Master's thesis

Creative Design Management

2022

Emmi Kinnunen

The Role of Customer Service in B2B Marketing

TURKU AMK

TURKU UNIVERSITY OF
APPLIED SCIENCES

Emmi Kinnunen

The Role of Customer Service in B2B Marketing

In today's customer-centric companies, marketing cannot simply be the responsibility of the marketing department with full-time marketers. The brand experience is build throughout the organization in every interaction with customers. Therefore frontline employees have important role in marketing.

This research-oriented development project aims to understand the role of customer service in B2B marketing as well as reports the design process with the goal of creating a toolbox for the customer service to enable them to implement marketing communication in their daily work.

The theoretical framework explores the topic by understanding the nature of B2B marketing and brand experience and the role of part-time marketers and brand ambassadors in it. The empirical part repors the design process facilitated by the thesis writer.

Based on this research-oriented development work, the organization should consider including customer service in marketing activations in order to develop their overall B2B marketing and the brand experience.

Emmi Kinnunen

Asiakaspalvelun rooli B2B markkinoinnissa

Tämän päivän asiakaskeskeisissä yrityksissä, markkinointi ei voi olla puhtaasti markkinointiosaston vastuulla. Brändikokemus rakennetaan läpi organisaation kaikissa asiakaskohtaamisissa. Sen vuoksi asiakasrajapinnassa työskentelevillä on tärkeä markkinoinnillinen rooli.

Tämä tutkimuksellinen kehittämisprojekti pyrkii ymmärtämään asiakaspalvelun roolia B2B markkinoinnissa. Sen lisäksi opinnäytetyö raportoi design-prosessin, jonka tavoitteena oli luoda asiakaspalvelulle työkaluja, jotka mahdollistaisi heille markkinointiviestien jalkauttamisen päivittäisessä työssään.

Teoreettinen viitekehys tutkii aihetta luonnehtimalla B2B markkinointia ja brändikokemusta sekä "osa-aikaisten markkinoijien" ja brändilähettiläiden roolia osana kokonaisuutta. Opinnäytetyön kehittämisprojektissa raportoidaan opinnäytetyön kirjoittajan fasilitoima design-prosessi.

Tämän tutkimuksellisen kehittämistyön perusteella, voidaan todeta että organisaatioiden tulisi harkita asiakaspalvelun osallistamista markkinointiaktiviteetteihin, kehittääkseen B2B markkinointia ja brändikokemusta kokonaisuudessaan.

Asiasanat:

B2B-markkinointi, brändikokemus, palvelumarkkinointi, design-ajattelu

Content

Figures

Pictures

Tables

Abbreviations

B2B	Business to business
FLE	Frontline employee
PTM	Part-time marketer
DT	Design Thinking
OOH	Out of home
B2C	Business to consumer
H2H	Human to human
PM	Project Manager

1 Introduction

One thing can be said; the world of marketing (from commercial and academia perspective) is full of opinions, ideas, strategies, perspectives and viewpoints. Even the question *"what is marketing?"* can be debated from many different point of views. Customer-orientation and digitalization are affecting the role of marketing and marketeers in the organization. Breaking the silos influences also the marketing department. Some even challenge the term marketing because of its lost credibility.

Megatrends such as digitalization and the power shift to the consumer impact also the business-to-business environment. Nevertheless, personal selling still maintains the dominant sales and communication strategy in B2B sector. (Baumgart & Schmitd, 2010, 1250) There is always a human behind the desk or screen making the purchace, not a whole business or organization. (Kurvinen & Seppa, 2016, 26) Some argue that emotions account half of the decision making, when rational covers the other half. (Hague & Hague, 2018, 143) B2B firms operating in industrial setting are increasingly acknowledging the quality of customer service as a strategic asset. (Jong et al. 2021,1)

In conventional marketing we are familiar with a set-up where marketing is a separate function that is managed by marketing department consisting of full-time marketers. (Grönroos, 2020, 294) As the ultimate goal of marketing should be to make the business relevant to its customers, the responsibility to market the company is actually fractured outside the marketing department. Service or frontline employees interacting with customers in the service process are employed in other non-marketing business functions. Primarily their job is to make sure that the process functions well from a technical point of view but of course they do have a role what comes to the customer relationship, value-creation and marketing. (Grönroos, 2015) Recent research shows that the co-operation between the sales and frontline employees is crucial when re-engaging value co-creation with customer; service personnel provides tactical insights that sales can turn into strategic knowledge. (Friend et al. 2020, 271)

Many business leaders have already understood that the key to success is the marketing and sales relationship and therefore the latest tools, data and decisions are provided to these departments and to their co-operation. But there are still large amount of people who have an impact of the customer and often interaction with customers even more often than what sales and marketing department does.

Value proposition and brand promise are central tools in customer relationships and branding; organizations need to keep the promise that they state there and frontline employees have a key role in living up to the promise. Nevertheless, Liewendahl et al. (2020, 422) point out that current marketing theory does not provide sufficient knowledge how to motive and empower frontline employees in relation to value proposition. Because of their everyday interactions with customers, frontline employees should be seen as the vanguard of corporate brand delivery. Customers' attitudes and perception of the corporate brand experience are shaped in these interactions and when managed successfully results can be seen as increased sales and higher customer satisfaction. (Balmer, Stuart, & Greyser, 2009; Schepers & Nijssen, 2018; Hughes et al., 2019).

1.1 Background

During the thesis process, it appeared clear that as Grönroos (2020, 292) states in his article, there are lack of research done from a context of service and marketing and attemps in creating service marketing models are all dated in 70s and 80s. Grönroos (2020, 292) explains the situation: "Service marketing requires genuinely new approaches, which did not fit the conventional and dominating marketing mix management paradigm and kept researchers from continuing the studies of marketing in service firms." He continues by challenging that "unless a valid and acceptable model (or models) of marketing relevant to service is developed and found useful, none of the advances made in designing, innovating and digitalizing services, to mention just a few topics, can be fully used, or used at all." (2020, 293)

Grönroos (2020, 293) challenges the status quo by claiming that marketers do not have customers' best interests in mind. Grönroos states: "Moreover, employees other than the marketers are responsible for keeping customers and, therefore, for making customers feel satisfied with how the firm serves them and also for their continued patronage to the firm. For the research community, it should be a wake-up call drawing researchers' interest to study how marketing can be reinvented to fit today's customer communities and business practices." (2020, 293)

Grönroos points out that when the product is replaced by the service process, frontline service employees take on the role of part-time marketers and that should affect how the process of marketing is viewed and managed. Although academia does not really offer any modern models that would help in creating processes in practical setting. (Grönroos, 2015, 295) Baungrath & Smichdt (2010, 1251) also point out that there has been little published research relating explicitly to internal branding in the B2B context. Liewendahl et al. (2020, 422) support the vision by adding that there are not any marketing theories that would contribute by the understanding how to motivate and empower frontline employees in the actions of keeping the value propositions and brand promises. Research has focused on sales and service roles in isolation rather than studying sales-service integration. (Rapp et al., 2017)

1.2 Research objective and methodology

Based on the information provided in the introduction, it can be said that there are different types of marketeers in the company – those who have it in their job titles and those who do not. It is often said and written (Nayar, 2010; Polaine, 2013; Brown 2008) that people are the biggest assets the company have, and they are the ones that humanize the brand. It is ignorant to think that for customer, the brand story or sales pitch varies depending on who they speak to from the organization.

The aim of this thesis is to understand the role of customer service in B2B marketing in the context of service marketing and to create a toolbox or similar to enable customer service to implement marketing messages in their daily work. The theoretical framework is build on three parts. First part explains the environment the framework is build on: B2B marketing, Brand experience and Internal brand equity. The second part offers theories that link frontline employees to service marketing: first service marketing models are reviewed briefly, secondly promise-theory is explored and finally the service system is explored via Honeybee colony metaphor. In the next chapter the roles of frontline employees in B2B marketing are introduced. And finally enablers of part-time marketers are presented in detail.

The empirical part of the thesis is based on Design Thinking that also is viewed as an enabler of part-time marketers. The design process utilizes tools from Design Thinking methodology. The development project is build on IDEO's 3 I process.

This thesis explains how customer service function was included in marketing by creating a toolbox by using design thinking process and methods. Therefore the research question is: **What is the role of customer service in B2B marketing?** And furthermore: **How can customer service implement marketing communication in their daily work?** The theoretical framework of this thesis explores B2B marketing in service marketing context and concepts that connects and enable frontline employees and marketing. The empirical part of the thesis introduce the process and methods that were used in creating a tool to include customer service in marketing.

1.3 Research-oriented development project

This thesis is a service-oriented development project with the aim of creating a toolbox for customer service to integrate marketing activities in their daily work. The solution can be developed only by understanding first the role that customer service can take in marketing. This type of a project combines

academia with practical approach. Like in this thesis the aim is to develop solution that answer the need, the project is explained in a report where the goal, process, methods and findings are written open. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2015, 18-21; Kananen 2012, 21)

The development project uses theoretical concepts to deepen the understanding in practical setting. The practical part is connected to one or several theories. The approach demands wide understanding of a research topic and requires that the theoretical framework is carefully build in order to be beneficial. The project starts by defining the problem and then continues by selecting suitable research methods and analyzing tools to find solutions. (Kananen 2012, 13; Ojasalo et al. 2015)

The central theoretical concepts are linked to the project when analyzing the results and concluding the findings. Research methodologies that are used in research-oriented development project are diverse and both qualitative and quantative methods can be used. Active co-operation with the stakeholders of the project is highlighted throughout the process. (Kananen 2012, 33; Ojasalo et al. 2015)

Research-oriented development approach requires not only project management skills but also development skills. Many projects involve careful planning, networking, creativity, change management and resilience as well as critical mindset.

When utilizing research-oriented development approach, the aim is to develop current practices and processes and to create new data from the market. The research-oriented development project does not settle in understanding the current state or in describing phenomena, the aim is to develop better practices especially to the workplace. (Kananen 2012, 44; Ojasalo et al. 2015; Vilkka 2021: 18-19)

For this thesis project the research-oriented development approach was chosen because of the clear practical settings the worklife-connection required. Research-oriented development approach supports clearly the worklife by

developing the practices, communication and definition. (Vilkka 2021: 18-19) At the workplace, there are certain project settings as well as timelines, so in oder to meet with those requirement and also to engage the stakeholders into the process, it felt natural to choose this approach. As Vilkka (2021, 23) highlights, the research-oriented development project is done in co-operation. Theoretical framework was build as a separate entity in this case and this part was not communicated to all the stakeholders as it was not relevant for them.

1.4 Key concepts and theories of interest

In this chapter the key concepts are defined through a lens of this thesis. More profound understanding is build in the section two. The subject area of this thesis focuses topics of B2B marketing, branding and the concepts that link frontline employees into B2B marketing. From the design management perspective, the practical part of the thesis covers the topic of Design Thinking.

Business to business Marketing

Business to business market means that the buyer is a company or an organization, instead of a private person, consumer. (Rope, 2014, 15) The goal of B2B marketing should be to make the firm relevant to its customers (Grönroos, 2015). This thesis covers the topic in the context of service marketing. In this thesis business to business marketing is shortened as B2B marketing.

Frontline Employees

Frontline employees are the employees that are in interaction with company's customers. The interaction is often daily and typically frontline employees are service personnel such as customer service, service maintenance or call center personnel. (Santos-Vijande, 2015) In the context of this thesis frontline employees are serving customers in B2B environment. In this thesis frontline employees is shortened as FLEs.

Customer Service

Customer service is interaction with a customer about the product or service. Everyone in the organization who interacts with customers has a role in customer service, nowadays it is rare to find a position that would not partly involve customer service. (Kannisto & Kannisto, 2008, 8) In the context of this thesis, the concept of customer service is focusing in B2B context and to the team whose job titles contain "customer service".

Part-time marketer

Part-time marketers are employees of an onganization who carry out marketing activities but do not belong to the marketing or sales department. In this thesis they are also referred as PTMs. (Gummesson, 1990, 60)

Value Proposition

"A strategic tool facilitating communication of an organization's ability to share resources and offer a superior value package to targeted customers". (Payne et al. 2017) Value proposition is also in more generally defined as a tool to communicate the value business offers to customers. Value proposition potentially impact implementation of marketing across the company. (Payne et al. 2020, 245)

Brand Promise

Brand promise is a tool to communicate what value brand offers to its' customers. It is a commitment to deliver certain experience through the interaction with customers. (Anker et al. 2012, 268)

Design Thinking

Design Thinking is a human-centered approach to seek innovative solutions to problems. It is a mindset and a toolbox that encourages to think like a designer. (Miettinen, 2014) In this thesis Design Thinking can also be shortened as DT.

1.5 Delimitations of the thesis

This research-orientated development project explores frontline employees role in B2B marketing with the focus on understanding the *roles* rather than the goals or aims as such. That being said, the thesis does not cover theories that can be linked to the entity, such as service quality and value creation. Also the thesis work does not cover the research of how customer-centric the case company is which obviously will have an effect on the roll out of the development work.

As this thesis aims on understanding several roles, the introduction of these roles and concepts around the topic can be done only rather shortly and in high-level. The aim is to understand the roles in order to create tools to include FLEs in marketing actions rather than research the roles in depth. Also, this development work is executed in the viewpoint of a full-time marketer in order to create ways to include FLEs in executing marketing action. Therefore this thesis aims on keeping the setting and conclusions rather practical in order to truly benefit the case company.

Crucial part of successful design process is iteration and further development based on the experiences and feedback. This thesis development work reports only the first version of the idea portfolio. The case company aims to develop it further but that part of the process is left out from the thesis.

1.6 Case company

The case company of the development project is Paulig and in more precisely Paulig Professional (nowadays Paulig PRO) which is the part of the organization that serves B2B customers in three channels: food service, office and store. Paulig is family-owned company that operates in food & beverage sector. The most known brands are Paulig Coffee (Juhla Mokka, Presidentti and Kaupunkikahvit), Santa Maria and Gold & Green (Nyhtökaura). Paulig is

international company operating in 13 countries, with a purpose of "For a life full of flavour". (Paulig Group company presentation 2021)

The project was done in Finland in co-operation with Out of home marketing and Paulig Professional customer service. OOH marketing in Finland supports the sales in all the business channels. This project was focused on Paulig Professional office-channel that the customer service department (OOH After sales) mainly supports. The business is service-business as Paulig Professional sells full-solutions, meaning combinations of products and services. In the office channel, the solution can be for example a premium-office solution that combines premium automated coffee machine, after sales services (maintenance and support), coffee products and marketing materials (brand elements etc.).

Picture 1. Example of a solution targeted to B2B customer in office-channel

1.7 Structure of the thesis

Because of a complexity of the thesis, the entity is visualized in one figure where the structure and elements of the thesis are seen. Throughout the thesis visuals are used in order to simplify complexity, which is typical method used in Design Thinking. (Stickdorn, 2018)

Thesis starts with an introduction that covers the base of the research-oriented development project. In this part research questions are introduced as well as the key concepts and theories relevant to the thesis. In this part also the case company is presented.

The main part of the thesis is divided in two: theoretical framework and empirical meaning the development project. Theoretical framework consists four main themes: The marketing environment (B2B marketing and brand), Service marketing models linked to FLEs, FLEs roles in marketing and finally enablers of marketing in this context.

The development project is reported by explaining the process phases: the customer service case is explored based on the design process sequence and the results of each process stage is reported after each chapter.

Thesis ends in conlusions where the role of customer service in B2B marketing is discussed. The conclusions draw connections between the theoretical framework and practice.

THESIS

INTRODUCTION

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

B2B MARKETING + BRAND

FLEs + SERVICE MARKETING

FLEs MARKETING ROLES

MARKETING ROLE ENABLERS

DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

DESIGN PROCESS: CASE CUSTOMER SERVICE

RESULTS

LINK TO THEORY

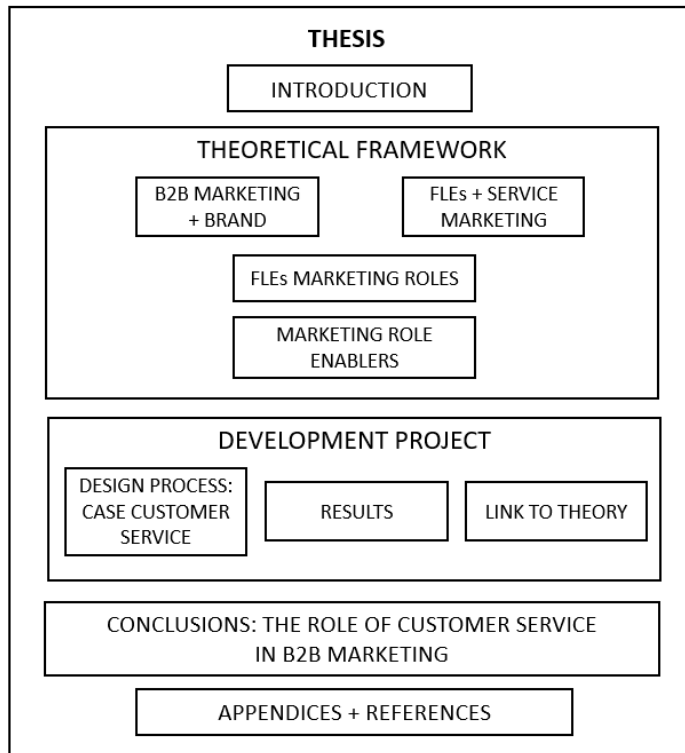CONCLUSIONS: THE ROLE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE IN B2B MARKETING

APPENDICES + REFERENCES

Figure 1. The visualization of the thesis structure

2 Role of Frontline Employees in B2B marketing

This part of thesis builds the theoretical framework. The section starts by introducing the concept of B2B marketing and brand experience in order to understand the business environment the topic of thesis relates to. After understanding the environment, the theoretical framework explores the theories and models that link service marketing and FLEs. After drawing the linkages, theoretical framework introduces roles that FLEs have in B2B marketing as well as the concepts and models that enable FLEs to deliver marketing promises.

Theoretical framework aims to answer the research question: "What is the role of customer service in B2B marketing?"

2.1 Introducing the marketing environment in B2B

According to Zimmerman & Blythe (2017, 262) the main difference in business to consumer and business to business marketing communication is the lack of mass media for businesses. There are also fewer target audiences in B2B marketing. Taylor (2017) points out the convergence of B2C and B2B. B2B marketing environment has shift during the last decade: business customers have brought their consumer-buying-behavior into the table. Buyer is a persona and therefore the shift from B2B to H2H (human to human) is needed. Because of that, the tools marketers use, have changed and technology has brought new opportunities on to the table. Nevertheless, what have remained is the core of B2B marketing: "Understanding what drives and grows the business, a relentless focus on the customer, delivering of what customer finds of value and finding relevant customer insight based on the available data, as well as creative idea and design, are what great marketers have relied on for decades." (Taylor, 2018, 1)

On the table below, the main characteristics of B2B and B2C marketing are being compared. As mentioned above, the main difference is the use of mass media. In B2B marketing, the use is modest. In B2B the communication is

rather rational where consumer communication often uses emotional appeals. What comes to the information flow, in B2B market, there is bigger chance that the customer is seeking out information and also storing it for future reference whereas consumers often try to avoid the message and if reached, the messages are quickly forgotten. In the communication, the length of the copy also differs; in B2C the copy is usually punchy and sharp where in B2B copy can be much longer. Also B2C marketing is aimed to individuals who make the buying decisions themselves, whereas B2B marketing is aimed for groups who in many cases need to agree on purchasing decisions.

Bunsiness-to-consumer (B2C)	Business-to-business (B2B)
Use of mass media	Modest use of mass media
Use of emotional appeals	Rational approach
Consumers often avoid the message	Actively seeking out the information
Communication forgotten quickly	Communication stored frequently
Copy short & punchy	Copy longer and informative
Communication aimed at individuals who make decisions for themselves	Communication aimed at groups where purchaing decisions need to be agreed
Communication can be often digitalised	Communication relies personal interaction due to complexity of offering and high price

Table 1. Comparison of B2C and B2B marketing (adopted from Zimmerman & Blythe, 2017, 263; Baumgarth & Schmitd, 2010, 1250)

In B2B marketing communication, a marketer needs to clarify whether the communication is unsought or sought by the customer. Unsought communication is a content that is send out with a hope that the buyer will respond e.g. newsletters, print ads whereas sought communication is something the buyer actively search e.g. exhibitions and training materials. The message should be different depending of the communication type; in unsought communication, the message is sharp, catchy and should drive for action whereas in sought communication the message is often informative and factual. (Blythe, 2003)

Most organization businesses are built on both product and services. (Zimmerman & Blythe. 2017, 189) In B2B, sales and marketing have

traditionally worked in silos, resulting that B2B marketing remains to create limited business impact. When organization is not aware of the linkages between different functions, it is likely to end up with scattered customer experience and internally with teams that seek only the benefit of their own, not the whole company. (Gummesson, 1991, 65)

Corporate culture that enables and appreciates good service and customer orientation is the base of successful service business. In addition to established service-culture, internal marketing plays an important role in communicating each employee the importance of their role for the business and in the provicion of the customer satisfaction. Any company that is engaged in relationship marketing is afterall providing services marketing where the product is only an means to an end and where the most important tool to maintain and develop successful customer relationships are processes which then lead to profitable and sustainable business. (Zimmerman & Blythe, 2017, 191)

2.1.1 Brand experience in B2B

The most successful companies are driven by marketing, not sales. These companies understand that brand equity matters as well as build value to both, the company and the customer. (Taylor, 2018, 2) The brand is the identity of the company as well as it's image and reputation. It communicates the purpose of the organization, what are the things the company fights for, what is the customer promise as well as what type of person the organization is. (Kurvinen & Seppa, 2016, 49) Many B2B companies neglect their brand by saying that the only thing that matters in B2B is the customer relationships, but what they do not understand is that those relationships is their brand. (Hague & Hague, 2018, 147) "A strong brand image and identity are clearly important drivers of corporate success in the business-to-business context." (Baumgarth & Schmitd, 2010, 1250)

For tangible things, like products, brand building is rather difficult because things do not really represent persona or character. In brand building, customer

service is the most sustainable tool to differentiate because in service there are several touchpoints where customer and the brand can interact. Each encounter with customer and the service is an opportunity to tell the brand story and therefore every action can be seen as marketing activity. (Tuulaniemi, 2011) Afterall, the role of a B2B marketer, is to make the brand and the people memorable for customers still after marketing campaigns or sales promotions. (Taylor, 2018, 5) When branding services, it is important to crystallise what makes the brand unique and how that information is translated into the customer experience and how the brand is seen and experienced in encounters. (Tuulaniemi, 2011)

Personnel is what brings brand alive and that is why FLEs are company's biggest asset in brand building. They showcase how the brand treats and talks to the world. By making the personnel to understand the "why" of the company and by aligning everything that the company does to the company values, an organization can trust that the communication is at least somewhat unified. (Hague & Hague, 2016, 148) In B2B, the employees are increasingly playing a key role in the representation of corporate brands at the interface with actual and potential customers. Many researchers have highlighted that interpersonal communication between employees and customers is very important for B2B brands. (Baumgarth & Schmitd, 2010, 1251-1251) Behaviour of employess should be consistent with the brand identity and it should express brand values. "This is not simply a matter of appropriate self-presentation and communication, but also of personal identification with the brand, emotional attachment to it, and motivation to become involved with the branding strategy in direct interaction with customers and influencers." (Baumgarth & Schmitd, 2010, 1250)

Because brand is build in every interaction with the customer, it goes beyond the strict visual brand guidelines. Company should be consistent in the things like how the phone is answered and how the presentations spoken. (Hague & Hague, 2016, 149) It is crusial that management communicates important information, like values and goals, to the the frontline employees so that they are able to understand their role in building the brand. Accroding to Zimmerman

& Blythe (2017, 191) product support is often an overlook marketing tool. In many cases, as important as the equipment bought, is the support of the equipment, especially in B2B markets. Product support service can be one thing that marks the difference compared to the competion. There are lots of marketing potential in services. One should consider putting part of the marketing budget in activities done through customer service. These activities can delight or bring pure benefit to the customer. (Tuulaniemi, J. 2011)

2.1.2 Internal Brand Equity

Strong brand and identity is an important asset for B2B company. Because of the high price and complex nature of the B2B offering, personal interaction with the company and the customer is more likely in question and therefore the brand equity is many times build in these interactions through company employees. (Baumgarth & Schmitd, 2010, 1250)

In the B2B sector, brand building is not just a task for marketing managers or brand managers and their teams, but a shared responsibility of all employees at all levels, because internal brand equity is a significant driver of the B2B brand. (Baumgarth & Schmitd, 2010, 1257) When considering the level of internal brand equity in B2B organization, Baumgarth & Schmitd (2010, 1252) offer four attributes of organizational and individual behaviour:

1. Brand orientation.

2. Internal brand commitment

3. Internal brand knowledge

4. Internal brand involvement

Chong (2007, 203) points out that employees role in the "experience economy" is more critical than ever before. "In such an economy, the consumer is a 'guest' who is looking for a highly personal and memorable contact with the brand."

2.2 Frontline employees and service marketing

The goal of service marketing is to invite customers to use the service processes and promising them value that they expect to get by using the services, and so that the value is created in their processes. (Berry, 2000; Vargo & Lusch, 2006) As discussed in the "Background" chapter in the introduction of the thesis, academia fails on offering modern service marketing models that could be linked to the practical service marketing processes. Therefore this part of the thesis creates a view of the theories and models that contribute to this context. So, the aim is to understand the linkage between service marketing and FLEs, not to find a model that could be used in the practical setting as it is.

2.2.1 Service Marketing Models

"The ultimate goal of marketing should be to make the firm relevant to its customers" Grönroos (2015) states and challengies academia to engage in conceptualizing service marketing. The theoretical part of this thesis aims on understanding what is the role of FLEs in B2B marketing and later on what is the role of customer service is B2B marketing, therefore the existing models are introduced in this chapter briefly. The two models contribution this development project the most, will be explored deeper in their own subchapters.

Servuction Model

The servuction model, introduced by Eiglier and Landeard in 1975, is based on resources active in the service production process. (Grönroos, 2020, 292)

Interactive Marketing Model

Interactive marketing model (Grönroos, 1978) introduces that both conventional marketing as well as production processes influence customer.

7P Model

Booms and Bitner (1982) introduced the service marketing model that adds three more Ps to the conventional marketing's four decision making areas. 7 Ps are: Product, price, promotion, place, people, process, physical evidence.

The molecular model

The model by Shostack (1977) highlights that in order to market services successfully, many other processes and resources need to be taken into account together with conventional marketing activities.

As it can be noticed, all of these models are presented in 70s and 80s and therefore do not offer suitable famework for the businesses today. As highlighted in Background-chapter of this thesis, service marketing models should be adapted to fit today's customer communities and business practices where marketing is actually done throughout the organization. (Grönroos, 2020, 293)

2.2.2 Promise theory

Grönroos (2020) offers a viewpoint of marketings' role in *promise making* and *promise keeping* originally introduced in 1980s by Calonius (1986). The concept extends marketing beyond its traditional forms and roles. (Grönroos, C. 2020, 294) Theory presents that marketers should make promises and keep them. By fulfilling customer expectations by keeping the promises, that relate to customers ' life, the company makes itself relevant to the customer. (Grönroos, C. 2020, 293)

Grönroos (2020, 294) suggests service marketing to be conceptualized as promise marketing process. In this case giving promises to the customers and keeping the promises are integrated in the model. This would make the marketing conceptualization dynamic process.

In this thesis, B2B marketing is viewed through this lens: as a process of promise making and keeping.

2.2.3 The Honeybee Colony Metaphor

One approach that relates to the viewpoint that marketing activities are done throughout the organization, is the Honeybee colony metaphor that aims on making sense of service dynamics. In the metaphor service system is presented and visualized as a honeybee colony where different metaphor actors and activities present different roles and activities in service analogue. (Brozovic et al. 2015, 634)
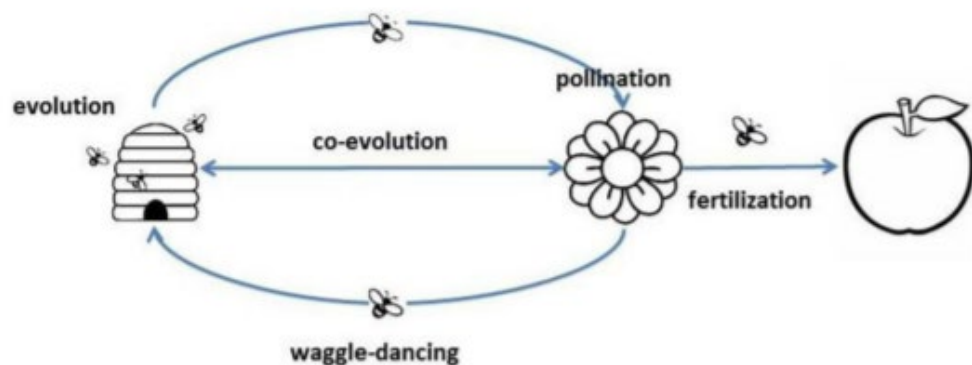
Picture 2. Visualization of The Honeybee Colony (Brozovic et al. 2015, 634)

The Honeybee metaphor contributes by making sense of the complex system of service. In the metaphor, service provider is viewed as the honeybee hive, honeybees are the FLEs (also referred PTMs) and flowers are customers. Honeybees contribute by "pollinating" which in service context mean that FLEs facilitate customer's value creation when interacting with them. On the other hand, honeybees are also "waggle-dancing", which in the service context means that the FLEs transfer information about the customers back to the service provider. By doing so, honeybees are enabling "fertilization", which in

this context means that FLEs enable that the customer's value creation process can be improved or enhanced further.

The Honeybee metaphor	Service analogue
ACTORS	
Honeybees	Part-time marketers
The honeybee hive	Service provider
Flowers	Customers
ACTIVITIES	
Pollination	Facilitating customer's value creation
Fertilization	Improving or enhancing customer's value creation processes
Waggle dancing	Transferring information about customer back to the service provider
Co-evolution of the colony and the flower	Building and maintaining customer relationship
The honeybee colony evolution	Development of the organization based on conclusions from business intelligence

Table 2. The Honeybee metaphor in service analogue (adapted from Brozovic et al. 2015, 634)

The metaphor allows organization to understand the role of FLEs in customer value creation as part-time marketers.

2.3 The roles of Frontline Employees in B2B marketing

As mentioned already in previous chapters, in B2B, brand building is not only task of full-time marketers because internal brand equity is important driver of the B2B brand (Baumgarth & Schmitd, 2010, 1257). FLEs have role in marketing as PTMs who are responsible of keeping the marketing promises. (Grönroos, 2020; Brozovic et al. 2015) FLE's can be seen as corporate brand ambassadors when delivering brand promises in customer interactions. (Boukis et al. 2021, 674)

2.3.1 Part-time marketer

Part-time marketers are employees that carry out marketing activities without officially working in marketing or even sales but who are present in buyer-seller interaction. Part-time marketers often outnumber the actual marketing team. Because of the crusial role in the customer engagement interaction, careful selection and training of these people is important in managing these "moments of truth". (Gummesson, 1991, 60) Part-time marketers role in creating customer loyalty and satisfaction as well as generating re-sales is critical. They meet customers daily and at the heart of service interaction and consumption. (Grönroos, 2015)

Besides the interaction, Gummesson (1991, 68) introduces the "point-of-marketing" term that interests the interaction especially in the marketing context. Poit-of-marketing is an opportunity where part-time marketers can influence customers' current and future decisions. "The process gives the service provider a unique opportunity to influence future puchacing decisions as they are in direct interaction with the customer and therefore there are natural points-of-marketing." (Gummesson 1991, 68)

Value proposition and brand promise are the purpose and value the organization promise to its' customers. Brand promise can be thought as a specific experience at each touchpoint where the frontline employees play an important role. With their actions and communication, they are able to create value to the customer. "A key expectation is that one should think, feel and act according to these promises in customer interactions". (Liewendahl et al. 2020, 421) Companies that are customer-centric, aim on building value to the customer in every interaction. (Kurvinen & Seppa, 2016, 26) Especially in B2B environment, it is important that the service behaviour is aligned with the brand promise. (Baumgarth and Schmidt, 2010)

When considering opportunities on empowering and motivating frontline employees in leveraging value proposition and brand promise, it is important to understand that employees may lack ownership of and insight that would

enable them to be successful. (Liewendahl et al. 2020, 421) If employees understand the goals of the firm and their own role in achieving them, it is likely that they want and be able to support these goals in their interactions with external stakeholders. (Chong, 2007, 203)

2.3.2 Brand Ambassador

Internal Brand Ambassador is an employee of an organization who volunteerily recommend the workplace to others and for example share content about the workplace in they own social media channels. (Hurmerinta, 2015, 70) Brand Ambassadors are the faces of the organization but also the voices and therefore they have an impact on how does the brand look and sound like. (Smilansky, 2018)

According to Edelman Trust Barometer research (2015) one trust the employees of an organization more than media or research. The most trustworthy spokepersons are the "average worker", in this case meaning e.g. the frontline. (Kurvinen & Seppa, 2016, 115) Employees that are brand ambassadors can benefit the organization by listening, they can have friends or family that comment the brand or the competitor. Brand Ambassadors can be valuable in bringing the feedback to the organization and by doing so offering an opportunity to develop and evolve. (Gelb & Rangarajan, 2014, 99)

Successful employee advocacy requires culture that supports it, trust from both sides as well as careful and motivating planning behind it. Employees can be the missing link from the marketing puzzle. Not all the employees are natural in content creation, therefore feeding sharable content for the personnel is a good way to get the message through. (Kurvinen & Seppa, 2016, 115)

2.4 Enablers of part-time marketers

In order to facilitate FLEs actions in delivering brand promises in customer interactions, managers need to understand the enablers of these processes.

Internal marketing plays an important role in motivating the personnel. Liewendahl et al. (2020) contribute by offering model in supporting FLEs motivation towards delivering marketing promises.

2.4.1 Internal Marketing

Internal marketing is a philosophy where employees are perceived and treated like organisation's internal customers. (Bruin et al. 2020, 203) Internal marketing is coaching, inspiring, bringing meaning to ones work and energizing. It is what engages employees to reach common goals and helps to succeed. For a good customer experience, internal marketing is required. (Kurvinen & Seppa, 2016, 83) With internal marketing, a company can assure that promises can be made and kept successfully. (Grönroos, 2020, 294)

Employees who are engaged and even excited about organizational initiatives ans actions, will most definitely share that energy in customer interactions. The process of internal marketing starts by understanding the current status. If personnel is not aware of the problems, it is impossible to sell them a solution. By engaging employees to design solution based on the common understanding of the challenge, an organization will succeed better when the team understands the connections behind activations. (Kurvinen & Seppa, 2016, 83)

According to Chong (2007, 201) internal communication and training should be the first priority. Communication and training that is founded on company values has a capability to empower frontline employees into "walking embodiments" of the values and the key persons to keep the brand promise. Companies compete in the market where everyone wants to tell for what they stand for, therefore for service brands it is important that there are as many internal spokespersons as possible to make the message louder.

2.4.2 Frontline Employees Motivational Modes

As mentioned many times in the previous chapters, it is evident that employees have important role in keeping promises to the customer. In order to clarify the motivational aspects that encourage or weaken frontline employees motivation to align with value propositions and brand promises, FLE motivational modes models was created. (Liewendahl & Heinonen, 2020, 426)
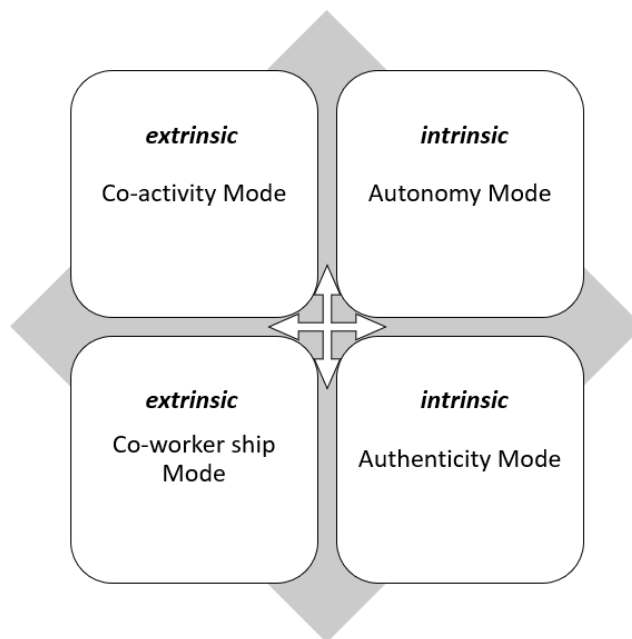
Figure 2. FLE motivational modes (Liewendahl & Heinonen, 2020, 426)

The model presents factors that support motivation to align with the promises:

- Frontline employees' co-activity in the process of creating the value propositions and promises

- Authentic promises

- The mode and quality of communication

Co-activity includes factors such engaging employees in the design process, awareness and understanding the promises, creating a forum where the ideas

and feedback can be given as well as appreciation from the managers. "A forum for exchanging ideas is an essential extrinsic, structural aspect of motivation as it is required for co-activity to take place." (Liewendahl & Heinonen, 2020, 426)

Authentic promises relates to the content of value propositions, ownership and trustworthiness. This supports the first co-activity factor, that by enabling FLEs to participate in the development process, it results to the value proposition that creates true value to the customers also in the real interactions. By linking the value propositions and promises to the practical settings, the promises are easier to be kept, more authentic and trustworthy.

The mode and quality of communication involves internal communication that concerns bottom-up infusion, respect for employee knowledge as well as external communication of value propositions and promises. From FLEs point of view, the content of the propostions and promises are often fuzzy and vague and therefore aligning with them could be difficult. Crucial part of the communication also is the timing and realistic copy text for FLEs alignment. (Liewendahl & Heinonen, 2020, 429)

There are also two factors than weaken FLEs motivation to keep the promises made in value proposition and brand promise:

- An objectifying stance towards employees

- Power struggle

The first weaking factor "objectifying stance towards emplyees" is a result from not including employees into the strategic issues and development. This may lead to the value propositions and promises that can feel abstract and confusing. This matter also relates to from top to bottom communication where managers mainly just inform things to the FLEs. Also FLEs knowledge and expertise about the customers were not appreciated.

Power struggle in this case means that fuzziness between internal actions and the practice. If the value propositions and promises are communicated unclearly, it can result into the actions where FLEs decided to ignore promises

made be management in order to serve the customer well. (Liewendahl & Heinonen, 2020, 429)

2.5 Summary

It is not possible that marketing and sales department carry out all the marketing activities in the organization. It is clear that they cannot be always at the right place, in the right time with the right customer. Therefore it is crucial that both the management as well as all employees of the organization understand their role as full-time or part-time marketers. (Gummesson, 1991, 73)

When the product is replaced by the service process, FLEs adapt the role of part-time marketers. And by doing so, the marketing approach also shift from the tradional manner into more complex process. (Grönroos, 2015, 295) Promise-theory offer a model that helps marketing managers to view marketing activities as promise-making and promise-keeping process. Promise-making can be organized in a separate department, but the promise-keeping process is spread throughout the organization. Therefore, it cannot be organized in any conventional structures. (Grönroos, 2015).

For FLEs it is easier and more motivating to perform in line with what was being promised if those who kept the promises in practice could also influence what was being promised by having the agency to participate in developing value propositions. T (Liewendahl & Heinonen, 2010) FLEs pointed out, the agency to participate in the development of value propositions would not only make them aware of, and advance their understanding of, what was promised but also give them ownership of what was being promised. (Liewendah & Heinonen, 2020, 428)

In order to manage and support promise-keeping mindset, one have to understand the business requirements (B2B marketing) and assets in B2B environment (brand experience, internal brand equity), the service system (The Honeybee metaphor) as well the enablers (internal marketing, motivational modes) to motivate FLEs to deliver and keep promises.

3 Development Project

This part of the thesis report the practical piece of the research-orientated development project. The process of the Design Thinking model is explained in a manner that compiles practical project with theoretical framework that was introduced in chapter two. The author of the thesis is the Project Manager of the development project and also acts as a facilitator in the workshops.

The report part of the thesis is explained with the goal of answering the second research question: How can customer service implement marketing communication in their daily work?

3.1 Design Thinking

Nowadays Design Thinking is understood as a complex thinking process, that before was only used by designers, being adapted into new fields such as business innovation. Design Thinking is seen as an effective toolbox that can be used in any type of innovation process and can benefit many types of problem-solving challenges. It links creative design approach together with traditional business thinking. (Tschimmel, 2012, 2) DT can also be defined as innovation and problem-solving method, that is based on iterative usage of various creative design methods. (Combelles et al. 2020, 22)

According to Brown (2019, 15) Design Thinking is "fundamentally an exploratory process". DT has shown its value as a methodology to generate innovative ideas. (Combelles et al. 2020, 22) DT is often conceptualized as a process or set of methods where the common stages or methods are need-finding, brainstorming and prototyping. (Auernhammer et al. 2021, 624)

As Design Thinking has become more popular among businesses, it has also showed that in order to create long term Design Thinking capabilities in the organization, the approach can not be build on one-off design sprints but rather have roots in company strategy and culture. (Wrigley et al. 2020)

Design Thinking process consist of different stages which definition is different depending on the "founder of the process". Even though the complexity and the focus may differ between different processes, in high level the stages consist three parts: data collecting, idea generation and testing. (Sanchez-Gordon et al. 2021, 96)

In the context of the thesis, relating to the B2B marketing and FLEs role in the process, Design Thinking offers methodology that supports the "Enablers of part-time marketers" introduced in chapter 2.4. The co-creative and democratizative manner of Design Thinking allows team to work together and to be part of the process from early on. (Elsbach & Stigliani, 2018, 2279)

3.2 3 I Model

3 I model was developed by the design agency IDEO in 2001 in the context of social design. The model is divided into three parts: Inspiration, Ideation and Implementation. Inspiration motives to search for solutions, Ideation is the process of generation, developing and testing the ideas and implementation is the journey from the project handover to the execution. Instead of the model being linear, the actual process is iterative and therefore more circle type. The process might loop back between phases as the design team search for new solutions or develop solutions further. (Brown, 2019, 15)

The first Design Thinking space of the model, Inspiration, includes the identification of the design opportunity or problem, working on the design brief to give the design team a framework as well as the observation of the target group in their daily environment.

In the Ideation phase of the process, an interdisciplinary team analyzes the findings from the first phase and turn them into insights that can be turned into solutions or opportunities to change.

The third part of the IDEO's 3 I model is implementation where the best ideas are turned into an action plan. Design Thinking model encourages to prototype

the solution as well as to create a communication strategy. (Tschimmel, 2012, 6)

3.3 Visualization of the design process

Even though the word "process" is often understood as a linear row of actions with a start and an ending, design process rarely is that type of a process. As Lawson (2005, 289) states designing is something that is far too complex to be explained with a simple diagram. Brown (2019, 14) continues that the nature of DT makes it impossible to provide easy-to-follow recipe, that would ensure that every project would be successful. Designers know that there is not such a thing as "one best way" to move through the process. Brown (2019, 15) continues that the process is best to consider as a system of overlapping spaces.
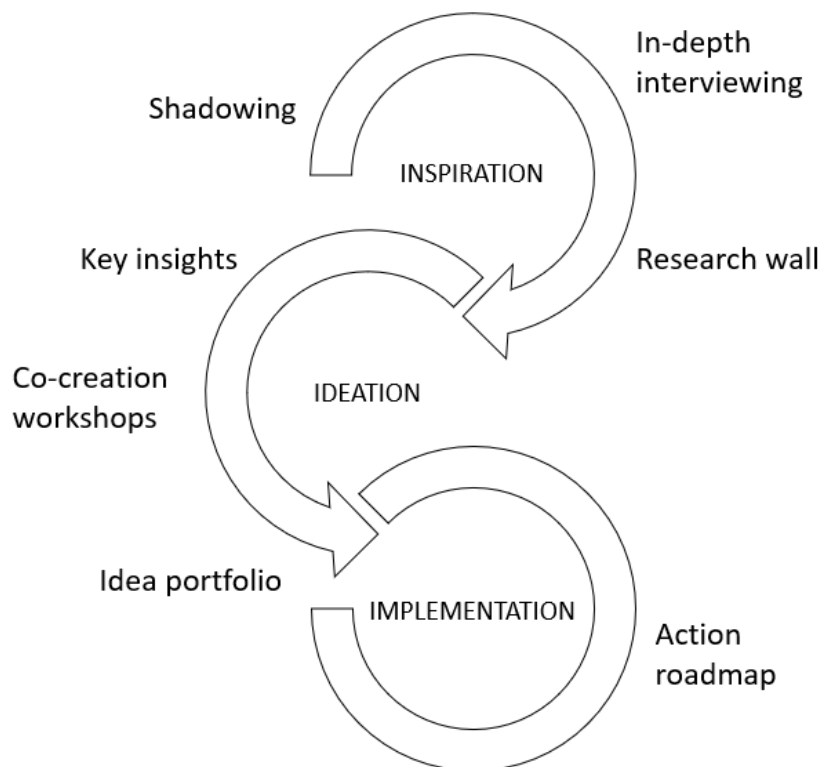

Figure 3. Design Thinking Process (adapted from IDEO)

3.4 Methods

In this chapter all the Design Thinking methods that were used during the design process are introduced briefly in order to the reader to understand what each step contained.

In-depth interviewing

In-depth interviewing is a research method used to help the researcher to learn about for example particular experiences, expectations, challenges, needs and processes. Interviewing is mainly listening but also asking the right questions. Interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. Typically in-depth interviews are conducted face-to-face in order to observe the expressions and body-language of the interviewee as well as to create more personal atmosphere. Interview can also be done virtually. (Granot et al. 2012)

Shadowing

During the shadowing, the researcher acts inconspicuous as a shadow when observing the object of the project. The goal of shadowing is to understand how the person being observed behaves in the situation and context and how she/he experience the situation. (Stickdorn, 2018)

Building a research wall

Research wall enables the researcher to find patterns but also can act as a tool to share information with others. The method combines text, visual, video and audio to present the different forms of data. Often the building of a research wall starts by clustering the information under themes. (This is service design doing, 2020)

Developing key insights

Key insights help the researcher to summarize and communicate the knowledge in a way that is relatable to the others. It is important that the insights are framed carefully as they serve as a base for ideation and further

development. There are different ways to formulate the insights, the approach should be chosen based on the aim of the project. Strategies like peer-review and co-creation workshops can be used to validate insights. (This is service design doing, 2020)

Co-creation workshop

Co-creation workshop is a method that can be used in any part of the design process, although it is most used in ideation stage. The most important value the workshop brings is its' nature to engage others to the project. By enabling different stakeholders to give their input and feedback, the buy-in of the results later on is more likely to be successful. It is important to consider who to invite to the workshop, think about the agenda very carefully as well as to consider who acts as a facilitator of the workshop. (Benson et al. 2021)

Idea portfolio

In the idea portfolio method, different ideas are clustered and ranked according to two variables and arranged on a graph or a portfolio. The two variables can be for example "feasibility" and "impact", but can be also something else that is more suitable for the project. (This is service design doing, 2020)

3.5 Project description

The development project was carried out during the spring 2021. The initiative was formed based on the discussions with the current business area Marketing Manager and the after sales Manager who had noticed the need for deeper co-operation as well as the missed opportunity to utilize the full potential of the customer service function.

Based on the discussion the Project Manager (the writer of the thesis, in the following text referred as "PM") initiated a project with a working title "Service as marketing". PM also formed a hypotheses based on the conversation. The hypotheses was that "What comes to the marketing opportunities, customer service is not utilized in the best possible way". The challenge was to identify

the opportunities there are to build the brand as well service and product marketing through customer service. PM set the goal to create a toolbox/manual/way of working that would enable customer service as a channel to implement marketing communication.

The development process followed IDEO's 3 I Model, where the I's come from the words: Inspiration, Ideation, Implementation. In the following chapters the project is described and divided into these three parts.

3.5.1 Results of the project initiative

As learned from the theoretical framework, frontline employees have role as part-time marketers in delivering and keeping the promises. (Grönroos, 2020) In the case company, the after sales department that customer service team is part of, is often "left out" from the marketing plans and do not really play a role in any type of marketing activities. As PM works in the marketing department, the initiative interest her as she was well aware that most of the marketing efforts and messages were mainly communicated to the sales and co-operation between marketing and sales was well established.

Based on the knowledge founded in the theoretical framework, PM was able to understand the role of FLEs in the service marketing and the enablers to motivate the personnel in delivering the brand promises. Therefore it was easy to choose a design process and methods that would enhance the participation and co-operation. Design Thinking and it's methods offered a framework that would take the part-time marketers, in this is case customer service, part of the process of designing the activities. This type of co-activity would motive the team in delivering value proposition and brand promise of the organization and by doing so build on internal brand equity.

3.6 Inspiration

The first part of the process, Inspiration, was the research part of the project where the current state was understood, and the preliminary development ideas and insights could be formed. The research methods chosen in this phase were in-depth interviewing and shadowing. PM conducted 5 interviews that were all 30-60 minutes long. The interviews were semi-structured with the aim of offering the interviewees also space to discuss freely about the topic. The interviews were conducted via Teams and recorded.

The work shadowing was done during two workdays (for about 3 hours per session). During the shadowing the PM observed the average working day that the customer service representative has, the employee explained the daily tasks, introduced the communication that was done via email and PM also listened the service that was done via phone by using attached head-set. During the shadowing the PM made field notes.

3.6.1 Results of the Inspiration

The interviews created an opportunity to confirm the hypothesis. It became clear from the interviews that the customer service team did not feel that their expertise were fully used and they could even point out many opportunities they had for delivering and keeping the brand promises to the customer. They did not fully understand their role as part-time marketers but they were positive towards leveraging brand communication. Also the managerial level saw opportunities to enable the team to serve the customers better also from a brand perspective but it can be noted that the managerial level did not see that they could affect the status quo themselves.

The work shadowing revealed opportunities to deliver brand promises in the daily work context. Customer service team was focused on serving the customers as efficiently as possible but the opportunities to top the expectations of the customer were not utilized because of the lack of effective tools to do so.

3.7 Ideation

After the Inspiration stage of the process, the Ideation part of the project started. In this phase the methods that were used were Research wall, Developing key insights and Co-creation workshop. The knowledge and information collected during the Inspiration phase was transformed into a Research wall that in this project meant a Power Point deck that contained information of the emerging topics and patterns that were repeated in the interviews, the most interesting quotes from the discussions, learnings that were gained during the shadowing etc. Based on the researched wall, the PM was able to analyze the data in the form of insights that summarized the main findings from the inspiration phase. Altogether six insights were formed and visualized as Insight cards. Each card contained Title that summarized the "truth", ingress that deepened the story with few sentences and a picture that somehow set the scene for the insight and emerged some thoughts or emotions.

The actual ideation took place in Co-creation workshops where the customer service team was invited. Two 2-hour-long virtual workshops were held in Teams that were facilitated by the PM. The aim of the workshops was to engage the team into the project but more importantly ideate the development ideas how they could be more involved in implementing marketing communication. The workshop started with introduction to the project, also the "Rules of the Ideation" were introduced so that the right mindset and atmosphere could be created for the team. After that a short warm-up was done to energize the team which was followed by presenting the insights by the PM. After the insights were presented each participant could vote for the one that resonated most in them. After the voting PM explained what insight were chosen to be the base of the ideation and why. Also the ideation challenge was formed based on the insights. The ideation part itself was divided into three parts. In the first part, teams were ideating solutions to the challenge in a me-we matter, after that the team converged the ideas by choosing 2-3 best ideas for further developed in the Idea Cards and in third part of the ideation, teams

presented their Idea cards to the rest of the team. Workshops ended by PM explaining the project process and next-steps.

3.7.1 Results of the Ideation

The information collected from the inspiration phase was analysed in the research wall that acted as a great tool to collect large amount of information in a more compact format. Quite quickly, the patterns and similarities started to form and the PM was able to create insights based from the research.
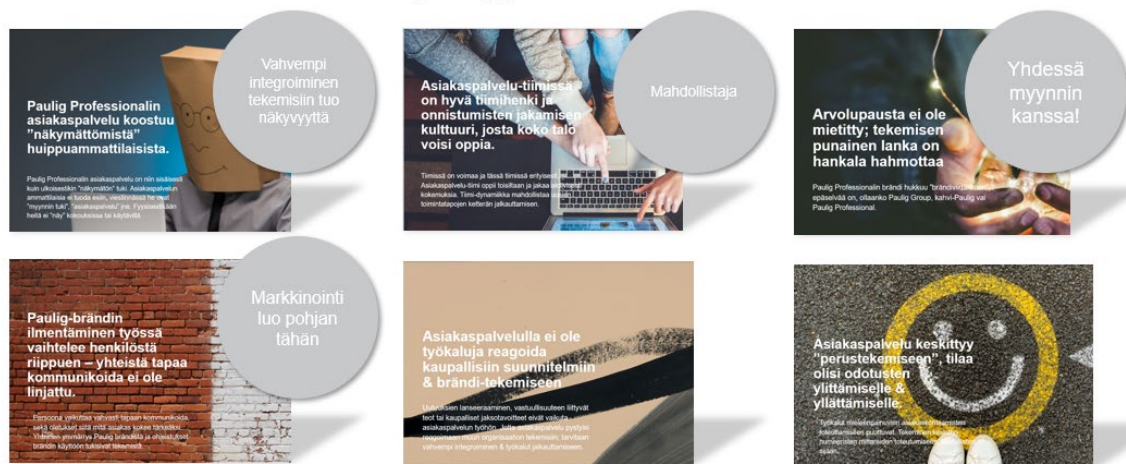
Picture 3. Insights presented to the team in the co-creation workshop.

Althogether six insights were formed and presented to the customer service team in the co-creation workshop:

- Paulig Professional customer service team consist of "invisible top-professionals"

- Customer service team has a great team spirit and the culture of best practice sharing that the whole company could learn from

- There is no real value proposition and therefore it is difficult to understand the big picture

- The way Paulig brand is presented in the communication varies depending of the employee -there are no common guidelines

- Customer service does not have tools to deliver according to commercial plans or brand activities

- The customer service focuses on daily tasks, there would be room for exceeding expectations

All the insights were introduced during the workshop but because of the internal processes and future plans, it made most sense to concentrate on the insight: "Customer service does not have tools to deliver according to commercial plans or brand activities". This insight also related closely to the research question and actually two other insights could be linked to it aswell. The insight also got most of votes, when the team voted the insights that resonated most in them.

Based on the insight, the design challenge was created by the PM. Design challenge formed the base for the ideation: "How might we enable that the customer knows about Paulig novelties and the most important activities?"

Picture 4. Design challenge presented to the team in the co-creation workshop.

The ideation was done in three phases in divergent and convergent manner. After the ideation the teams formed altogether 10 Idea Cards that summarized the ideas by defining topics:

- Name of the idea

- Open the idea by using one sentence

- What need/problem idea solves?

- What excites you about the idea?

- Visualize the idea!

Ryhmä 1 IDEAKORTTI: Kuukauden kahvi

Avaa ideasi yhdellä lauseella: Tarjota asiakkaalle uutta vivahdetta kahvien maailmaan. Sisäinen/Ulkoinen uutiskirje, jossa sisäisessä on hieman enemmän dataa, kun taas ulkoisessa enemmän kahvin maku asioita ja tarinaa kahvin ympärille. Voi olla myös videotervehdyksen muodossa.	**Minkä tarpeen/ongelman idea ratkaisee?** Asiantuntevalla tavalla esitellä kahvi asiakkaalle makujen maailmaan. Keitä olemme sen sijaan että olisimme piilossa. Olemme täällä teitä varten!
Mikä ideassa innostaa eniten? Kahvitietämyksen lisääminen niin asiakkaalle kuin talon sisällä.	**Visualisoi idea! (mikäli aikaa jää ☺)**

Picture 5. An example of an Idea Card

All in all the co-creation workshops were successful; the teams were energetic and active. They got great ideas and felt empowered by the methods used in the ideation. The feedback was positive and the PM felt that the most important thing in the workshops was that the team felt that they were listened. Design Thinking process and methods enabled the team to co-create and act as experts in their own field.

3.8 Implementation

Because of the lack of time, instead of making the idea portfolio during the co-creation workshop, implementation phase of the project started by PM making an idea portfolio in order to prioritize and cluster the ideas. Based on the idea portfolio PM formed a action roadmap where all the ideas were listed in order to initiate the actions further. The roadmap was introduced to the customer service team as well as the managerial level. The map contained also responsible person as well as the timing in quarterly level.

3.8.1 The results of the implementation

All the idea cards created in the workshops were carefully examined by the PM. PM made some modifications and combinations for the ideas but almost all the ideas created in the co-creation workshops were put into the Action roadmap in some form. The roadmap conducted the name of the idea, briefly the explanation what the idea is about, responsible person that takes the lead of the initiative and the timing. The roadmap was then presented by the PM to the relevant stakeholders in the management teams as well as the customer service team.

Ideat-kartta

Idea	Mitä	Kuka	Milloin
Sähköpostin hyödyntäminen (viesti, visuaalisuus, bannerit)	S.posti pohjien make-over kaupalliseksi		
Tuotetuntemuksen lisääminen (varmistetaan tiedonkulku lanseerauksista yms.)	Aspa sis. Uutiskirje / Teams / tiimi-info tjms.		
Asiakasviestintä (aktiivinen asiakaspalvelu: uusien tuotteiden tarjoaminen yms.)	Koulutus		
Sähköiset kanavat (Oma Paulig, etähallinta, s.posti bannerit)	Suunnitelma & wow		
Kuukauden kahvi (Aspan suositus)	Toistuva teema uutiskirjeessä		
Makunäytteet asiakkaille (kahvinvaihto yms.)	Näytteiden tuotteistus palveluksi		
Työnkierto & kehitysprojektit (Aspa osaksi PP:tä)	Suunnitelma		
Omnichannel –tekeminen (Aspa osaksi suunnitelmia)	Roadmap		
Varmista kahvin näkyvyys asiakkaassa	Wow (osana roadmappia)		

Picture 6. An action roadmap (partly hidden)

The plan is to do a check-up after couple of months to see how the initiatives are proceeding and maybe add, delete and define some of the initiatives. The process will be reported also to the customer service team and customer service presentatives will be taken as participants into different project teams formed based on the ideas.

4 Conclusion

In the final part of this thesis, the development project is summarized by showcasing the most important insights from the theoretical framework as well as the empirical part of the thesis. Also the value of the development work is evaluated and lastly the prospects of future research are given.

4.1 Summary

The purpose of this thesis was to understand the role of customer service in B2B marketing. The roles were examined by introducing different theories covering the topic and exploring the actual marketing opportunities with a customer service team. The theoretical framework and understanding of the roles created a base for the practical part of the thesis.

This thesis clearly works as an entity, the first part pictures the environment where the practical part can play; by understanding the role of FLEs in marketing, the facilitator (the writer of the thesis) is able to workshop the actual marketing activations together with the team. Theoretical framework showcases FLEs role as part-time marketers, which have certain role in the marketing promise making and promise keeping process and are able to step to the role if certain internal marketing practices as well as motivational modes enable it.

Design Thinking process and methods create a set-up that enable part-time marketers to become part of the marketing. Employees, ones providing the service, are important for designing process with their knowledge and engagement in the job (Polaine et al. 2013, 43-44). Because of the multi-disciplinary and co-creative nature of Design Thinking, the methods create an opportunity to engage different stakeholders into the process of designing and by doing so, motivate the participants to take the role of part-time marketers. As Liewendahl & Heinonen (2020, 426) explain, one important way to motivate FLEs is to involve them into the process of creating value propositions and making promises.

During the practical part of the research, interviewing and workshopping with the customer service team, it became very clear that the team needs to be "activated" in order to really become part-time marketers. The insights build based on the interviews, really showed that the team was eager to be more involved and they saw the potential they had but also felt that without the right tools and the co-operation, they could not take the role of part-time marketers. In the workshops the team got the opportunity to be engaged in the process of creating ideas of marketing activations and the facilitator of the workshop felt the empowerement and the excitement of the team. Someone even said, that finally someone is listening to their ideas!

In order to answer the research question of the thesis "What is the role of customer service in B2B marketing?", the answer can be simply "part-time marketer". But to widen the context and to truly understand what it means, the role of full-time marketer and part-time marketer can be compared.

The main difference with full-time and part-time marketers, is the different role in the process of marketing. Full-time marketers *make* the promises whereas part-time marketers *keep* the promises. With customer service, it can be argued that they can actually be taking both of the roles as they have an opportunity to interact with the customer in different stages of the relationship. Secondly, full-time marketer often takes the role of internal marketer and for example are responsible of internal marketing processes as well as brand ambassador programs. Part-time marketers on the other hand, do not have the management responsibility but can be active partipants in the programs and become Brand Ambassadors or internal influencers. Thirdly, full-time marketer takes the role of facilitator in order to engage the stakeholders into the design process in order to support their motivational modes. Part-time marketers role is to support the process with their customer expertise that is gained in daily interactions with the customers. Supporting the third role, full-time marketers role as a manager is crucial in the setting, as without a proper management and ownership of the process, the actions will not be initiated and supported. Part-time marketers act as executers. They will make the actions happen in the customer interactions

with the help of material provided by full-time marketers. Finally, the content and visuals often are the responsibility of the full-time marketing, whereas part-time marketers can act as "voice" of the organization.

Full-time marketer	Part-time marketer
Promise making	Promise keeping
Internal marketing	Brand Ambassador
Facilitator	Customer expertise
Manager	Executer
Content	Voice

Figure 4. Marketing roles

The second research question of the thesis was "How can customer service implement marketing communication in their daily work?". The empirical part of the development work answers the research question by showcasing an example of the process. The process involves three stages and in this thesis the process follows IDEO's 3I process: The first part of the process is "Inspiration" which means understanding the environment and daily work of the customer service in order to support them on the next stage, which is "Ideation". Ideation of activities should be build on a true insight that triggers actions and motivation to create solutions. The set-up of the ideation should be co-creative in order to motivate customer service to become part of the process and act as experts. The last part of the process is "Implementation" where customer service really step up to their role as part-time marketers and start executing the activations. In order to make this part of the process happen, the previous stages should have been done carefully and the implementation should be managed and iterated by full-time marketer.

The action roadmap created based on the ideation in the co-creation workshops showcases an example what type of marketing activities customer service can start excuting or can be part of initiating.

To summarize the findings of this thesis, the context is presented in Golden Circle. (Sinek, 2009)

Figure 5. Research-orientated development project summary

Based on the knowledge gained during the process of this research-oriented development work, the thesis writer can recommend that the organization should consider including customer service in marketing activations in order to develop their overall B2B marketing and the brand experience. It can be done by understanding the different roles in marketing; role of customer service as part-time marketers and the evolving role of full-time marketeers. Also the organization should consider the process of engaging customer service in designing the activities. The outcome can be marketing activities that support the brand experience of the organization which results as increased sales and higher customer satisfaction. (Balmer, Stuart, & Greyser, 2009; Schepers & Nijssen, 2018; Hughes et al., 2019).

4.2 Contributions and transferability of results

This thesis work contributes by researching theme that is less explored by the academia: what is the role of marketing outside of marketing department. As Brown (2005) wrote in his text titled "Marketing Renaissance"; marketing and sales are seen as key roles in making the promises to customers when keeping the promises is typically considered to be someone else's business. Brown reported a study among top executies where none of the respondents mentioned marketing to be responsible for the customer. Even though, the role of marketing is claimed to be the linkage between the customer and the company, it seems that strategically other departments in the organization are affecting the relationship more powerfully. (Brown, 2005, 3). Scientifically there are not much research done in the roles of marketing outside the traditional marketing roles, and to build on that, there is no framework that would support the actions towards managing these processes. In practical level, this thesis contributes by showcasing Design Thinking as a set of methods that can enable marketing to manage and support the role of part-time marketers.

Even though the thesis concentrates on the role of part-time marketer, the research-oriented development project as an entity offers a viewpoint of what is the evolving role of full-time marketers and what are the skills they will need in order to manage the marketing process as a whole, from the making to the keeping of the promises.

4.3 Future research development

As Gönroos (2015) states "For the research community, it should be a wake-up call drawing researchers' interest to study how marketing can be reinvented to fit today's customer communities and business practices. So far, neither service researchers nor marketing scholars, in general, have reacted. As a consequence, marketing continuously becomes less relevant to firms and top management, and only tactical, if anything, and marketing as an academic discipline loses credibility as part of the management and business

administration field." This thesis offers a narrow viewpoint on this matter but all in all, the topic requires wider research that could give opportunity to contribute by updating service marketing models as well offering a framework to manage the marketing process from start to end.

Also, the future of marketing and the new roles of marketeers offer an interesting topic for further research. "When people outside of marketing's traditional boundaries become part of marketing, and when business functions other than marketing become part of the firm's total marketing process, it becomes doubtful whether "marketing" signifies the phenomenon we are talking about very accurately." (Grönroos, 2015, 295)

References

Anker, T.B. 2012. Fuzzy promises: explicative definitions of brand promise delivery. Marketing Theory. Vol 12, No 3, 267-287.

Auernhammer, J. & Roth, B. 2021. The origin and evolution of Stanford University's design thinking: From product design to design thinking in innovation management. The Journal of product innovation management. Vol 38, No 6, 623-644.

Baumgarth, C. 2010. How strong is the business-to-business brand in the workforce? An empirically-tested model of 'internal brand equity' in a business-to-business setting. Industrial marketing management. Vol 39, No 8, 1250-1260.

Benson, T. 2021. Virtual Co-Creation: A Guide to Conducting Online Co-Creation Workshops. International journal of qualitative methods. Vol 20.

Berry, L.L. 2000. Cultivating service brand equity. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science. Vol 28, No 1, 128-137.

Blythe, J. 2003. Essentials of Marketing Communication. Financial Times Prentice Hall 2003.

Boukis, A. 2021. Unveiling front-line employees' brand construal types during corporate brand promise delivery: A multi-study analysis. Journal of business research. Vol 131, 673-685.

Brennan, R., Canning, L. And Mcdowell, R. 2020. Business-to-business marketing. Sage.

Brown, S.W.; Webster, F.E.; Steenkamp, J.B.E.; Wilkie, W.L.; Sheth, J.N.; Sisodia, R.S.: Kerin, R.A.; MacInnis, D.J.; McAlister, L.; Raju, J.S. & Bauerly, R.J. 2005. Marketing renaissance: Opportunities and imperatives for improving marketing thought, practice, and infrastructure. Journal of Marketing. Vol 69, No 4, 1-25.

Brown, T. 2019. Change by design: how design thinking transforms organizations and inspires innovation. HarperCollins.

Brozovic, D.; Ravald, A. & Nordin, F. 2015. Making sense of service dynamics: the honeybee metaphor. The Journal of Services Marketing. Vol 29, No 6/7, 634-644.

Chong, M. 2007. The Role of Internal Communication and Training in Infusing Corporate Values and Delivering Brand Promise: Singapore Airlines' Experience. Corporate Reputation Review. Vol 10. No 3, 201-212.

Combelles, A.; Ebert, C. & Lucena, P. 2020. Design Thinking. IEEE software. Vol 37, No 2, 21-24.

De Bruin, L. 2020. Internal marketing, service quality and perceived customer satisfaction: An Islamic banking perspective. Journal of Islamic marketing. 199-224.

De Jong, A. 2021. Key trends in business-to-business services marketing strategies: Developing a practice-based research agenda. Industrial marketing management. Vol 93, 1-9.

Elsbach, K.D. 2018. Design Thinking and Organizational Culture: A Review and Framework for Future Research. Journal of Management. Vol 44, No 6, 2274-2306.

Friend, S.B. 2020. What drives customer Re-engagement? The foundational role of the sales-service interplay in episodic value co-creation. Industrial marketing management. Vol 84, 271-286.

Gelb, B.D. 2014. Employee Contributions to Brand Equity. California management review. Vol 56, No 2, 95-112.

Granot, E. 2012. A structural guide to in-depth interviewing in business and industrial marketing research. The Journal of business & industrial marketing. Vol 27, No 7, 547-553.

Grönroos, C. 2020. Viewpoint: service marketing research priorities. Journal of Services Marketing. Vol 34, No 3, 291-298.

Grönroos, C. 2015. Service management and marketing : managing the service profit logic. Fourth edition. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Gummesson, E. 1991. Marketing-orientation Revisited: The Crucial Role of the Part-time Marketer. European Journal of Marketing. Vol 25, No 2, 60-75.

Hague, P. & Hague, N. 2018. B2B Customer Experience : A Practical Guide to Delivering Exceptional CX. New York, NY: Kogan Page.

Hurmerinta, J. 2015. On aika muuttua : Menestysopas sosiaalisen aikakauden johtajille. Helsinki: Kauppakamari.

Kananen, J. & Jyväskylän Ammattikorkeakoulu. 2012. Kehittämistutkimus opinnäytetyönä : kehittämistutkimuksen kirjoittamisen käytännön opas. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulu.

Kannisto, P. & Kannisto, S. 2008. Asiakaspalvelu : tiedettä, taikuutta vai talonpoikaisjärkeä? Tampere: AMK-kustannus.

Kurvinen, J. & Seppä, M. 2016. B2B-markkinoinnin & myynnin pelikirja : yritysjohdon opas myyntiin ja markkinointiin. Helsinki: Kauppakamari.

Lawson, B. 2005. How Designers Think : Demystifying the Design Process. Jordan Hill: Taylor & Francis Group.

Liewendahl, H.E. & Heinonen, K. 2020. Frontline employees' motivation to align with value propositions. The Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing. Vol 35, No 3, 420-436.

Lusch, R.F. 2006. Service-dominant logic: reactions, reflections and refinements. Marketing theory. Vol 6, No 3, 281-288.

Miettinen, S. & Teknologiateollisuus (Yhdistys). 2014. Muotoiluajattelu. Helsinki: Teknologiainfo Teknova.

Moorman, C. & Lemon, K. CX RX: How the Best Firms Are Innovating and Competing on Customer Experience. Cited 22.10.2021. https://www.ama.org/marketing-news/cx-rx-how-the-best-firms-are-innovating-and-competing-on-customer-experience/

Nayar, V. 2010. Employees First, Customers Second: Turning Conventional Management Upside Down. Harvard: Harvard Business Press.

Ojasalo, K.; Moilanen, T. & Ritalahti, J. 2015. Kehittämistyön menetelmät : uudenlaista osaamista liiketoimintaan. 3.-4. painos edn. Helsinki: Sanoma Pro Oy.

Ostrom, A.L.; Field, J.M.; Fotheringham, D.; Subramony, M.; Gustafsson, A.; Lemon, K.N.; Huang, M. & Mccoll-Kennedy, J. 2021. Service Research Priorities: Managing and Delivering Service in Turbulent Times. Journal of Service Research. Vol 24, No 3, 329-353.

Paulig Group 2021. Company presentation. Cited 20.10.2021.

Payne, A. 2020. Toward a comprehensive framework of value proposition development: From strategy to implementation. Industrial marketing management. Vol 87, 244-255.

Payne, A. 2017. The customer value proposition: evolution, development, and application in marketing. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science. Vol 45 No 4, 467-489.

Polaine, A.; Løvlie, L. & Reason, B. 2013. Service design: From insight to inspiration. Rosenfeld media.

Rope, T. 2004. Business to Business -markkinointi. 2. painos. edn. Helsinki: WSOY.

Sanchez-Gordon, M.; Mendoza-Gonzalez, R. & Colomo-Palacios, R. 2021. Design Thinking in Practice. IT professional. Vol 23, No 4, 95-100.

Santos-Vijande, M.L.; López-Sánchez, J.Á & Rudd, J. 2016. Frontline employees' collaboration in industrial service innovation: routes of co-creation's effects on new service performance. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science. Vol 44, No 3, 350-375.

Sheth, J.N. & Sisodia, R. 2015. Does marketing need reform? : fresh perspectives on the future. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Shostack, G.L. 1977. Breaking free from product marketing. Journal of Marketing. Vol 41, No 2, 73-80.

Sinek, S. 2009. Start with why: How great leaders inspire everyone to take action. Penguin.

Smilansky, S. 2018. Experiential marketing : a practical guide to interactive brand experiences. Second edition edn. London: Kogan Page.

Stickdorn, M.; Lawrence, A.; Hormess, M. E. & Schneider, J. 2018. This is service design doing: Applying service design thinking in the real world : a practitioners' handbook. First Edition. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media, Inc.

Taylor, H. 2018. B2B Marketing Strategy : Differentiate, Develop and Deliver Lasting Customer Engagement. London: Kogan Page.

Tschimmel, K. 2012. Design Thinking as an effective Toolkit for Innovation.

Tuulaniemi, J. 2011. Palvelumuotoilu. Helsinki: Talentum Media.

Vilkka, H. 2021. Näin onnistut opinnäytetyössä : ratkaisut tutkimuksen umpikujiin. Jyväskylä: PS-kustannus.

Wrigley, C.; Nusem, E. & Straker, K. 2020. Implementing Design Thinking: Understanding Organizational Conditions. California management review. Vol 62, No 2,125-143.

Zimmerman, A. & Blythe, J. 2017. Business to Business Marketing Management : A Global Perspective. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.