

# **European International University**



## **MBA in General Management**

### **Action Research Paper**

#### **Investigating the Effectiveness of Agile Management in Enhancing Sales**

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## **Dedication**

To my little beloved twins

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to all those who have contributed to the completion of this research project. Firstly, I am immensely thankful to CCEO business school and European International University, for their guidance, expertise, and continuous support throughout the research process. Their valuable insights and feedback have been instrumental in shaping the direction and quality of this study.

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Without the support and contributions of these individuals, this research would not have been possible.

## Abstract

Agile management has emerged as a transformative approach to project and team management, enabling organizations to navigate the complex and rapidly evolving business landscape. This abstract explores the essence of agile management, emphasizing its fundamental principles, benefits, and implications for organizational success. Agile management involves a mindset shift, embracing flexibility, collaboration, and iterative processes that empower teams to deliver high-quality outcomes while responding effectively to changing requirements and customer needs.

Agile management is built upon the principles outlined in the Agile Manifesto, which values individuals and interactions, working solutions, customer collaboration, and responding to change. It encourages cross-functional teams to self-organize, promote continuous learning, embrace transparency, and foster a culture of trust and accountability. By adopting agile practices such as Scrum, Kanban, or Lean, organizations can enhance productivity, reduce waste, and achieve shorter project cycles.

The benefits of agile management are manifold. It enables organizations to quickly adapt to market demands, promoting faster time-to-market and increased customer satisfaction. Agile fosters a collaborative environment, optimizing communication and knowledge sharing among team members, stakeholders, and customers. The iterative nature of agile management allows for early and frequent feedback, facilitating continuous improvement and reducing the risk of project failure.

However, implementing agile management requires careful consideration and adaptation to specific organizational contexts. It challenges traditional hierarchies, necessitates a supportive

leadership style, and demands a cultural shift towards embracing change and experimentation. Organizations must invest in training and coaching to develop agile competencies and ensure successful implementation.

“A traditional project manager focuses on following the plan with minimal changes, whereas an agile leader focuses on adapting successfully to inevitable changes.” (Jim Highsmith, Agile Project Management: Creating Innovative Products,2009).

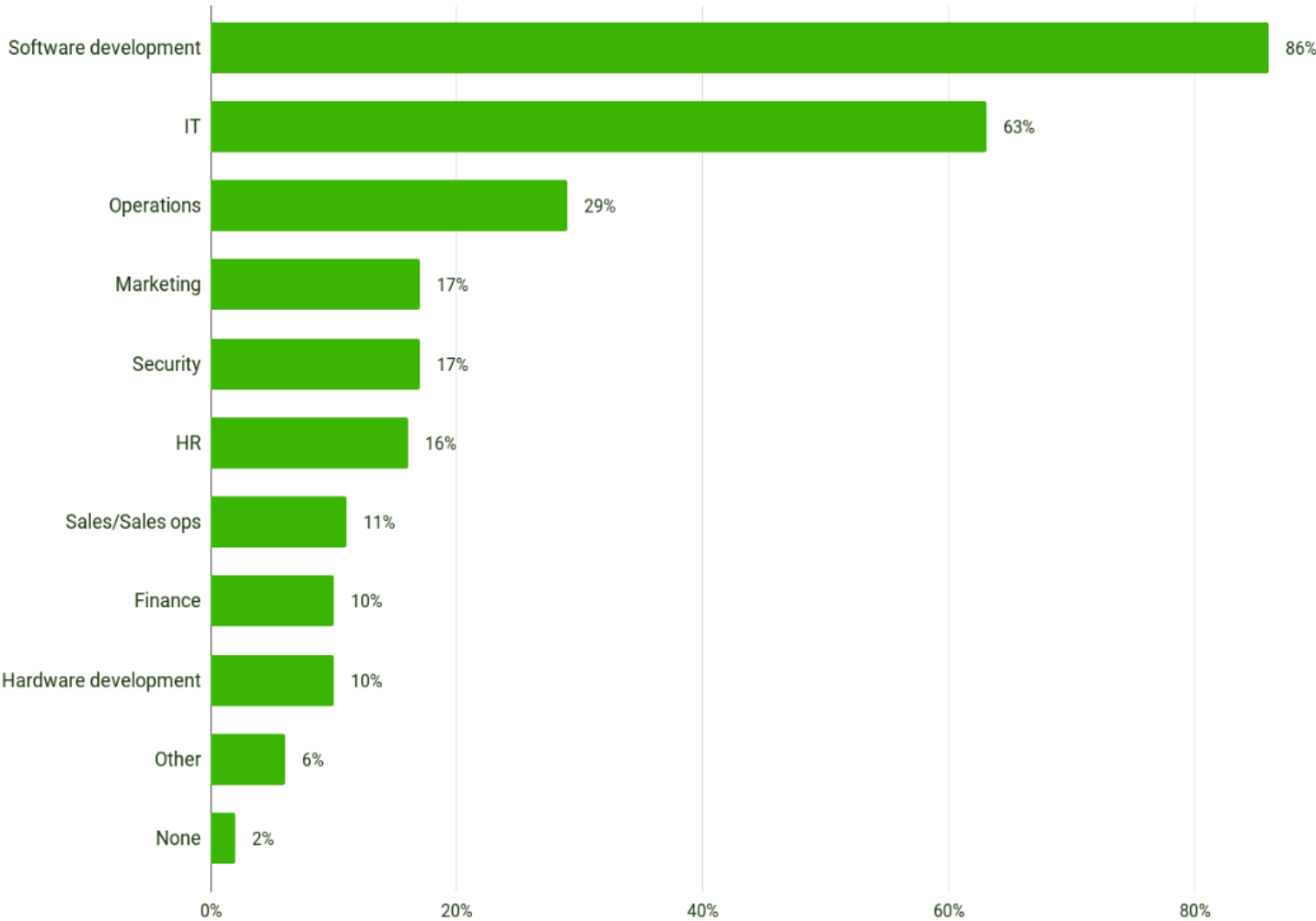


Chart 1. Statistics (2023) shows what percentage of the departments have adopted Agile methods.



## **1. Rationale for Research**

In today's highly competitive business environment, organizations are constantly seeking strategies to enhance their sales performance and gain a competitive edge. Agile management, known for its adaptive and iterative approach, has been widely adopted in various industries. However, its effectiveness in enhancing sales processes and outcomes remains a relatively unexplored area of research. This study aims to investigate the impact of agile management on sales effectiveness, providing valuable insights for organizations looking to optimize their sales strategies and achieve improved sales performance.

Over time, agile methodologies have predominantly found their application in the realm of software development. However, their influence has gradually expanded to encompass a wide range of industries and functions, including business intelligence, the financial sector, and strategic management, among others (Rigby et al., 2016; Weinrich, Volland, & Muntermann, 2016; Larson, 2011; McFarland, 2008). Nevertheless, despite this widespread adoption, the applicability of agile methodologies in the sales domain has received relatively little attention.

Within the sales literature, there exists a considerable body of work dedicated to the concept of agility in selling. This concept revolves around cultivating an agile mindset as a salesperson (Chonko & Jones, 2005; Gias, 2016; Konrath, 2014; Scott, 2016). However, the focus has primarily remained on the importance of an agile mindset, with limited exploration of the practical implementation of agile methodologies in sales. Although a few online blogs touch upon the subject of implementing agile methodologies in sales (Hogan, 2016; Kriselt, 2013; Roach, 2015), comprehensive research and analysis in this area are lacking.

Our study has uncovered several published papers that are relevant to our research. The first paper, which is a case study, offers valuable insights into how the implementation of Scrum enhanced the predictability of a company's sales process, ultimately leading to a notable increase in revenue (van Solingen et al., 2011). Similarly, the second paper sheds light on the agile transition of a telecom sales team in Turkey, specifically highlighting their adoption of Scrum (Akdag, 2014). While these two papers provide compelling evidence of successful agile methodology implementation in sales, it is worth noting that they are limited to case studies. Consequently, the primary objective of our study is to address the existing knowledge gap by exploring the practicality and effectiveness of agile methodologies in the sales domain.

Investigating the effectiveness of agile management in enhancing sales is crucial for organizations aiming to improve their sales performance in a rapidly changing business landscape. This research aims to provide valuable insights into the application of agile principles in sales processes, team collaboration, and customer-centric strategies. The findings of this study will offer practical recommendations for organizations seeking to optimize their sales operations, improve sales outcomes, and achieve sustainable growth. By adopting agile practices in sales, organizations can adapt to market dynamics, enhance customer engagement, and gain a competitive edge in the marketplace.

## **2. Research Questions and Objectives**

In today's dynamic and highly competitive business environment, organizations are seeking strategies to optimize their sales processes, improve outcomes, and gain a competitive edge.

Agile management, known for its adaptive and iterative approach, has shown promising results

in various industries. However, its impact on sales effectiveness and the specific agile practices that can be applied to sales processes remain relatively unexplored.

The purpose of this research study is to investigate the effectiveness of agile management in enhancing sales performance within organizations through identify some questions and objectives as below:

### **Questions**

- How does the adoption of agile management principles impact sales effectiveness?
- What specific agile practices can be applied to sales processes to optimize sales outcomes?
- How does the implementation of agile management principles enhance collaboration and performance within sales teams?
- What is the role of agile management in adapting sales strategies to changing customer needs and market dynamics?

### **Research Objectives**

- To assess the impact of adopting agile management principles on sales effectiveness in organizations.
- To identify specific agile practices that can be integrated into sales processes to optimize sales outcomes.
- To investigate how the implementation of agile management principles enhances collaboration and performance within sales teams.
- To explore the role of agile management in adapting sales strategies to changing customer needs and market dynamics.

- To provide practical recommendations for organizations on leveraging agile management to enhance sales performance and achieve sustainable growth.

### **3. Literature Review**

The literature presents a comprehensive evaluation of various studies that seek to uncover the multifaceted impacts of the effectiveness of agile management in enhancing sales. These studies delve into the realm of sales performance, exploring how the adoption of agile management principles influences key outcomes and strategies within organizations.

#### **3.1 Agile Approach**

According to Rigby et al. (2016), an agile approach is particularly favorable in market environments characterized by complexity, evolving customer preferences, and changing requirements. In such contexts, customer collaboration is feasible, allowing for close alignment with customer needs and expectations. Incremental deliverables throughout the development process address the dynamic nature of customer expectations and requirements.

Le Meunier-FitzHugh and Douglas (2016) highlight that salespeople in the B2B context operate in a complex environment with constantly changing expectations and preferences of B2B customers. The sophistication of modern buyers adds to the complexity of the market conditions for sellers.

Considering these insights, Chonko et al. argue that adopting agile management principles in sales can provide organizations with the agility needed to navigate complex and dynamic market landscapes effectively.

In summary, an agile approach is well-suited for market environments characterized by complexity, evolving customer preferences, and changing requirements. It enables customer collaboration, incremental value delivery, and adaptability, empowering sales teams to respond effectively to the complexities of the market and enhance sales effectiveness.



Figure 1. Agile Method

### 3.2 Scrum

According to VersionOne (2016), Scrum is the most commonly used agile methodology in software development. Scrum can be defined as "a framework within which people can address complex adaptive problems while productively and creatively delivering products of the highest possible value" (Schwaber & Sutherland, 2011, p. 3). Initially employed in the manufacturing industry (Takeuchi & Nonaka, 1986), Scrum emphasizes an iterative and incremental approach, enabling continuous inspection and adaptation (Sutherland & Schwaber, 2007).

Furthermore, Scrum serves as a framework for team performance and can be applied to various projects to deliver enhanced results within the ever-evolving business environment (Iver, 2009).

By adopting Scrum, organizations can effectively tackle complex challenges, respond to changing market dynamics, and deliver valuable products or services. Its iterative nature allows

for regular assessment and adjustment, ensuring that teams remain responsive and adaptable throughout the project lifecycle. This iterative process fosters collaboration, empowers team members to address complex problems, and facilitates the delivery of high-quality outcomes.

In summary, Scrum, the most widely used agile methodology in software development, has also demonstrated its applicability and effectiveness in sales contexts. By embracing the principles of Scrum, sales teams can enhance their performance, adapt to shifting market conditions, and deliver improved results. The iterative and collaborative nature of Scrum enables teams to continuously inspect and adapt their approach, ensuring that they remain responsive to customer needs and deliver products or services that provide the highest possible value.

### **3.3 Agile Methodologies in Sales**

In a 2011 interview, Jeff Sutherland, a co-signer of the Agile Manifesto and CEO of Scrum Inc., made a compelling case for the effectiveness of Scrum, an agile methodology, in sales (Heuser, 2011). Drawing from his experience, Sutherland shared insights in a paper that documented a successful implementation of Scrum in a prominent software organization based in the Netherlands. Prior to embracing Scrum, the company held the perception that their sales process was unpredictable and largely controlled by their customers. This realization motivated the sales team to gain a deeper understanding of the Scrum methodology, given their focus on selling agile software development and Scrum consultancy services.

Through the implementation of Scrum practices and values, the sales team embarked on a journey of continuous improvement, leading to a more transparent sales process. The study highlighted the significance of this endeavor, stating that it provided the "first documented insight into how Scrum can improve predictability in the sales process leading directly to

increased revenue" (van Solingen et al., 2011, p. 284). As a result of adopting Scrum in the sales department, the company experienced a doubling of their revenue. Sales teams gained a comprehensive understanding of and control over their sales process, enabling them to better anticipate and navigate customer steps throughout the sales cycle (van Solingen et al., 2011).

In addition to the previous papers discussed, another noteworthy study by Akdag (2014) delves into the application of agile processes in a telecom sales team. This particular team witnessed a remarkable 65% increase in sales revenue, primarily attributed to the reduction of complexity and the fostering of collaboration. This study further reinforces the positive impact of agile methodologies in the sales domain.

### **3.4 Agility Selling**

The literature extensively discusses the significance of cultivating a general agile mindset among employees to establish an agile organization (Ambler, 2003; Breu, Hemingway, Strathern, & Bridger, 2002; Chonko & Jones, 2005; Muduli, 2013). This focus has led to the emergence of various articles and books exploring the concept of agile sales, agility selling, and salesforce agility (Chonko & Jones, 2005; Gias, 2016; Konrath, 2014; Scott, 2016). While agile methodologies are primarily concerned with processes and frameworks (Levy, Short, & Measey, 2015), agility selling revolves around the mindset and thinking that salespeople need to exhibit within a sales organization (Chonko & Jones, 2005).

Chonko and Jones (2005) initially defined the characteristics of sales force agility by drawing upon concepts of agility from the manufacturing literature. An agile salesperson delivers value to customers by reducing cycle time and anticipating change. They achieve this by remaining vigilant to shifting customer behavior and swiftly closing prospects. When faced with change, an

agile salesperson leverages the resources and capabilities available within the organization. They acquire and share the necessary knowledge to solve customer problems, effectively leveraging their team members' expertise to generate collaborative solutions. By prioritizing close customer collaboration, agile salespeople can anticipate and rapidly respond to existing and prospective customer needs (Chonko & Jones, 2005).

Konrath (2014) describes an agile mindset as a crucial factor that enables sales forces to navigate through challenging times and overcome obstacles. Agile sellers approach problems differently, transforming them into opportunities and challenges instead of fearing them. They view mistakes as valuable learning experiences, experimenting and harnessing their full potential to distinguish themselves from their peers (Konrath, 2014). As highlighted earlier, the agility selling mindset can be acquired by individual salespeople. However, management actions also play a vital role in promoting workforce agility through training, compensation, empowerment, teamwork, and information systems (Muduli, 2013).

In summary, the literature emphasizes the importance of fostering an agile mindset among employees for building an agile organization. Agile sales and agility selling concepts underscore the value of reducing cycle time, anticipating change, and collaborating closely with customers. An agile mindset enables salespeople to approach challenges as opportunities for growth, leveraging their skills and knowledge to excel. While individual salespeople can cultivate an agile mindset, management actions and support in areas such as training, compensation, empowerment, teamwork, and information systems can also play a pivotal role in promoting workforce agility (Muduli, 2013).



### Success rate of agile projects

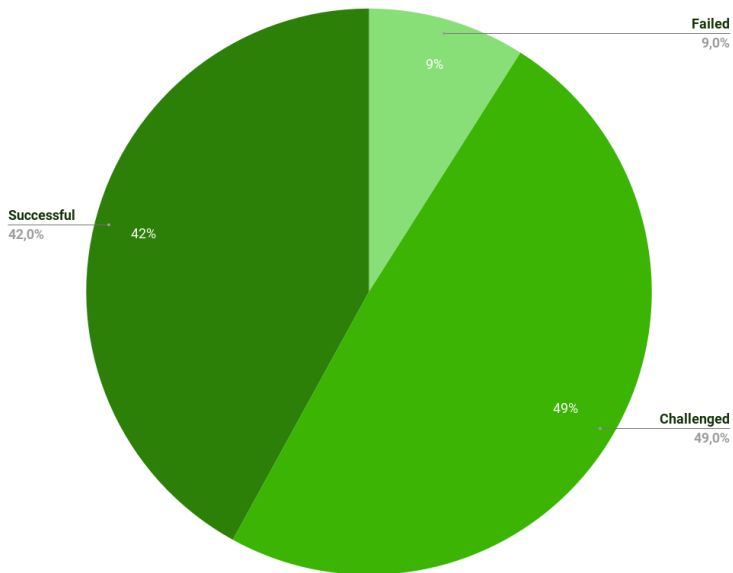


Chart 2. Statistics (2023) shows what percentage of success rate of agile projects.

### Success rate of waterfall projects

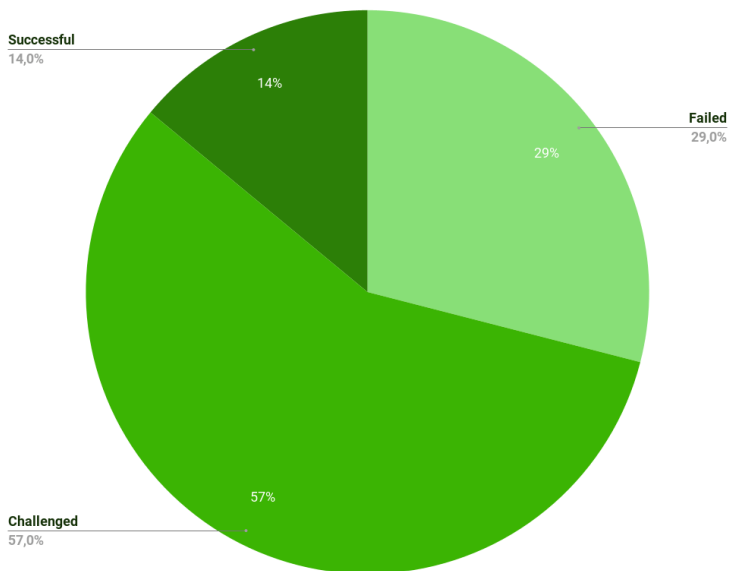


Chart 3. Statistics (2023) shows what percentage of success rate of waterfall projects.



Figure 2. The sales Agility Steps

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Research Design and Participant

The present research utilizes a descriptive approach to evaluate the paper and adopts a deductive approach in the qualitative research, to effectively relate prior research, interviews, and survey to examine the research objectives through a critical analysis of the research methodology. The focus of this study is on the qualitative research approach. qualitative research allows for greater researched flexibility, which might be necessary for understanding complex phenomena (Johnson, 2015).

Regarding the research design, Iovino and Tsitsianis (2020) suggest that the research design supports the interpretation of the methodology. Leavy (2007) states that the research design provides a framework for assessing different perspectives of the research problem by considering both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the study's direction. In this paper, the research

design is highlighted, and it aligns with the interpretivism philosophy, which supports the research findings on the impact of Agile management on sales. A deductive approach is employed to explore qualitative research by connecting previous studies and approaches to evaluate the research objectives through a critical examination of the research methodology. The time horizon is considered cross-sectional as the study draws data from secondary sources within a similar timeframe.

Furthermore, this research study takes the form of a literature review with a focus on a single research method, exclusively employing qualitative inquiries to investigate the impact of Agile management on sales. The paper serves as an illustrative example of how Agile management affects sales. Similarly, the study relies on secondary sources to evaluate the impact of Agile management on sales performance. These secondary sources include various case studies that explore the effects of Agile management on sales, enhancing the credibility of the research findings on the subject.

## **4.2 Intervention and Data Collection Tool**

### **- Semi-Structured Interviews**

Conducting semi-structured interviews with sales professionals can provide valuable insights into the impact of Agile management on sales performance. For example, a qualitative study by Hirvonen, Jessika 2019. Whereas Six Finnish sales managers who primarily engaged in professional selling and operated in a business-to-business (B2B) setting were interviewed for the preliminary study. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were used in the study; the interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and the result was 106 pages of data. The Gioia methodology was applied to the data analysis.

### - **Focus Groups**

Organizing focus group discussions with sales teams can offer in-depth insights into the effects of Agile management on sales processes and teamwork. Like the study that was done by Drury, M., Conboy, K., & Power, K. (2011, August), This research examines decisions made across the four stages of the sprint cycle: Sprint Planning, Sprint Execution, Sprint Review and Sprint Retrospective. A focus group was conducted with 43 agile developers and managers to determine what decisions were made.

### - **Observations**

Direct observations of sales teams working under Agile management can provide valuable data on their behaviors and practices. Like the information on study of Melo, C. D. O., Cruzes, D. S., Kon, F., & Conradi, R. (2013), This study conducted a six-month multiple-case study in three large Brazilian companies that have been using agile methods for over two years. The research focused on identifying productivity factors through interviews, documentation, and observation. Agile team management was found to be the most influential factor in achieving productivity. Key factors included team design, member turnover, effective inter-team coordination, and minimizing delays. The study highlights the negative impact of member turnover and emphasizes the importance of team design choices. The findings contribute to a revised conceptual framework for agile team productivity, calling for further confirmatory studies.

### **Document Analysis**

Analyzing relevant sales reports, meeting minutes, or project documentation can offer supplementary insights into the impact of Agile management on sales. In a qualitative study conducted by Asfour et al. (2019), the researchers aimed to gain insights into how representative

industrial teams approach agile mobile app development and the challenges they encounter. The study involved four different mobile app development companies, employing a multiple-case study design. The findings suggest that not all agile development principles are universally applicable in the mobile app development context. The research highlights the additional challenges faced by mobile app development teams when adopting agile methods, including issues related to development automation tools and online app store restrictions. This study contributes to a better understanding of the unique considerations and obstacles associated with agile mobile app development.

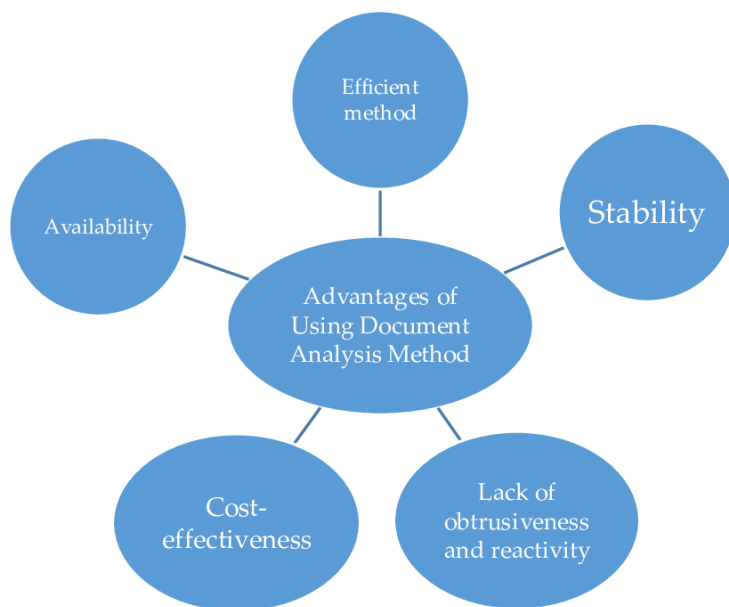


Figure 3. The Advantages of using Document Analysis Method

### **Case Studies**

In-depth case studies of sales teams or organizations can provide comprehensive insights into the impact of Agile management on sales. For instance, a case study by Patel and Singh (2020)

examined a sales team's adoption of Agile practices in an e-commerce company and explored the effects on their sales processes, customer engagement, and revenue growth.

### **Surveys and Questionnaires**

While primarily used in quantitative research, surveys and questionnaires can be adapted for qualitative data collection. For example, a mixed-methods study by Stettina et al (2021), *The impact of agile transformations on organizational performance: a survey of teams, programs and portfolios*.

To address the research objective, this study collects data from secondary sources such as journals, books, articles, and the professional services network Deloitte. Important sources like Google and open textbook libraries are utilized to gather data from articles, books, and journals. The study employs a descriptive research approach and evaluates the collected data through content analysis of research articles, cases, books, and web reports. This comprehensive evaluation ensures the research objectives are effectively supported by a wide range of literature sources.

### **4.3 Data Collection Procedure**

In order to analyze the research objectives effectively, it is essential to validate the collected data, as emphasized by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2017). The data collection procedure employed in this study encompasses various steps, ultimately leading to the content analysis of the effect of agile management on sales. This analysis is further supported by relevant studies conducted by other researchers, insights gathered through interviews, and information derived from books. By employing these robust data collection methods, the study aims to provide a

comprehensive understanding of how agile management influences sales outcomes. The data collection and evaluation procedure follow the following steps:

- 1- Clearly Define Research Objectives: through establish clear and specific research objectives that align with the study's focus on the effect of agile management on sales.
- 2- Clearly Define Appropriate Data Collection Methods: Determine the most suitable data collection methods to gather relevant information. This includes interviews, surveys, observations, and document analysis.
- 3- Participant Selection: Identify and select participants who possess relevant knowledge and experience related to agile management and sales, like sales professionals, managers, and other stakeholders who can provide valuable insights.
- 4- Obtain Informed Consent: by participants fully understand the purpose of the study, their role, and the confidentiality of their responses. Obtain informed consent from each participant before proceeding with data collection.
- 5- Data Collection: Implement the selected data collection methods. Conduct interviews, administer surveys, observe sales activities, or analyze relevant documents and carefully record and document all data collected during this phase.
- 6- Data Evaluation: Analyze the collected data using appropriate techniques such as content analysis, thematic analysis, or statistical analysis. Extract meaningful insights and patterns that pertain to the effect of agile management on sales.
- 7- Cross-Validation: Validate the findings by comparing and corroborating the results obtained from different data sources and methods. This cross-validation process enhances the reliability and accuracy of the conclusions as mentioned in references.

- 8- Literature Review: Supplement the findings with existing studies, research articles, and relevant literature that support or provide context for the observed effects of agile management on sales.
- 9- Interpretation and Conclusion: Interpret the analyzed data, drawing meaningful conclusions regarding the effect of agile management on sales outcomes.
- 10- Ethical Considerations: Adhere to ethical guidelines throughout the data collection and evaluation process, ensuring participant confidentiality, privacy, and informed consent.

In addition, the development of the semi-structured interview guide was informed by an extensive literature review on agile methodologies and agile sales (Glaser 1998; Taylor & Bogdan 1998). Guided by the principles of agile, two interviews' guides were created to cater to sales representatives and agile experts, ensuring that the questions were tailored to each respondent type and individual (Glaser 1998). The interviews employed open-ended, descriptive questions, which provided a structured framework while allowing for the emergence of relevant follow-up inquiries (Glaser 1998; Taylor & Bogdan 1998). Please refer to the Appendix for the detailed interview guide.

For data analysis, the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss 1967) was adopted, involving the iterative examination of data throughout the research process to identify categories (Glaser 1998). Analysis commenced immediately after the first interview, aligning with the grounded theory approach (Glaser 1998). Following transcription, the data underwent coding in open, axial, and selective stages (Corbin & Strauss 1990).

By following these steps, the study aims to collect comprehensive and reliable data, evaluate it effectively, and draw valid conclusions regarding the influence of agile management on sales.



## **5. Data Analysis and Research Findings**

### **5.1 Data analysis**

In the present study, the collected data from various research and studies is evaluated in the corresponding section. The analysis adopts a content analysis approach to assess the research questions, utilizing the triangulation method. By incorporating multiple sources of data, such as surveys conducted among executives, CEOs, agile experts, sales managers, sales teams, and workers, the validity and reliability of the findings are enhanced. The following section provides a detailed elaboration of the studies conducted.

#### **5.1.1 " Scrum in Sales: How to Improve Account Management and Sales Processes"**

This research focuses on the implementation of Scrum methodology in sales and account management to improve account management and sales processes. Initially, the sales and account management teams at iSense perceived sales as a random and reactive process, with customers being the ultimate decision-makers. However, seeking a way to gain more control over this process, the teams decided to undergo Scrum training to explore new possibilities.

After adopting Scrum internally as their best practice in the fall of 2010, the teams experienced a transformation in their sales process. Scrum revealed early indicators that were closely related to final sales results, allowing the teams to detect and control the direct causes of closing deals.

This newfound ability to predict and influence sales numbers enabled the sales teams to proactively manage their work and take control of the sales processes.

As a result of implementing Scrum, the teams experienced continuous improvement and a more enjoyable work environment. The strategic implementation of Scrum in sales and account

management led to escalating revenue and the development of a sustainable competitive advantage.

In summary, this research highlights the positive impact of incorporating Scrum methodology in sales and account management. By leveraging Scrum, the teams gained greater control over the sales process, identified early indicators of success, and achieved improved sales performance. The successful implementation of Scrum resulted in ongoing improvements, increased revenue, and a competitive advantage for the organization.

### **5.1.2 "The Emergence of Agile Sales Management"**

Effective sales execution is a prerequisite for driving company success (Avlonitis, 2010).

This research focuses on the emergence of agile sales management and the evolving roles of sales managers in the B2B (business-to-business) context. The study aims to identify how sales managers adapt to and drive changes within their organizations and explores the emerging roles that sales managers perceive for themselves.

The study conducted interviews with six Finnish sales managers who primarily engage in professional selling in the B2B sector. The interviews were semi-structured and in-depth, resulting in 106 pages of transcribed data. The researchers utilized the Gioia methodology to analyze the data.

The conclusions drawn from the study suggest that applying the principles of business agility can extend to include agile sales management. It proposes that an agile mindset is valuable for sales managers in coping with change. Sales managers contribute to organizational adaptiveness, resilience, and speed by fostering a collaborative team-selling culture and promoting autonomy

and self-leadership among their teams. The role of a sales manager has increasingly become people centric.

In summary, this research highlights the concept of agile sales management and the changing roles of sales managers in the B2B context. It emphasizes the need for an agile mindset and the development of people-centric skills. The findings suggest that sales managers play a crucial role in fostering adaptiveness, collaboration, and autonomy within their teams, ultimately driving sales success.

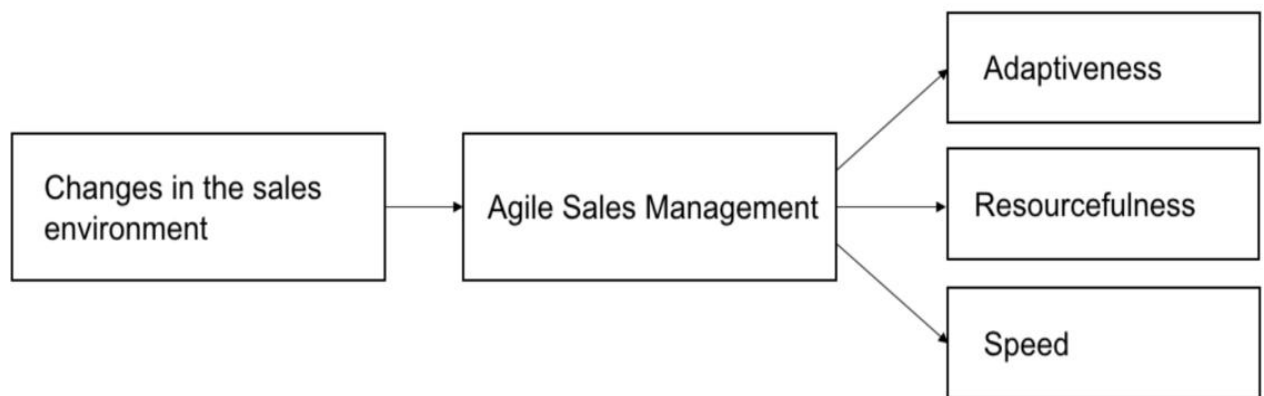


Figure 4. Conceptual framework on Agile Sales Management (Hirvonen, 2019)

### **5.1.3 "Analysing the impact of agile supply chain on firms' sales performance with moderating effect of technological-integration"**

This research examines the impact of an agile supply chain (ASC) on firms' sales performance (FSP), with a specific focus on the moderating effect of technological integration (TE). The study acknowledges the growing significance of agility in supply chain operations and the limited literature available on this topic, particularly concerning the incorporation of technology in developing economies.

The research collects data from supply chain managers and employs structural equation modeling to analyze the relationships between different dimensions of the ASC and FSP within small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Bangladesh. The findings reveal positive relationships between ASC and FSP, indicating that dimensions such as alertness, flexibility, decisiveness, swiftness, and accessibility have a positive impact on FSP. Additionally, the study highlights the positive influence of technological integration on both ASC and FSP.

Overall, this research provides valuable insights for strategic supply chain management, emphasizing the importance of focusing on ASC and technological capabilities to optimize firms' sales performance in today's customer-oriented business environment.

#### **5.1.4 "Agile manufacturing: Relation to JIT, operational performance and firm performance"**

This research explores the relationship between agile manufacturing, Just-in-Time (JIT) practices, operational performance, and firm performance in the manufacturing industry. It recognizes that manufacturers have widely adopted lean practices like JIT and Total Quality Management (TQM) to reduce costs and improve quality. However, as these practices have become more prevalent among competitors, their ability to sustain a competitive advantage has diminished. In response, manufacturers are now focusing on increasing agility to rapidly respond to changing customer demands, which has emerged as a crucial driver of competitive advantage.

The study proposes that JIT, as a component of lean manufacturing, is closely connected to agile manufacturing. Specifically, JIT-production and JIT-purchasing are identified as essential elements that contribute to agility. The research further investigates the positive relationship between manufacturing agility, operational performance, and firm performance.

The paper concludes by discussing the contributions of the study, its limitations, suggestions for future research, and implications for practicing managers. Overall, this research provides valuable insights into the interplay between agile manufacturing, JIT practices, operational performance, and firm performance. It offers guidance for manufacturers aiming to maintain a competitive edge by enhancing their agility in response to evolving market demands.

Narasimhan et al. (2006) “when viewed from performance (capability) perspective, leanness is a precursor to agility.”

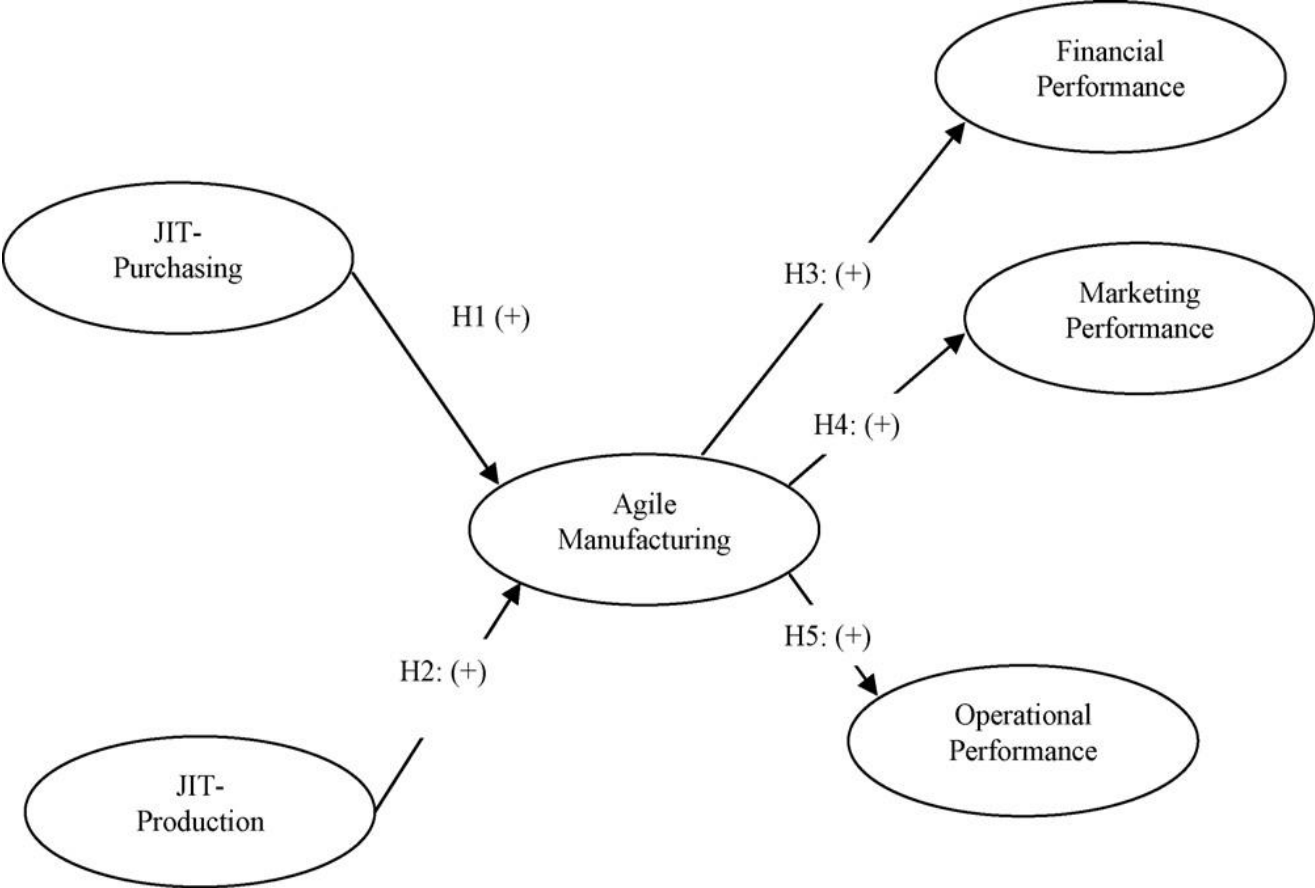


Fig. 5. Agile manufacturing model with hypotheses.

## 5.2 Content Analysis and Findings

The research articles and case studies analyzed the relationship between agile management and sales performance, as well as its impact on company growth and sales teams. They also examined the challenges faced by companies in implementing agile methodologies in sales. The content and case analyses yielded the following research outcomes:

\* Agile management positively influences sales performance and contributes to company growth. The adoption of agile principles in sales processes enhances flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness, enabling organizations to quickly adjust strategies, prioritize customer needs, and optimize sales outcomes. research shows that the benefits of Agile are undeniable; compared to non-Agile teams, 93% of Agile organizations reported better customer satisfaction, 76% reported better employee engagement, and 93% reported better operational performance.

\* Specific agile practices can be applied to sales processes to optimize sales outcomes. These practices include iterative planning and forecasting, continuous feedback and learning loops, cross-functional collaboration, and customer-centricity. Incorporating these practices into sales processes leads to improved sales results.

\* Implementation of agile management principles enhances collaboration and performance within sales teams. Agile methodologies foster a culture of transparency, frequent communication, shared responsibility, and self-organization. This promotes higher levels of collaboration, motivation, and productivity among sales team members.

\* Agile management plays a crucial role in adapting sales strategies to changing customer needs and market dynamics. By gathering and incorporating customer feedback quickly, organizations can respond to evolving market trends and adjust sales strategies accordingly. The iterative

nature of agile management allows for rapid experimentation, learning, and adaptation in sales activities.

However, companies face challenges in implementing agile methodologies in sales. These challenges include resistance to change, lack of organizational alignment, cultural barriers, and the need for ongoing learning and adaptation. Overcoming these challenges is crucial for successfully implementing agile management in sales and reaping its benefits.

Overall, the research outcomes highlight the positive impact of agile management on sales performance, company growth, and sales team collaboration. They also emphasize the importance of specific agile practices and the need to address challenges in implementing agile methodologies in sales. These findings provide valuable insights and recommendations for organizations seeking to leverage agile management to enhance their sales performance and achieve sustainable growth.

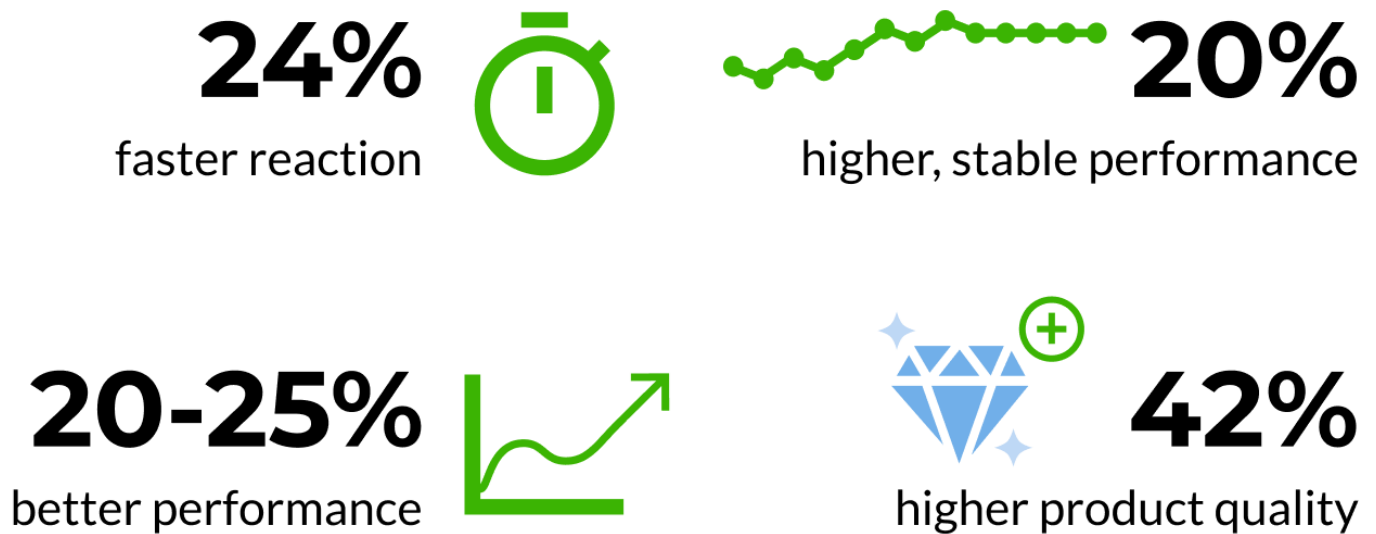


Chart 4. Agile statistics show that retrospectives enhance organizational performance.

## Why agile transformations fail

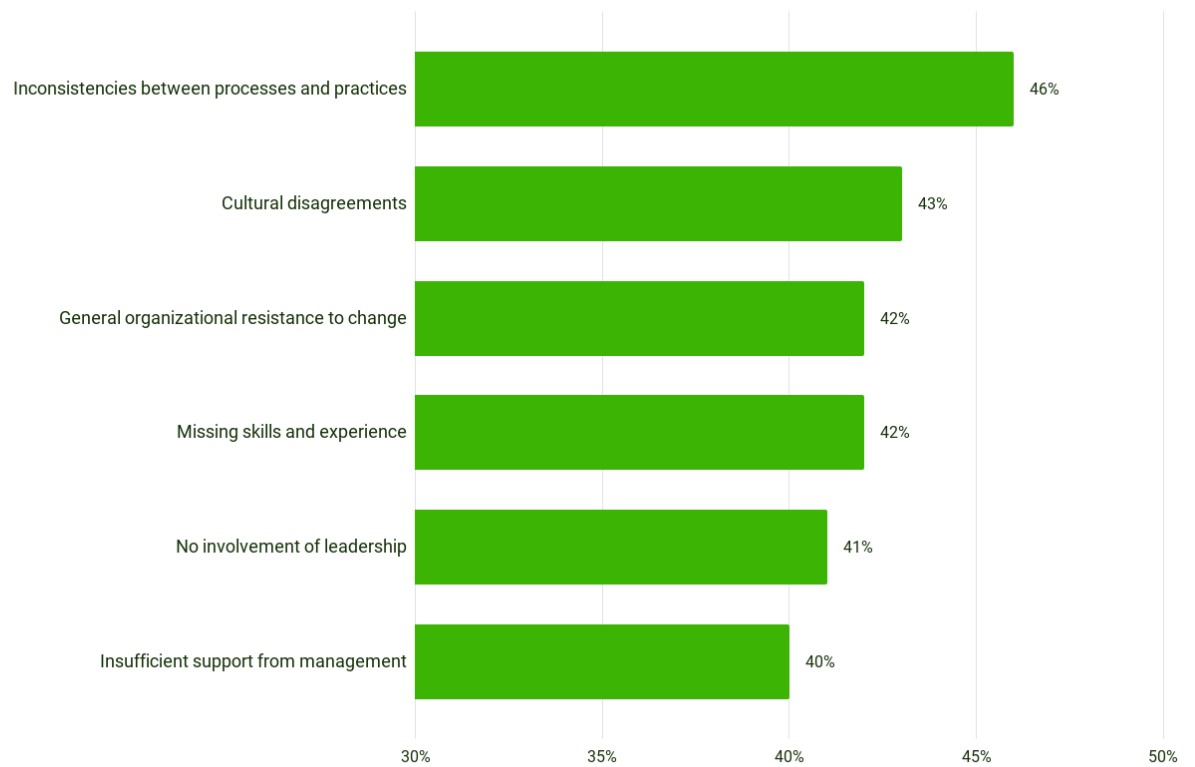


Chart 5. % of why agile transformation fail.

## 6. Conclusion, Implications, & Recommendations

In conclusion, the research on the relationship between agile management and sales performance has provided valuable insights into the benefits, challenges, and implications of implementing agile methodologies in the sales context. The findings suggest that adopting agile management principles positively impacts sales effectiveness and contributes to company growth. Agile practices such as iterative planning, continuous feedback loops, cross-functional collaboration, and customer-centricity optimize sales outcomes and enhance collaboration within sales teams.



Agile management enables companies to adapt sales strategies to changing customer needs and market dynamics, ensuring responsiveness and competitive advantage.

### **Implications:**

The implications of this research are significant for organizations aiming to improve their sales performance and achieve sustainable growth. By embracing agile management principles, companies can enhance their sales processes, increase customer satisfaction, and drive sales success. The findings emphasize the importance of organizational alignment, cultural transformation, and ongoing learning and adaptation in implementing agile methodologies in sales. The research highlights the need for a collaborative and transparent sales culture that promotes self-organization, cross-functional collaboration, and continuous improvement.

### **Recommendations:**

Based on the research outcomes, several recommendations can be made for organizations seeking to leverage agile management to enhance sales performance:

**Embrace a cultural shift:** Foster a culture that embraces agility, transparency, and continuous improvement. Encourage open communication, collaboration, and a customer-centric mindset within the sales teams.

**Align sales strategies with customer needs:** Regularly gather customer feedback and integrate it into sales strategies. Use agile practices to quickly adapt sales approaches and offerings to meet changing customer demands.

Implement iterative planning and feedback loops: Adopt iterative planning processes to continuously assess and adjust sales strategies. Establish feedback loops to gather insights from sales teams and customers, enabling rapid adaptation and improvement.

Foster cross-functional collaboration: Encourage collaboration between sales teams and other departments, such as marketing and product development. Break down silos to ensure alignment and shared goals, improving overall sales effectiveness.

Empower and support sales teams: Promote autonomy and self-leadership within sales teams, empowering them to make decisions and take ownership of their work. Provide adequate training, resources, and support to enable sales professionals to excel in an agile environment.

Address resistance to change: Recognize and address resistance to change by providing clear communication, training, and support during the transition to agile sales management. Foster a sense of shared purpose and emphasize the benefits of agile methodologies for both individual sales professionals and the organization as a whole.

Foster a learning culture: Encourage a culture of continuous learning and improvement within the sales teams. Facilitate knowledge sharing, experimentation, and reflection to enhance sales performance and adapt to evolving market dynamics.

By implementing these recommendations, organizations can leverage agile management principles to enhance their sales performance, improve collaboration within sales teams, and achieve sustainable growth in today's dynamic business environment.

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## **Appendix 1: Sales representatives and managers' semi-structured interview guide**

### **Organization/Position:**

- What is the duration of your employment in sales?
- What is the length of your tenure at this company?
- Which role do you now occupy?
- What is your function and what are some of the projects and activities you have to do?

### **Department of company/sales:**

- What is the structure of your organization?
- What is the structure of your sales department?
- What is the existing structure of your sales process?
- For what duration is a normal sales cycle?
- How do you work together internally with the sales team and other departments?
- What would you say about the sales force's mentality?

### **Agile methods (assuming you've worked with them before)**

- To what extent are you familiar with agile methodologies?
- How well-versed in agility selling are you?
- Have you already dealt with alternative approaches or agile processes like Scrum?
- How would you characterize sales agility and agile methods?
- How flexible is the way you handle sales?
- How quick are your sales staff members?
- Would you kindly give a summary of the agile techniques you have used in the past or are presently implementing?
- Is it feasible for you to introduce Scrum into your team? How, if at all? Why not, if not?
- What are the advantages of using agile techniques in sales?
- What are the potential advantages of an agile approach for your clients?
- Is there a way you could envision your client participating more in the sales process?
- How might tighter cooperation assist your team?
- What challenges arise when putting agile approaches into practice in sales?

## **Appendix 2: Semi-structured Interview Guide for Managers and Sales Representatives (continued)**

- How responsive is your sales funnel?
- How adaptable is your sales team?
- How do you envision your sales force and department?
- Do you think there are any advantages to using agile techniques in sales?
- What are the potential advantages of an agile approach for your clients?
- Could you envision your client participating more in the sales procedure?
- How might tighter cooperation benefit your team?
- Is it feasible for you to introduce Scrum into your team? (The explanation of Scrum)
- Do you foresee any challenges in putting agile into practice?
- What would need to alter in terms of department, organization, culture) to develop agility?

**Appendix 3: Data Collection & Evaluation Procedure**

