine-reward circle can also be described as addiction. However, behavioral change isn't only applicable to addictions. To create a simple desire to do something, there needs to be one of two types of cues. External cues are the ones that can be affected and in time, they can turn to internal cues; marketing is often creating external cues on purpose. Receiving targeted emails for things you're interested in keep something in mind and in time, those emails may not be needed but you wander off to your favorite online shop to browse anyway (Szabo, 2017). In marketing terms, this phenomenon is called TOM (top-of-mind) – an easily retrievable memory (Stepchenkova & Li, 2014). So a simple formula for cue-routine-reward framework is that you need a cue (external, which might in time turn to internal and trigger the next phase without any external push) that trigger action, routine that keeps up the action, and a possible reward in the end and from there you go back to the cue again, and repeat. Another way of affecting behavior is automating repetition. As I'm writing this, my text editor program saves my progress automatically, so I don't have to constantly press save Szabo, 2017).

The LEVER framework is one way of creating desired change in a predetermined way. LEVER stands for limitation, elevation, validation, ease and reversibility. Limitation refers to creating a mental image of rarity or scarcity of whatever product is being offered – like for an example online shops may show there's only two items left in the storage, so you better hurry to get one. Elevation means to elevate some items instead of removing options altogether, like recommending something in a certain category by saying it's a bestseller. Validation is helping the customer validate their choice. One example of validation is making recommendations about items that were previously purchased together. Ease simply stands for easiness – the more east something is to do, the more likely the customer is to do it. Reversibility is important as people are averse to making commitments, so making it also easy for them to reverse the decision later when possibly having second thoughts, helps them make the decision in the first place. One thing about the LEVER framework is that it doesn't matter in which order the steps are, as users can be exposed to them in a random order and it's not really necessary to try to affect that order. To create a behavioral change map, you need to apply the LEVER framework with the addition of external cues (that in time may become internal cues), and encouraging routine (Szabo, 2017).

There are finally also ecosystem maps that make a holistic overview of the solution and its connection to everything around it. Unlike the maps explored previously, ecosystem maps don't only take a look at a detailed part of the solutions' process, but they're introduced within a greater context. By ecosystem in the context of user experience, means all of the functions together that the user comes to touch with when interacting with the solution. This means everything from software to people (Szabo, 2017).

In the center of the ecosystem map is the solution that's the focus of scrutiny in the mapping. To find entities related to the solution, categories will be created by asking six questions: how, who, when, where, what and why. How far different dimensions for these questions are from the center of the map, is the scale of the entity; closer to the edge means bigger scale. Assembling these pieces together forms a basic context of the solution. This basic context can be used to describe what the solution is needed for in full sentences: it's used by ___ to ___ because ___ (Szabo, 2017).

An ecosystem map is best used to understand an overview of the user experience through a certain solution. In a similar way to the ecosystem map, a stakeholder map can be created to form an understanding of all the different people working around the solution and their different kinds of needs and stakeholder categories. Similar to the ecosystem map, stakeholders also can be arranged from closest to farthest from the solution to represent how close they are to the solution and how often they might need different kind of reporting, for example. Stakeholders are the people associated with the solution that have power to make changes and they are vital to the success of whatever the solution's goal is. Stakeholder maps along with ecosystem maps help make sense of the overview of the dimensions of the solution and the people working with or utilizing the solution. (Szabo, 2017).

# 3 Method

In this chapter we will look at the methods for gathering information from the key internal stakeholders in this process. The chosen method is doing interviews with the stakeholders, and the interviews are constructed based on the literature review.

## 3.1 Qualitative research

A qualitative research method differs from a quantitative method in a sense where in qualitative research the goal is not to find an absolute truth but rather find meaning and connection in the things studied. With the qualitative method you're always looking for the connections between concepts and experience, and there's always a distinction between the two. It's also needed to clarify if you're looking at a concept or the experience - this distinction defines how one should define the original research problem and the goals. While it’s never possible to find out everything about someone’s experiences, the researcher will set up the research problem and questions in the light of their own knowledge of the subject, knowing that it may change when their own perception of the issue changes too. The fact that the relationship between the researcher and the person who’s experiences they’re looking at will inevitably affect the outcome, needs to be taken into account. Thus, not only questions that answer the question “what” should be asked, but also a lot of “whys” should be intended towards the research material (Vilkka, 2021).

Overall, the research should be defined in three dimensions: first, the context needs to be taken a look at where it becomes evident, how the questions asked are linked to a wider picture and what was the research setting like where questions were asked. Second, it has to be taken into account what's the intention and motivation behind the claims made in the research setting. It all affects how the material should be viewed - even if a subject was lying for example, there’s an intention behind it. Third, the process itself can affect the outcome greatly: for example, with a rigid schedule there’s a limited opportunity to deep dive in a given problem (Vilkka, 2021).

## 3.2 Interviews as a material gathering method

Interviews as a method for gathering information is a useful one but needs to be considered carefully. There’s always power dynamics between the interviewer and interviewee, where the interviewee’s opinion is heard because it’s of interest to the interviewer and their research. The goal of conducting interviews should be to actually increase understanding of the research problem itself. If they don’t, the interviews aren’t maybe the most effective way for the research to be conducted (Silvennoinen, 2016).

When interviews have been chosen as the method of gathering data for the study, the interviews can be constructed in different ways. The interview questions should be constructed in a way where the topics are thought through and the questions relate to each other. This can be done while still making sure the questions are not the same; the development of good interview questions needs to have a thought process behind where the questions don’t repeat themselves. The redundancy question should also be applied to the length of the interviews: every single interview should be recorded and transcribed, thus meaning that every person and question you add to the initial interview process will add additional hours to the overall process of handling the interview material (Gillham, 2005).

For this study, the semi-structured interview was chosen as the interview type. The semi-structured interviews will be constructed so each interviewee will be asked the same questions, but they will also be asked more additional questions if the course of the conversation naturally goes into that direction or something the interviewee possibly says needs further clarification. All the interviews will be given approximately the same time, and all the questions will be open so the interviewee in a sense isn't given an opportunity to answer yes or no, but the questions will prompt more conversation. After the interview, the material needs to not only be transcribed but the data acquired has to be of use to the study: otherwise, the process of gathering material through interviews is redundant (Gillham, 2005).

# 4 Interviews

In this section, backgrounds of the interviewees will be explained to shed light on why these individuals were chosen as the ones to be interviewed. The interview setting will also be discussed. The interview material itself of the key internal stakeholders will be explored in depth and the interview material will be analyzed.

## 4.1 Interviews of key stakeholders

As seen on the table below, five people on different areas of responsibility from the sales and operations processes were interviewed.

Table 2. Profiles of key stakeholders participating in the interview process

| Title | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| Sales director | Area sales management |
| Development director | Area sales development |
| Development director | Area sales development |
| Team lead, ad operations | Advertising operations, campaign & material management lead |
| Team lead, media service | Campaign booking, reporting, sales support lead |

To learn more about the process and its complications and possible development possibilities, five key people that view the material delivery process from different angles were interviewed. All of them lead different parts of the whole process and most of them have direct reports that experience the difficulties in the process, so all interviewees had a sense of the process, having received feedback from their direct reports and their client contacts.

Each was first explained the overall process (although they are all already familiar with it, but to start with the same level of understanding of why we're discussing this) and described the customer segment that's on further inspection. Then they were all asked questions with the emphasis on no right or wrong answers, but instead carefully considering the question at hand, looking at it from their position, possibly giving insight on why they thought the current state of things is the way it is, and also thinking of feedback and ideas. As the interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews, some additional questions were asked from all of the interviewees as the discussion on different topics went on.

Three of the answerers work on the commercial side, one of whom has hands-on experience on the sales' departments complications regarding the material process, and two who work as development directors, having knowledge on the process itself and why some approaches have been taken while others have not been explored. Two answerers work on the operative side of the business that takes care of customer's campaigns that have already been sold – production teams. As in the whole sales process sales, as well as all individual sides of the process are separated on different teams that specialize on a specific area of responsibility, all interviewees look at the same thing from a very different angle. In a company this size, the journey of a single sale goes from the first contact with a customer through many different teams before final delivery and reporting of the campaign's success. The interviews were conducted to better understand different points of view on the complications of the process and identify issues that may have gone unnoticed before, as well as gather new insight, information and ideas how this could be developed to reach a larger margin of customers who would adopt the material management platform to their use and continue to utilize it.

### 4.1.1 Overview of the commercial viewpoint

For this section two development directors and one sales director from the SME segment management were interviewed. They all have first-hand experience on the sales side issues of the material delivery process, with one working straight with sales and two working in sales development.

In the first question, all three respondents mentioned the customer's lacking technical know-how and abilities – they all separately agreed that the first and foremost special quality in this customer segment is that most of them aren't technically savvy. One respondent went into detail to describe the issues their team in the sales department had observed with the customers. They felt that the customer's issues on material delivery depended greatly on the production method of the material; as the material delivery for ready materials is different from materials that go to production, it depends which one the customer had bought. In the latter case the customers had more issues due to the material delivery system's capabilities that don't always meet what the customer wants to achieve with the platform: they gave an example that when a customer wants to deliver pictures along with text to the material production, the system has a free text area that doesn't deliver text only to production, but customers need to deliver the text along with pictures on a separate file. On top of this, there's a small number of customers who may not own a computer or don't have one at their brick-and-mortar store where they run their business, so delivering materials should be done when they get home after work. Part of this problem is also that the materials delivery platform isn't mobile supported – a customer usually might snap pictures on their mobile phone, but to be able to deliver the materials through the platform, they should transfer the pictures from their phone to the computer and then upload the pictures to the material management platform. Due to this many customers opt for sending the production materials via emails, skipping the material management platform altogether. Another respondent suspected regarding the technical side of the delivery, that the platform itself isn't as intuitive as it could be.

Another side described in the interviews is not skills-related but more an attitude one instead. Because the customers pay for their advertisements, they expect a certain level of service, for an example if they feel they get irritated with the material management platform, they send the materials to someone or some place instead via email and expect someone to take care of the rest as they have paid for the advertisement itself and its seen as part of the price of the advertisement. Two of the respondents also suspected this is partly due to old habits – as the customers have delivered materials via email or another means for a long time, they have a hard time adapting to new ways of delivering materials.

A third aspect in this customer segment that a few of the respondents mentioned, is that this customer segment consists of small enterprises that can be as small as one to three people, where the entrepreneurs themselves handle the marketing of their company on top of their day jobs. Some of them have also had long careers in a less digital environment, so this itself may cause a barrier between how they have handled their advertisements before and how we would ideally want them to deliver materials today.

Asking about the onboarding process, one of the respondents described the sales process as an outbound one where the salesperson explains the whole process to a customer on the phone and might even send them instructions if they have one at hand. Another one thought that some salespeople may not want to go into too much detail into the whole process and what's expected of the customer, in order to not lose the customer's interest and a sale as a result. The respondent said that sales is instructed to explain the process step by step to the customers but it's a known issue that they may not want to explain it very thoroughly so the customer doesn't lose interest if it sounds too hard for them. One of the respondents gave an example where the customer has been a customer for a long time and it's due to the salesperson to remember whether they have gone through the new material delivery method to the customer and often it's told to the customer when the sales is being made. However, as Sanoma's whole process takes time and it's not automated, it may take up to four days for a customer to receive the link to the material management platform and if it's been days since the conversation about the material delivery through the platform, they may have already forgotten about the instructions they received. One of the issues mentioned was also that as the platform's language follows the user's default browser language, some customers find it hard to taggle in an all-English platform and may even have a hard time changing the language to Finnish, even if the option is available.

All of the respondents have received feedback on the material management platform and the material delivery process. The user interface is mentioned as not being very user-friendly or intuitive. It's also mentioned twice that while the platform itself is the same for all different size customer with different needs, it isn't ideal for people who are not by profession marketing purchaser specialists, so an SME customer may be less equipped to adapt than a media agency professional, for an example – one respondent suggests that maybe there could be a light version for users that don't need all the qualities a professional media buyer needs. The production material delivery is mentioned again as being harder than the delivery of ready materials, as well as commenting on proof versions of a material from the production. Proof version commenting goes through the platform as well and isn't seen as an intuitive option either. Two respondents also mention that when you send a material through the material management platform, the platform doesn't give feedback to the user, and they're left wondering whether they succeeded in the material delivery or not – the respondent suggests that a thank you message would be great to give a sense of successful delivery and confirmation to users of the material management platform. Apparently a lot of salespeople receive questions about this from customers who are unsure whether they succeeded or not, and this means the salesperson usually has to go out of their way to ask another team if they have received the material through the platform successfully.

A third respondent commented on the sales' experiences on the customers' reactions to the transformation from the old email material delivery to a platform where they're expected to upload the materials themselves. They recalled sales having received a lot of negative customer feedback, going as far as mentioning some customers have mentioned going to competitors in order to avoid having to deliver a material by a material delivery platform instead of their older ways, whichever they have been accustomed to. The respondent mentioned, "It's different for those customers that we have less of, who deliver materials through an advertising agency, as agencies can do it with their eyes closed. -- These entrepreneurs [our customers] are specialists in their respective fields, and IT isn't that field."

All three respondents mentioned the same issue: as this customer segment doesn't consist of professional media buyers, their perspective and starting point for using the material delivery platform is very different from those who buy media by profession.

Regarding how to better help different stakeholders get the most out of the material delivery platform, all three respondents agreed there should be a phone number visible where you can get help if you don't know what to do. One respondent suggested there should be a phone number that would answer promptly as no one is going to wait around for an hour to receive help from an email address, and there should also be a possibility to reach someone during evening time when the customers usually head home.

Another thing mentioned was that a lot more instructions could be on hand than currently is. Step-by-step instructions for different types of material delivery (depending on whether it's a ready material or a material that's going to production, for an example) were mentioned as an easy solution, or short instruction videos. One respondent said, however, that if it takes longer than a minute to explain how a material delivery platform works, it's probably time to take a long hard look at the system itself if it's not easy to use without a series of online videos.

The last question about possible ways to affect customer's willingness to use the material delivery platform instead of email for an example, stirred up different kinds of comments. All respondents felt this issue should be approached delicately. One was worried that especially with SME customers that are dominant in smaller areas, it can take only one upset customer that can possibly turn other customer's opinions on the company and the paper itself to a negative side, so there's the worry that the company will position itself as a big bad corporation and might create unnecessary badwill. There's also the matter of profitability: the respondent said that the smaller the customer (basing the size purely on the size of their purchase), the less it makes sense to do a lot of manual work, which leads to the conclusion that if some measures would be tested to see if customers would adopt the delivery platform, it should be with smaller ones where the work should be optimized to create as little manual work as possible. One respondent said that the key could be that customers would be taken into the development process of the system itself to hear their thoughts on the development of the platform. Taking customers into the process was thought of as an alternative to, for example, setting a date after which no materials would be accepted outside the material delivery platform. As most customers feel strongly that they are the customer and they are entitled to a certain level of service, this would be seen as very negative. It was also mentioned that as the customer should be taken into development discussions, they might voice the same ideas the respondent had heard as a feedback: there should be a Finnish language version easily available with the possibility to deliver material by a mobile phone.

#### 4.1.2 Overview of the operative viewpoint

For this section, two team leads were interviewed. They both lead customer-facing teams in sales operations that work on different parts of the customer's journey, one team taking in straight bookings from customers and handling sales' briefs, with the main goal of booking campaigns, and the other team receiving and passing forward the materials the customers send, working on campaign production where the materials are put into their respective spots in the media environment.

For what makes this customer segment stand out from the rest, it was mentioned that there's a whole customer group (cities and municipalities) that have a set in stone way of managing their advertisements that go into the paper, mostly because they deliver everything that's needed for their advertisement by email at the same time, so by the time they receive the ad delivery email link, they have already delivered a material. Another point was that the customers have been accustomed to a certain way of delivering materials before, as they used to know personally everyone involved in the whole process and they could deliver the material in a format of their liking. Technical capabilities of the customers was also mentioned as a possible factor, as it seems like customers that deliver materials via email might have technical challenges with the material delivery through a platform.

The onboarding process isn't very visible in the customer-facing teams, as the customer has already spoken with a salesperson before their purchase goes into the booking team and from there to the advertising operations team and production. One respondent suspected that as it's up to the salesperson to go through the material delivery process with the customer, it's possible that if the person going through it doesn't really see the benefit of using the material delivery platform or doesn't feel comfortable with using it, this attitude can be transferred to the customer as well, unintentionally. One of the team leads interviewed mentioned that there's been training for sales to familiarize themselves with the delivery platform, as well as knowledge has been shared to let everyone know there's a phone number where customers and salespeople alike can get help with the material delivery platform, as well as an instruction website.

Both respondents agreed that the amount of feedback that comes regarding the material management platform isn't a lot when compared to the number of materials that go through smoothly without complaints. Both agreed that the platform itself isn't very hard to use, but some customers feel more at ease with it than others. One respondent said they've received feedback that the material delivery platform isn't user-friendly enough, that it should lead the user more through the platform than what happens next. Also, the default language being the browser's default language, which is English for most people, is something that comes up regularly. It hasn't, however, been an issue until the new customer segment was introduced to Sanoma's material delivery process and platform, so it's a problem specific to this customer segment. It was also mentioned that even if there's a phone number available for instructions with the material delivery platform, some customers get upset if they don't get someone on the line right away or the number is somehow unavailable.

Regarding possible training, internal stakeholders have received training. No in-person training has been offered straight to customers, which is hard to set up and may not be a viable solution. Instead, some salespeople have complained that they are too involved in the material delivery process with customers, and they feel it takes up too much of their time. It's mentioned that a solution might be that salespeople could more freely hand over difficult cases to advertising operations teams that's more equipped to help customers with their possible difficulties with the material management platform or anything regarding the materials in general. If a salesperson tries to advise the customer instead of handing over the case to another team, the process is failing. So, instead of giving customers or even salespeople more training, it's seen more as an issue of handing over the difficult case to the right team to take care of it.

"This is the kind of topic that it's hard to set up walls either way", one respondent commented on whether customers could be given some kind of incentives, negative or positive, to encourage the usage of the material delivery platform. They feel that instead of setting up anything like giving discounts, it would be easier to just set a date after which no materials would be accepted via any other means except the material delivery platform. However, it's also needed to have a backup which is usually email, in case the system fails somehow but materials still need to be delivered. Another respondent commented that some customers simply appreciate in-person customer service and even though we already have self-service channels with cheaper prices, a lot of customers prefer to buy media straight from someone which means price isn't the only incentive that gives direction to customer behavior, still depending on the customer though. The customers that might be incentivized through discounts for example are also ones that already buy the smallest possible products and thus it isn't really a viable solution to offer them discounts for using a material delivery platform. They also felt that maybe as most customers already use the material delivery platform successfully, maybe there's a customer segment that never really will and whether that's a bad thing or something that simply needs to be accepted as it is. An example of customers like this was given again – cities and municipalities, that usually deliver everything needed for their advertisement to appear on the paper at the same time, thus making it less important for them to wait for a material upload link and only after that deliver the advertising materials separately.

## 4.2 Ideas from the interviews

The interviews highlighted the differences between perspectives on the same issue, depending a little bit on whether the answerer was working closer to sales or closer to the material process or its' development. One finding was that there's even a difference whether it's really an issue that needs to be solved, that some customers opt to not use the material delivery platform but want more service and want to use email for an example as they have done for a long time. This is a very foundational issue and may give direction to where the material delivery process itself should probably be heading: it's harder to proceed if not everyone agrees with what the main goal is.

On the other hand, there was a handful of things almost all respondents seemed to agree on: the customer segment that's under scrutiny is special in its differing technical capabilities that have much to do with the fact that the customers specialize in areas that may have very little to do with computers and information technology in general. Almost all also agreed that customers should be given some other incentive than discounts or anything similar to it, and maybe incentivizing customers through something isn't really the way to go but something else should be considered, maybe circling back to the fact that not everyone really sees it as an issue that not all customers use the material management delivery platform – this probably affects the possibilities the respondent felt necessary to even consider.

Drawing from the interview materials and theoretic framework, at this point of the interviews ideas emerged how the overall process could be improved to have a larger amount of customers opt to use the material management platform instead of older ways of delivering materials, like using email or delivering advertising material on some portable memory or delivering the materials to a salesperson who has to deliver it on behalf of the customer. On top of the ideas gathered from the interviews, we'll be addressing some of the issues mentioned as well to reach a better understanding of the material management platform, its users and their possible issues regarding the platform that might get in the way of actually using the platform.

# 5 Development process

In this chapter, we will dive deeper into the results of the interviews with the key stakeholders and connect those findings to the theoretical framework introduced earlier. The focus is on finding solutions to the original problem, drawing from all the material available from the literature and the interviews.

## 5.1 Onboarding process

From the interviews, it looks like the customer segment under scrutiny includes two different customer categories that should have two separate onboarding processes, depending on where their first contact comes from.

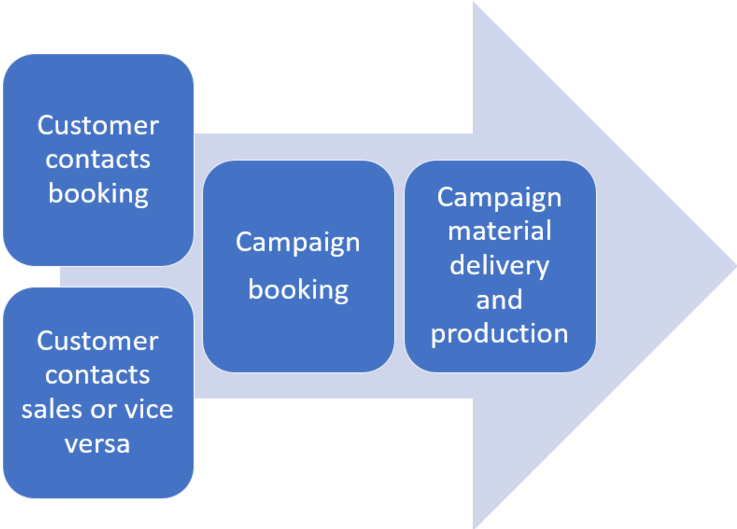


Figure 8 First customer contact.

Between these two customer categories, the way to approach the situation should be different. The first scenario is one where the customer reaches Sanoma's campaign book team directly, and there's no salesperson in the middle. These cases were described in the interviews as ones where the customer usually has all materials needed to drive the whole campaign home at the same time, and it doesn't really make sense to them to deliver materials in parts. This might be a flaw in the process or at least in the fact that the material delivery platform and the booking platform are two separate systems and most of the work isn't visible to the customer: the customer only receives a link to the material delivery platform after the booking team has confirmed the campaign for the booking system. If the customer has all the materials at hand already when they make first contact and know what they are buying, it doesn't really make sense for them to wait around for the booking confirmation. As it also kind of looks like this customer group (an example was given in the interview: cities and municipalities) doesn't really struggle with the technical side of material delivery but is acting out of pure practicality, it would make sense to actually introduce these customers to Sanoma's self-service campaign booking tools. Sanoma has one self-service channel already ready for print advertisement customers, so using a self-service channel customers that anyway know what they are doing, would benefit from the lower prices of the self-service channel. This would also reduce manual labor in the booking team.

Customers that tend to deliver everything at the same time could be greeted with a message that would confirm the order and simply state that they had already checked out the self-service channel. This would be a kind of behavioral nudge that could encourage some of these customers to later check out the self-service channel. It looks like cities and municipalities have more in common with the professional media buyers in advertising agencies that were mentioned in the interviews: they are also people who do material delivery during their normal working hours and also as a part of their daily routines, unlike compared to the customers who deliver materials after their time on the “office” during the day where the office can be a pick-up truck or a brick-and-mortar store. Encouraging customers to use self-service channels would also make the conversation somewhat meaningless, whether everyone agrees with the sentiment or not, that most customers should deliver materials themselves to the material management platform. Meaningless, because this would anyway fix a part of the issue.

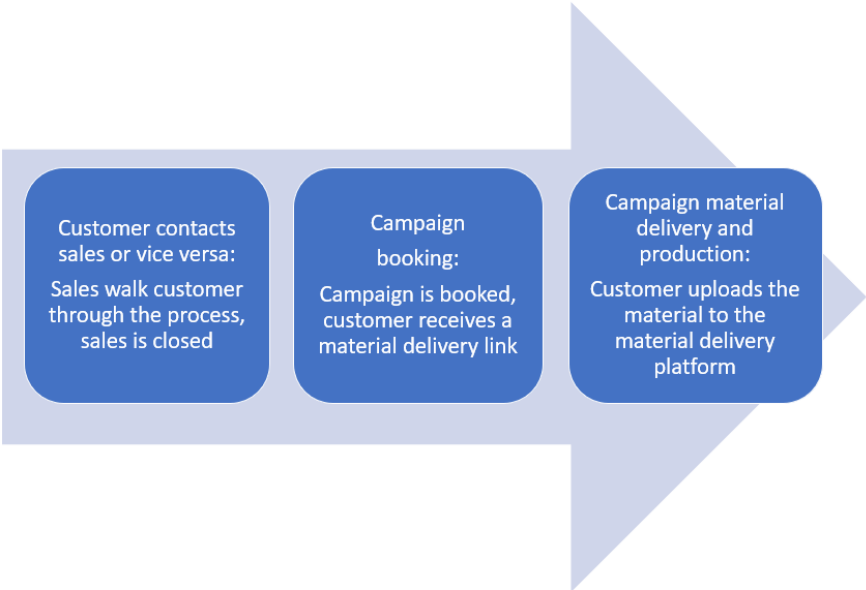


Figure 9 Customer journey.

Taking a look at the other category in this customer segment, there’s another thing there that seems to have gone unnoticed. If the process would go as described in the picture above, the customers would probably have an idea how to proceed when they receive the material delivery link. However, in the interviews a few respondents mentioned that the salesperson doesn’t always describe to the customer what will happen when they make a purchase, and when this occurs, the process looks different, see the picture below.

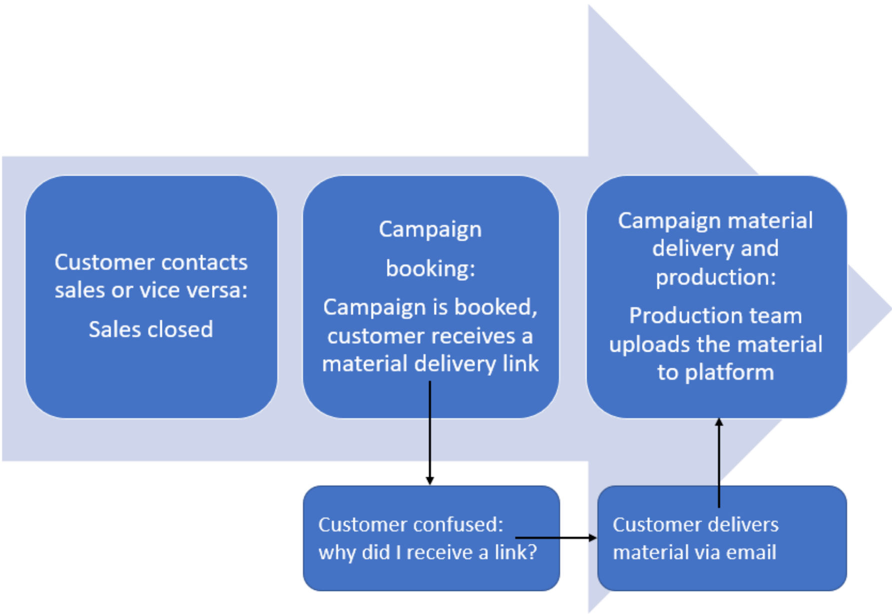


Figure 10 Customer journey confusion.

This picture represents one of the core issues around this process. If the onboarding process doesn't really walk a customer through the campaign's life span through different systems, the customer will find themselves confused at some point. Variations of this same picture could be drawn that might better illustrate sales' frustrations with the process as well: in some cases when the customer doesn't know what to do, they send the materials to sales instead who are then in charge of delivering the materials to the right place in a timely manner (especially in print advertising the deadlines can be rigid: once the material is late it's late, as the press doesn't stop for a single missing advertisement). Other issues described in the interviews could be drawn here as well: where does the customer seek knowledge if they don't know what to do with the material delivery link they have received or don't seem to be able to deliver the materials? On the other hand, it's understandable that salespeople are worried that a customer on the phone might not opt to buy at all if they listen to the process and think it sounds too difficult for them for any possible reason like time management or technical capabilities. To tackle this issue, it would be interesting for sales to take a look at cases where salespeople went through the process with customers, didn't lose a sale and overall everything went well. Is there something to learn from these cases, and is it possible to create a frame for everyone at sales to use to make the customer know what's expected of them?

The last point that was made in the interviews in passing many times was the fact that this process is different for new and old customers. For new customers it's easier to fix the onboarding process itself as described above, by making sure no customers are left out of instructions for material delivery and what's expected of them in general. But another group in need of attention is a large group of customers that have been buying media for a long time and are very accustomed to a certain way of doing things. They may well experience some aversion to change as for them at least first, the shift in process looks like a nuisance, having to learn a new way of delivering materials. What this customer segment needs is nurturing to make sure they're not left alone – even though they are old customers, they should be onboarded to the new process, so to speak. The current state of things is that just as with new customers, the old ones seem to be reliant on whoever happens to be their salesperson and how they want to proceed with letting the customer in on what's going to happen in the new environment. For both groups of customers, if the onboarding process to the material delivery process fails, the whole process is frustrating and the frustration seems to be multiplied to sales that finds the customer's problems before them eventually, as well as to the operative teams that only get in contact with the customer once they've already tried and failed with the material delivery.

With all these issues and possible solutions presented, one thing that's vitally needed to keep track of the process is sales documentation. From the interviews it seems that there's confusion on which customers have been onboarded and which have not. To offer customers the same treatment no matter who their salesperson is, there should be precise documentation to keep track of which customers have received the basic step-by-step process explanation and which ones seem to need more nurturing.

## 5.2 Nudging the customer to a right direction

On top of the nudge already mentioned in the onboarding process, some other ideas emerged from the interviews combined with the theoretic framework. In the previous chapter a very specific scenario was mentioned, where a customer delivering materials by email could be greeted with a message stating there's also self-service channels that could fit their needs. In a similar manner some other nudges could be implemented as well: thank you-messages could be sent in other scenarios as well. In the interviews, some respondents mentioned that it was a possibility to set a date after which customers couldn't deliver materials anywhere else besides the material management platform. Some seemed to think this approach was too harsh – a solution in between would be that instead of accepting materials by email right away, the customer would be sent an email instead that they had received a link to the material delivery platform and would they like to try it out instead, as 70% of our customers already use it successfully.

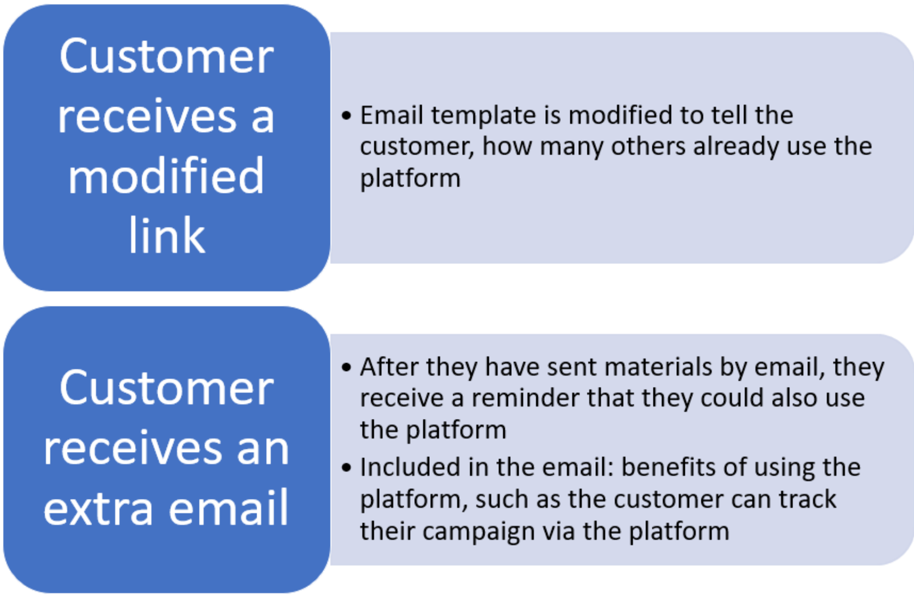


Figure 11 Two different scenarios where nudging methods could be applied.

Mentioning the number of customers that already use the platform successfully increases the probability of a person adopting the material delivery process due to research on behavioral economics and nudging specifically. Giving the option to still deliver the materials via email if the customer feels so is also in line with the ethical criticism of nudging, as nudging works best if people are given the choice to make a better decision but not forced to do so.

Sending an extra email means extra work for a short period of time, which also means all teams should be on board with the goal of increasing the material management platform usage rate, as some resources need to be tied around contacting customers that opt to send materials as attachments to an email. No automation is possible without also tying extra budget to this, so automation is less likely an option than extra handwork for some time.

## 5.3 How to get the most out of the platform?

One of the things that emerged from the interviews and taking a closer look at the onboarding process for an example, is that it looks like two things are missing from the bigger picture. When looking at the simplified pictures of the customer's journey from the purchase to the production, one thing emerges that's also mentioned in the interviews in passing, both in the sales side and the operational side. As the process is handled in different teams and the purchase is handled in a very streamlined way, after the purchase order leaves sales' hands, they have very little visibility to what happens next. This was mentioned in the interviews when the respondent said the salesperson sometimes has to ask after materials and make sure if the materials are ok. The same thing was mentioned in the operational side interviews as they mentioned they had very little visibility on what happened to the campaign in other teams than their own. By making the whole process better visible to everyone, some of the overall confusion both inside the company and on the customer side could be lifted.

Another thing that's a major thing affecting the overall success of the goal of having most customers use the material management platform is the fact that everyone has to agree on what the goal is and what is its' strategic significance. What first might look like resistance to change in the old ways (in the interviews, customers having used to doing things the "old way" was mentioned many times by different respondents) might actually be simply that the goal isn't clear to everyone. This problem could be tackled by better communication and overall having discussion in a larger setting of people about why something needs to be reached and why on the other hand, someone might not agree. Reaching an agreement over what needs to be done next and having everyone be on the same page is key to making sure everyone is working towards the same goal. In the interviews it seemed like there was disagreement between different respondents if the number of customers not using the material management platform was really an issue at all and whether they thought something could be done about it. If someone feels this is a non-issue, their willingness to promote change they don't necessarily agree with might be compromised. And if this difference of opinion on such a fundamental thing isn't visible to everyone and not under any discussion, it can create unnecessary frustration when people don't understand why they act like they do.

A whole body of things that need to be addressed as a whole is the technical side of the ad material delivery platform. Many different points were raised in the interviews, ranging from the English language being problematic to more complex issues like the whole delivery of raw materials that are going to ad production. One respondent came up with an idea that also summed up why some things probably don't make sense to the end user: the customer should be included in the development process from earlier stages, developing the system itself to better fit customer needs. With the current state of things, as the customer's complaints are only heard after the system is online and the customer fails to use it as they're expected to or they find something that's confusing them, it's no wonder everyone included in the process is left wondering why didn't we think of this earlier. Even if development processes include process specialists, they are still people that are heavy users of the system and without the fresh eyes of someone who's never seen or used the platform itself, some later on evidently obvious things can go missing. So, as the current stage of things seems to be that the customer feedback only comes after initial release of platform versions, it would be better to harvest customer feedback on earlier stages of the development process. In general, it would be good to gather feedback from different user groups in all different stages in a system's development life cycle: it seems from the interviews that currently there is no other way of gathering feedback but what comes around from the people who work straight with customers or the platform itself.

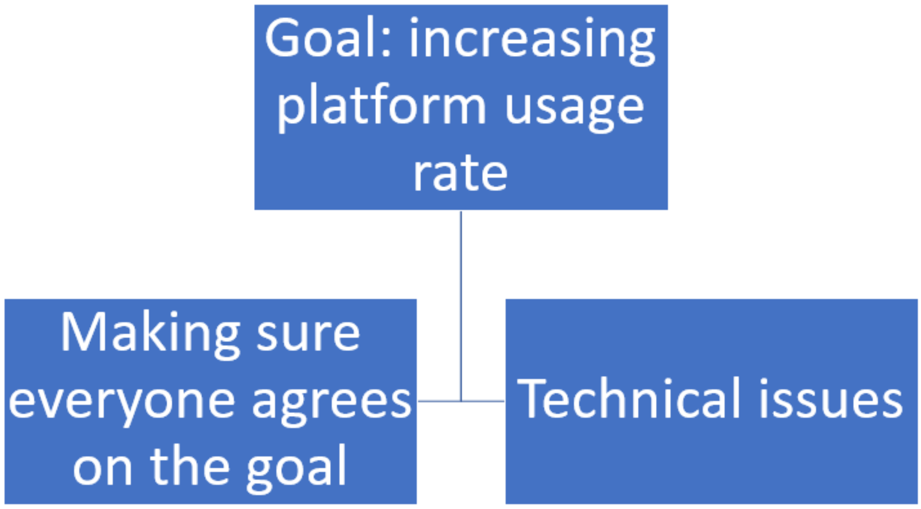


Figure 11 Things that need to be managed in order to reach the goal.

# 6 Summary and results

In this chapter the study and its findings will be taken a closer look at and some suggestions for future development will be made.

## 6.1 Results

From the theoretical framework and the interviews, ideas and issues were gathered. The main question at the beginning of this work was to better understand how more customers could be brought to use the material delivery platform themselves. What became evident in the interviews is that even though the company is large, the customer should be brought closer to different parts of the process beginning from system development. In short: the whole process should more customer centric.

## 6.2 Proposals

In the development process, many ideas emerged from the theory combined with the interviews to especially address the complex issues that arose from the interviews. While the ideas are all more or less easily tested whether they will work or not, some things need to be taken care of before any of them can actually be put into use.

To sum up what needs to be done in order to test out any practical things, a few key issues should be addressed. First, there should be a shared agreement of the goal that everyone is working towards. If not everyone is on board or doesn't agree if something needs to change, it becomes difficult to implement any changes. As the people interviewed are the ones that have the authority to influence decisions and implement changes into their teams, they are also the ones that have to be on the same page about what the shared goal actually is. For example, in the interviews a person that holds a key position in whether their team will answer customers sending materials to the wrong place, said that maybe things can just be as they are and don't need to be improved further. This is an important comment: it highlights the foundational disagreement over whether this is an issue or not.

Another thing that needs to be improved to reach a better understanding for everyone on whether things are working or not, is that visibility of the customer's journey through different teams should be made clearer for everyone. If there's no knowledge of what the customer has been talking about with different people before picking up the phone and getting someone on the line from another team, this can be a great point of frustration and illustrates the fact that the customer's experience isn't spotless. This has to do with documentation as well: there should be documentation created at different points of the customer's journey through different teams to create the feeling to the customer that they can be picked up right where they left off, not depending at all which team they happen to contact.

The third thing is that while the platform itself with its' user interface but also features got a lot of mentions from the interviews, it looks like the platform and it's user experience isn't currently thought of as a part of an overall customer experience. However, it could be, especially if one the ideas that emerged from the interviews would be implemented – customers could be taken into the development process at earlier stages. Currently their voices can be only heard once the version is online and they hit a wall when trying to do something.

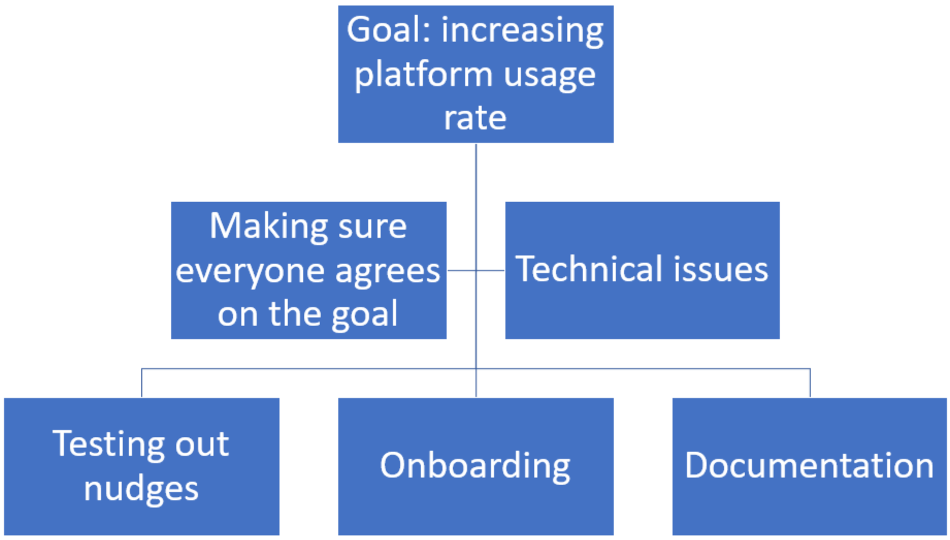


Figure 12 Example hierarchy that shows prioritization.

A suggestion for future development is to divide the proposals in this thesis into two phases: first phase is one where aforementioned, quite fundamental issues should be addressed. A second phase could be done once the fundamental issues have been resolved, moving into more detailed implementation of things that aim to fix the original issue which is making more customers use the material delivery platform.

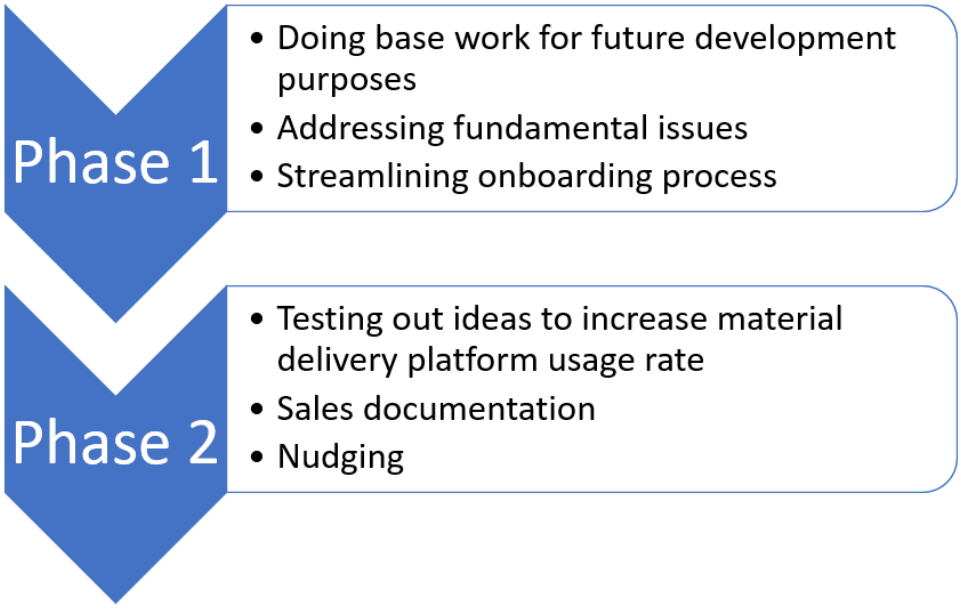


Figure 13 Two suggested phases, how to roll out development ideas.

## 6.3 Summary

This thesis' main goal was to find out how to increase the usage rate of the material delivery platform. For this purpose, it was identified that a specific group of customers have adopted the platform for material delivery purposes a lot less than other customer groups: SME customers that mainly buy print advertisements.

To gather more information, the theoretical framework was composed of four different areas: change management and leadership, behavioral economics, customer onboarding and user experience and interface. Five themed interviews of key people working closely with this specific group of customers, of customer-facing teams, were conducted to gather more information. The interview focus was on how they saw the current process from the point where they stand, as well as their thoughts on feedback they have received on the topic as well as possible ideas they had, or their peers had told them before how to improve the overall process to reach a better usage rate of the platform.

While many ideas emerged from the interviews on a very practical level how things could be improved, it also became evident that the main things that need to be put on focus first are quite foundational. Before any action can be tested, everyone has to be on board and agree it’s important to do these things, and everyone has to actually agree that it is a goal to increase the usage rate of the material management platform. Other bigger things in need of improving were that the customer’s journey through different teams and platforms isn’t visible to everyone working with the same customer, which leads to the customer experience feeling spotty, the customer having to explain their issue to different people in different teams again. This could be addressed by bettering overall documentation and making sure everyone knows the customer’s journey where their purchase goes next. The final thing was that as part of the overall customer experience, the customer’s voice should be heard in earlier stages of system development, so the material delivery platform itself would be clearly more a part of the customer experience.

This thesis got deeply into the root causes of why some customers currently don’t use the platform and why increasing their usage rate of the platform has been harder than for other customer segments. However, the next step would be to take care of the foundations and then delve deeper into the details that could improve the usage rate of the platform for these customers as well.

For future research, it might be interesting to take a look at why some certain customer groups transition into doing things more independently is harder. Some of the interviews hinted at the possibility of this being a wider generational issue, where some of the small-size entrepreneurs have led their businesses a certain way for a very long period of time, and while some of the issues might be technical, it could be possible that the issues are not only technical after all. In some of the interviews it was briefly discussed that this issue itself is a part of a bigger transformation period the whole media industry is going through, and this is just a symptom of a larger scale dissatisfaction among long-term customers when the whole industry as a whole is moving towards a more digital era. If it is an industry-wide issue that customers experience difficulties with keeping up with the changes, does it make sense to do a close scrutiny of a very small part of the overall process? In the context of Sanoma, if ad material management process development is the focus, it might make sense to take a look at all of the different media categories as a whole and the customer experience through the whole funnel. Stepping away from Sanoma, it would make sense to research industry-wide where different stakeholders see the transformation period leading to.

# 7 References


Adams, R. (2020). Practical customer success management: A best practice framework for rapid generation of customer success. Routledge.

Bazerman, M. H. & Moore, D. A. (2013). Judgment in managerial decision making. Wiley.

Berg, C. (2015). "A nudge in the right direction? How we can harness behavioural economics". December 1, 2015. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-12-01/berg-a-nudge-in-the-right-direction/6988786

Bucciol, A. (2019). Dishonesty in Behavioral Economics. Academic Press.

Caulfield, J. L. & Senger, A. Perception is reality: Change leadership and work engagement. Leadership & organization development journal, 38(7), 927-945. https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-07-2016-0166

Doig, A. (2011). Numbers, words and KYC: Knowing Your Country and Knowing Your Corruption. Critical perspectives on international business, 7(2), 142-158. https://doi.org/10.1108/17422041111128221

Dumas, C. & Beinecke, R. H. Change leadership in the 21st century. Journal of organizational change management, 31(4), 867-876. https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-02-2017-0042

Dunkin' Donuts Strengthens Customer Loyalty Using Salesforce (2016). PR Newswire.

Gillham, B. (2005). Research interviewing: The range of techniques. Open University Press.

Gorran Farkas, M. (2013). Building and sustaining a culture of assessment: Best practices for change leadership. Reference Services Review, 41(1), 13-31. https://doi.org/10.1108/00907321311300857

Hechanova, M. R. M., Caringal-Go, J. F. & Magsaysay, J. F. Implicit change leadership, change management, and affective commitment to change. Leadership & organization development journal, 39(7), 914-925. https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-01-2018-0013

Issah, M. (2018). Change Leadership: The Role of Emotional Intelligence. SAGE open, 8(3), . https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018800910

Kahneman, D. (2011). Thinking, Fast and Slow.

Laurila, M. (2017). "Me ollaan kaikki samassa veneessä ja soudetaan yhdessä samaan suuntaan”: Esimiesten ja henkilöstön käsityksiä hyvästä muutosjohtajuudesta. ”Manager and employee conception of good change leadership.” Vaasan yliopisto.

Lunden, K. (2008). The Death of Print? The Challenges and Opportunities facing the Print Media on the Web. Reuters Institute Fellowship Paper, University of Oxford. Available at: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/research/files/The%2520Death%2520of%2520Print%2520-%2520The%2520Challenges%2520and%2520Opportunities%2520facing%2520the%2520Print%2520Media%2520on%2520the%2520Web.pdf

Miller, M. (2011). Customer Onboarding. Target Marketing, 34(1), 27-28.

Monahan, K. (2018). How Behavioral Economics Influences Management Decision-Making. Academic Press.

Parra Moyano, J. & Ross, O. (2017). KYC Optimization Using Distributed Ledger Technology. Business & Information Systems Engineering, 59(6), 411-423. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12599-017-0504-2

Penttinen, E. & Rinta-Kahila, T. (2017). Onboarding customer companies to electronic invoicing platform – developing a marketing and a partnering strategy for Tieto, an e-invoicing service provider. Journal of information technology teaching cases, 7(1), 43-50. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41266-016-0015-x

Sanoma. (2020). https://www.sanoma.com/en/

Sanoma Learning. (2020). https://www.sanoma.com/en/what-we-do/learning/

Sanoma Media Finland. (2020). https://www.sanoma.fi/en/

Sanoma. (2020). Sanoma Annual Review 2020. Available at https://www.sanoma.com/globalassets/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/sanoma_annual_review_2020.pdf

Singh, J., Nambisan, S., Bridge, R. G. & Brock, J. K. (2021). One-Voice Strategy for Customer Engagement. Journal of service research : JSR, 24(1), 42-65. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670520910267

Stepchenkova, S. & Li, X. (2014). Destination image: Do top-of-mind associations say it all? Annals of tourism research, 45, 46-62. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2013.12.004

Sunstein, R. (2015). "NUDGING AND CHOICE ARCHITECTURE: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS" http://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/olin_center/papers/pdf/Sunstein_809.pdf

Szabo, P. W. (2017). User Experience Mapping. Packt Publishing.

Thaler, R. H., & Sunstein, C. R. (2009). Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness.

Thaler, R. (2017). From Cashews to Nudges: The Evolution of Behavioral Economics. https://www.nobelprize.org/uploads/2018/01/thaler-lecture.pdf

Thaler, R. H. (2018). Nudge, not sludge. Science (New York, N.Y.), 361(6401), 431. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aau9241

Silvennoinen, H. (2016). Helppo ja halpa haastattelu. Aikuiskasvatus, 36(2), 82–83. https://doi.org/10.33336/aik.88481

Vilkka, H. (2021). Tutki ja kehitä. PS-kustannus.

Figures

# 9 Tables

# 10 Appendices

Appendix 1: Theme interview questions

- The special characteristics of this customer segment (in comparison the customers who don’t have similar issues)?

- What’s the current onboarding process from the perspective of your team?

- What kind of feedback have you received regarding the material delivery process? Customers and internal stakeholders included?

- Help for change, internal and external: What kind of help could be provided externally for customers or internally for different stakeholders?

- What kind of means for influence there are: soft and hard means?