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Masterthesis

Topic:

**“The impact of digitisation on working environments.”**

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## 1. Abstract

This thesis analysis the impact of digitisation on work processes and environments in the cultural and creative industries. The aim of this research is to identify the changes that companies need to make in order to stay successful on the disruptive market. The following research question was developed:

“Which changes demands the digitisation in terms of working processes and environments from companies in the cultural and creative industries?”

To answer this question, relevant literature was researched and evaluated. The focus laid on agile working methods, company hierarchy and culture, digital leadership and workplace mobility. From the information gathered, six hypotheses were set up that relate to the impact of digitisation on processes and environments. In the following, the correctness of these hypotheses was examined on the basis of self-collected data. Therefor interviews with five experts from the culture and creative industries were conducted who have many years of practical experience with the relevant topics. The results of the content analysis of these interviews showed that while the experts acknowledged the changes in work processes and environments, they recognized the biggest impact of digitisation on the human factor. By giving up tasks on machines and the newly gained freedom of employees through agile working methods and job mobility, awareness of the importance of interpersonal relationships is growing. In the results of the content analysis, it therefore becomes clear that digital tools or agile methods merely act as enablers and have to be adapted individually to the respective circumstances. Just like the framework, the deployment must remain agile and flexible, focusing primarily on the needs of employees and customers.

## 2. Introduction

Digitisation has changed almost every aspect of daily life over the last ten to fifteen years. The Internet now not only connects people but also machines with each other and has become an integral part of the industry. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p.2) In addition to technical and machine innovations, the digital shift also changes the way in which work is done and how processes and structures are organized. Classic hierarchical structures are questioned and are considered obsolete concerning the new disruptive and fast-moving market. Due to the young generations of digital natives, the needs of the workforce are also changing. Factors such as a value-based community, a meaningful purpose and more happiness are increasing in importance. (Meyer, P.; The Agility Shift; 2015; p. 7-8) The Internet also allows work to take place not just in an office but from anywhere. Digitisation enables new ways of working that lead to greater freedom and self-determination.

The change that is taking place in terms of work processes and environments currently involves many industries. Employees and the market are calling for companies to change and adapt to agile trends. This change is also taking place in the cultural and creative industries. This thesis deals with the influence of digitisation on these processes and analyzes the cause and focus of the shift. Studies have shown that although 68% of executives describe their companies as agile, almost 90% of the interviewed employees stated to never worked with agile working methods. (Weckmüller, H.: Agilität kommt langsam voran; 2017) These figures highlight the drawback in German companies in terms of digitisation and show that new processes may be implied at management level but rarely arrive at the employee. Therefore, the research question asks for the necessary changes that digitalization demands of companies:

"Which changes demands the digitisation in terms of working processes and environments from companies in the cultural and creative industries?"

The focus of the research question was placed consciously on work processes and environments, as a change in these areas often affects the entire company structure and culture. The hypotheses in chapter X are therefore geared to the issues of corporate hierarchy, agile working methods, digital leadership and job mobility. In order to analyse these topics, the theoretical part of the thesis was used to illustrate the current state of research on the subject using relevant literature. The collected insights provide an overview of current agile working methods as well as the prerequisites for a successful implementation. In addition to the topic of company hierarchy, the subjects of leadership and workplace mobility were also discussed.

The researched results from the first part of the thesis are the basis for the data collection in the second part. An interview guideline was developed and the non-standardized expert interview was chosen from the field of qualitative social research as a survey method. Five experts from the cultural and creative industries were asked their personal experience and view towards new work topics. Their answers were evaluated using the Mayring evaluation method. The results of the content analysis provide insight into the unique approach that companies of the cultural and creative industries need to pursue in order to sustain successful.

### **3. Digitisation in the cultural and creative industries**

The digitisation is one of the biggest and most important topics in the economy. The rapid development of digital trends changes our personal and professional lives at unprecedented pace and scale and demands fast actions and reaction. Technological breakthroughs like big data, cloud computing, 3d printing and the internet of things are just a few examples on how disruptive the market has been over the last years and how it may changes in the near future. The chances are high that everything that can be digitised will be digitised – an evolution that will be highly challenging for businesses. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 2)

The impact of digitisation on different industries varies; some feel the pressure for change more than others. The cultural and creative industries experienced a huge change in almost every part of the industry over the last ten years. Through technology the way creative work is generated and distributed has changed and it also opened up the market for completely new products and services, like game and software development. (Towse, R.; Handke, C.; Handbook on the digital creative economy; 2013; p. 1) Digitisation in the creative sector can on the one hand directly enhance creativity and therefore foster relationships and communication with the target group. On the other hand, digitisation has led to a much more competitive market, as tools and services are online available for everyone. (Abbasia, M.; Vassilopouloub, P.; Stergioulas; L.; Technology roadmap for the Creative Industries; 2016, p. 40-42) The cultural and creative industries however experienced a huge growth over the last years which is driven by the digital shift and generated sales of an estimated 154.4 billion Euros in 2016. Total sales thus increased by around 1.5 percent compared to 2015. Just as in the number of companies, sales in the cultural and creative industries have been growing almost continuously since 2009. (Monitoringbericht Kultur und Kreativwirtschaft 2017; 2017)

One of the key characteristics of the digital age for businesses is the shift of activities away from mere product presentation to more services, to build a trusting relationship to customers. (Söndermann, M.; Digitalisierung in der Kultur- und Kreativwirtschaft; 2017) This development is the result of the new consumer market, in which the high demands of consumer determines prices and services. In this constellation the consumer is the main beneficiary. Even though more and more people consume creative services and products digitally nowadays, the market opening had led to a much higher level of competition within the industry, which has a direct impact on prices and a frequently wave of new product launches. Besides the downsides of this effect the rising consumer market has brought the creators a lot closer to their clients, as they are able to communicate with them on a daily basis to get direct feedback. Other advantages for the creators lie in the area of the new standards of technical equipment and global networking. Creative material can be shared in seconds with other creators worldwide which can lead to highly innovative and diverse results. Also the distribution of new products is much more efficient through digital channels and enables even smaller creative companies to reach their target group successfully.

( Acker, O.; Gröne, F.; Lefort, T.; Kropiunigg, L.; The impact of digitisation and the Internet on the creative industries in Europe; 2015; p. 27-38)

The future prospects for the creative industry looks promising. The competition is high, but the revenues continue to rise – as long as the consumer experience is further developed. The challenge is to stay relevant in a disruptive and highly competitive market. To participate in the competition and to stay relevant in the market, organisation have to achieve a high level of innovative growth and therefore be agile and digital. ( Acker, O.; Gröne, F.; Lefort, T.; Kropiunigg, L.; The impact of digitisation and the Internet on the creative industries in Europe; 2015; p. 67)

The following chapter will provide a broad overview over the changing working environments and which processes will be necessary to implement to follow the digital shift.

#### **4. The impact of digitisation on working environments**

Digitisation has an impact of almost every area of the daily life, of the society we live in and the cultural development. It also not only changes our industries and opens new markets, it changes already established working processes and environments drastically. This change is essential for the fast growing industries and companies need to adapt it fast and effectively to stay competitive. (Meyer, P.; The Agility Shift; 2015; p. 3-6) But the digitisation entails challenges to a barely comprehensive extend which affect the shift in many ways. The following chapter analyses the drivers of the digitisation and introduces the working methods of the digital age. Furthermore it discusses the impact of digitisation on working environments and how companies need to reshape their organisational structure.

##### **4.1 The digital mindset**

To successfully implement digitisation into a company, it requires more than just the technological resources. Digital leaders and teams need a specific mindset, to work effectively with new innovations and to understand the importance of the

shift. The core of this mindset is build on two pillars; the believe in the infinite abundance of possibilities and the opportunity of growth. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 54-56) This includes not only the confident use of technology, but also knowing how to implement it to generate growth. Furthermore there has to be an intuitive understanding about the importance of data acquisition and the chances that come with the digital shift. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 54-56) People with a digital mindset are characterised by the ability to handle the challenges within the so called "VUCA-world". VUCA stands for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity and was originally a term used by the military after the Cold War, to describe the state of the world. Today it is commonly used in the development of leadership skills and describes the business environment of the digital age. (Tovar, Pablo; Leadership challenges in the V.U.C.A world, 2016) Working in the VUCA-world requires the ability to make decisions without access to the full information and to adapt actions fast to changing circumstances. Leaders discover this world by using agile working methods and new technology to experiment; thereby they are able to create diverse perspectives and a broad understanding. The digital mindset allows them to handle future challenges and changes open minded and confident. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 54-56)

## **4.2 The agile shift**

Agile is a big buzzword in today's working environments and was born with the rise of the digital age. It is a necessary response to a disruptive and dynamic marketplace where technological innovations can change a whole industry within the shortest amount of time. (Hoque, F.; Why Design Thinking Is Critical For A Digital Future; 2017)

Today's market demands the ability to react fast to changes and adapt products and processes without a high organizational effort. Therefore it is insufficient to just be aware of budgets and team ressources to keep up with the high speed of market changes. An organization has to be able to use their resources effectively

and develop fast creative solutions in order to generate sustainable success. (Meyer, P.; The Agility Shift; 2015; p. 3-4) Agility originates by leaders and teams which react to the present state of the industry and are aware of possible trends and changes. This shift is decisive when it comes to the competitiveness and survival of a company. Therefore it is no longer worthwhile to develop detailed business plans or a strict roadmap for the next years as the market could change within a few days. Agile organizations are able to build new opportunities from seemingly insurmountable challenges. (Meyer, P.; The Agility Shift; 2015; p. 7-14) In order to do so they build their organisational structure flat and flexible and implement new work processes; so called agile working methods. These methods enable companies to work more agile and closer to the consumer and market than ever. (Meyer, P.; The Agility Shift; 2015; p. 9-11) Besides of the market-driven circumstance another highly relevant factor demands agility more and more. The young generations of the digital natives are changing the workforce massively. The so called *millennials* not only have an affinity towards technology and new tools, but also thrive in flexible working conditions. They highly value cooperative teamwork, a strong company culture and meaningful goals. Companies need to adapt to these needs as the millennials will account for almost half of the workforce by 2020. (Meyer, P.; The Agility Shift; 2015; p. 7)

Studies have shown that the implementation of agility in German companies is not looking promising despite of the current state of innovation and technology. In a study of the German Haufe Group called "*Agility Barometer*" of the year 2017, 90% of the interviewed employees and 70 % of the interviewed senior managers stated to not use agile working methods on a regular basis or even at all. (Weckmüller, H.: Agilität kommt langsam voran; 2017) Interestingly enough, these companies valued themselves much more agile than they actually are; 68 % of the interviewed executives ranked their company as above average in terms of agility. (Weckmüller, H.: Agilität kommt langsam voran; 2017) They also indicated to believe in the increase of efficiency through agile working methods and the benefit for project driven processes. These numbers show that although management level has recognized the importance of this topic, the implementation still suffers. The following this chapter discusses the five most known agile working methods, why they are necessary in the course of digitisation and how companies can implement them.

### 4.2.1 Design thinking

Design thinking is an agile working method with a human-centered design philosophy. (Boulton, C.; What is design thinking? The secret to digital success; 2017) This approach focuses on bringing together business ideas, technological innovation and the true need of the customer, to create a product or service that serves a so called *pain point* of the target group. (Boulton, C.; What is design thinking? The secret to digital success; 2017)

In the digital age many products or service are build by technology. The market for software products is constantly growing and transforming more and more sectors into digitized industries; but digitisation itself does not equal innovation. A technological product becomes innovative through different factors; usability and intuitivity are up front in terms of customer orientation. (Kolko, J.; Design Thinking Comes of Age; 2015) The competition on the market is high and the consumer has more power than ever, as he is empowered to choose devices and applications to his personal preferences. (Boulton, C.; What is design thinking? The secret to digital success; 2017) The aim of design thinking is to use empathy to see the roots of the customer's problem and to build efficient circles of problem discovery, prototyping and testing to adapt the product until its usable in the best way. A typical design thinking process runs through seven stages and is usually applied within the first phase of product development. It is a very open process which helps to generate ideas for product or business models. (Grätsch, S., Knebel, K.; Agile Methoden; 2018) The first step during design thinking is focused on understanding the needs and pains of the customer and to define the actual target group. Secondly comes the research and observation of already available solutions and why they fail at what they do. The third and fourth stages are synthesis and ideation; the results are evaluated and first suggestions for a solution are collected. At this stage the team uses empathy and creativity to think from a user's perspective. Stage five and six refer to the testing of the first prototypes and later the MVP, the minimal viable product. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 56-57) A MVP is a first draft of the product, developed in very pared down version

to test with actual customers. It enables the company to get direct feedback and to implement it within the next circle, without losing a lot of time or money. (Techopedia; What is a Minimum Viable Product (MVP)) Lastly the team goes into the iteration phase and starts a new sprint build on the gained results of the testings.

Design thinking is a commonly used process for young startups to save resources, receive and implement feedback and to build the trust of potential customers. Established companies in Germany struggle with this approach; they do not have the digital mindset and see the necessity to get in direct contact with the customer and hesitate to release a product that does not fulfill their standards. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 57-59) Design thinking also requires the acceptance of failure, it even encourages to fail in the early stages to improve the product idea faster and cheaper. Another challenge for companies is the flat hierarchy structure design thinking requires. Other than in a classic product development circle the whole team is permanently involved in the improvement and decision making process. Although the managers might fear to lose the control or the overview, they actually benefit from the perspectives of the employees who are much closer to the customer. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 56-57)

Design thinking changes the product development process on many levels. It brings the company closer to the product and the customer, has an interdisciplinary approach and allows the team to work across departments and – most importantly – follows an agile working model so the product can be adapted fast and without wasting resources. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 59-60)

#### **4.2.2 Scrum**

Scrum is a project management framework from the software industry. Similar to design thinking scrum emphasizes creative and adaptive teamwork and has a strong focus on the customer. (Rigby, D.; Sutherland, J.; Takeuchi, H.; Embracing Agile; 2017) Scrum is applied after the design thinking process when

the idea and business model of the company are defined; in this phase the focus lays on the development of the actual product and the testing phase. (Grätsch, S., Knebel, K.; Agile Methoden; 2018)

Scrum teams are rather small and contain usually up to 10 people, including the so called product owner and the scrum master. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 60-62) The product owner is responsible for the characteristics and the economical aspects of the product, whereas the scrum master is in charge of the scrum-rules and their compliance. He moderates the daily 15 minutes meetings and is the contact person for the team, when conflicts arise. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 60-62) What makes scrum so unique is the empowered team which works completely self-organized and autonomous. The scrum master and product owner function more as consultants and do not give orders to the team. (Rigby, D.; Sutherland, J.; Takeuchi, H.; Embracing Agile; 2017)

The scrum process starts with a planning phase in which the product owner explains the required features of the product. Based on these features a list is created, the *backlog*, which priorities the individual jobs and serves to set goals for the sprints. A sprint runs for two weeks and contains consistent daily meetings to discuss the progress and identify problems. After the sprint the team and the relevant stakeholders meet again to review the past weeks and to set new goals. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 60-62) During a sprint the product is constantly being tested by a potential user group, to eliminate errors fast and to test the usability of the software. This agile structure allows the team to adapt the process directly, work with the customers feedback and to test it again immediately. Because of the independence of the team there are no barriers of getting approval or justifying certain decisions before the retrospective at the end of the sprint – a cost and time efficient approach. The flexibility of the working process allows the team additionally to react fast to market changes. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 62-63)

### **4.2.3 Kanban**

Kanban is an agile project management tool which is often used by digitised companies to increase productivity by visualising working processes. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 62-63) A kanban board is basically the backlog list of a scrum process; it shows all tasks to be done and prioritises the most important ones. Based on the board the team decides which tasks will be developed by whom. During the working process the team members move their tasks to the respective column of the kanban board to let their colleagues know the current state. The boards shows on one hand which tasks still need to be done and which are already finished, but also illustrates who is currently working on which task. This way employees can interact if they want to contribute to a certain topic. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 62-63) Kanban reduces lead time and allows the team to keep track of current workload to reduce the amount of unfinished tasks. (Rigby, D.; Sutherland, J.; Takeuchi, H.; Embracing Agile; 2017) Besides the rise of productivity kanban also enables distributed teamwork with colleagues who work remotely from other locations. Digital companies may use white boards to visualise kanban boards in the office space but the more efficient solution are online tools. A digital kanban board is highly flexible and includes much more people into the project work – through apps and email notification the board is accessible from different devices worldwide. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p.62-63)

### **4.2.4 Lean startup**

The lean startup model describes a business model or product launch with a MVP to test it against the market. (Gonsal, J.; The Difference Between Agile, Lean and Lean Startup; 2015) The central idea of the lean startup is to develop a marketable product without wasting a lot of resources and to adapt it according to the test results. Other than the testing phase of design thinking the goal is not to only get customer feedback on the product, but also to see how the market

reacts; the question is not, if the product is good, but if people actually need it. (Gonsal, J.; The Difference Between Agile, Lean and Lean Startup; 2015)

In 2011 Eric Ries published a book that changed the startup scene from scratch. In his manifesto about the lean startup model he introduced the approach to build a minimal viable product and release it not only to a test group, but directly to the market. The collected data of the release should be measured and evaluated to enable the company to learn and to improve their product on the basis of realistic data. The definition of certain *key performance indicators*, short KPI's, allows the company to measure all the relevant data and to get authentic results. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 62-63) Defining the KPI's is pretty unproblematic especially for digital companies. The customer journey through the product leaves traces which can be traced and evaluated to learn about the usability and intuitivity of the product. Furthermore it can be tracked how the customer discovered the product and if it reaches the defined target group. When the results are not as expected the company can decide if the product needs more time or if a pivot is necessary. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 63) A pivot would mean to either revise the business model or adapt the product to the market needs. The short concept and process periods make this model to agile and suitable for the digital market. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 63-64)

#### **4.2.5 Business model canvas**

The business model canvas is not a privilege of digital companies, but is highly recommended in an agile and digital context. It describes a business model in a simple and adaptable context and shows the most important segments. The business model canvas contains 9 segments in total, which are: the value proposition, customer segments, key partners, activities and resources, as well as customer relations, channels, cost structure and revenue stream. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 63-65) The value proposition defines the value a company and

product is bringing to the customer; the customer segment defines the target group. The key partners are the directly related business partners, like suppliers, and the key activities and resources refer to required actions to fulfill the value proposition. The segment for customer relations focuses on the definition of the aspired relationship to the target group and the channels define the needed distribution channel for the communication. Cost structure and revenue stream sum up the upcoming costs and earnings of the company and how they contribute to the overall revenue stream. (Giovine, C.; Business Model Canvas; 2018; p. 10-16)

Innovation and market disruption can change the business model during the product development, which can on the other hand influence the segments. Being able to adapt fast to change and do not lose the vision for the company creates a highly competitive advantage for companies. Especially in the early phases of forming of an enterprise the business model canvas gives the opportunity to test different approaches against each other and to discuss which ones would be more profitable. Due to its flexible character it can also be used at a later stage to develop company and product further. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 65)

### **4.3 Organizational structure**

The classic hierarchical structure of traditional organisations is an inveterate opponent of modern working environments. Lengthy processes paralyze productivity, creativity and inhibit the innovative spirit – or in other words they prevent the company from being competitive in a disruptive market. Organisations need to modernise their structures to stay adaptable and responsive to market changes. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 72-74)

The digital age demands companies to act fast, flexible and across departments. The risk of strict hierarchical structures is the emergence of so called *knowledge silos* within the company, which prevent an effective flow of relevant information and thus a productive working environment. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.;

Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 126-127)  
Digitisation however fosters the network effect and makes it possible to easily get access to needed information. To make this shift happen the management level has to willingly give up control and be able to create an atmosphere of trust. Flat hierarchies and the empowerment of employees then enables agile working methods and the full capacity of knowledge to boost creativity, motivation and innovation. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 126-127)

The organisations of the digital age are no longer build on strict and rigid frameworks and structure, they function like a living system which needs constant care and check ups. In order to build strong teams and a rich company culture, managers need to nurture the system and provide an atmosphere of growth for both the company and the employees. (Laloux, F. ; Reinventing organisations; 2014; p. 55-56)

This chapter analyzes the organisational structure of digital companies and the new work dynamics between managers and their employees.

#### **4.3.1 Self management**

Self management is the base for most digital companies which work with agile working methods, to ensure that operational decisions are made by those employees who are actually affected by them. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 76-78) This strategy minimizes frustration and lengthy authorization processes and builds a strong relationship between employee and product simultaneously. The employee feels valued and motivated, because he has a direct impact of the growth of the company. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 78-79) Especially in the creative industries these frameworks can generate a higher grade of creativity and innovation. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 75-76)

But not only agile frameworks require a free and open working environment. Main driver for changes within company structures are the new generations of the digital age. The impact of the digital natives on working environments will be discussed in detail in a later chapter, but the topic of self management is also highly influenced by the newly discovered urge for freedom of the young generations. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 75-76) The number of freelancers and self employed people are steadily growing and will dominate the market more and more over the next years. Most of these people did not decide for self employment because of economical reasons – they long for self-determination. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 51-52) They want to feel valued and work in an environment where their knowledge and potential is appreciated and trusted in. Agile frameworks fulfill these new needs and empower employees to take risks, make decisions and manage the work in their own ways. The associated responsibilities prevent that tasks are not taken seriously and help to build motivation and trust, on both the employee and the management's side. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 78-79)

#### **4.4 Management in digital companies**

Through digitisation, agile working methods and the empowerment of employees the role of managers is shifting. Many traditional companies fear the loss of control and see their own leading positions at risk instead of seeing the new chances they gain. The adaptation of modern working methods like scrum or design thinking does not require a traditional leader but more a coach who sets the team guidelines and transports the vision to the team members, like a scrum master. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 103-105) So instead of losing time to organisational tasks and administration they can now focus on strategic decisions and future opportunities. And although agile working methods run without a leading manager, the teams still need time to adjust to the new structure; managers need to set rules and build an understanding of trust and responsibility,

to ensure that everybody is on the same page. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 105-106)

The digital age changed companies into living systems which require care, visions and a strong identity. It is the duty of the managers to build these factors and to become leaders in terms of company politics. In a fast changing market and disruptive age it gets more and more difficult to develop strong visions or stay true to a certain identity, because everything is changing constantly. It seems to be dangerous to stick to one strategy and best to always consider every possibility. Also the empowerment of employees leads to an even broader pool of opinions and knowledge. Managers need to inspire their employees and build a company identity they can identify with. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 105-106) Especially in times of change and uncertainty teams need strong leaders to stay positive and motivated.

A living system also requires care and check-ins, to make sure nobody is left behind. Regular feedback talks are therefore essential for a healthy company spirit and encourage employees to indicate conflicts or problems. The managers can build a stable level of trust and get input for possible improvements. The goal is to create a community feeling where everyone feels valued and appreciated. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 106-108)

In the 60's the philosopher and economist Peter Drucker already anticipated how the management world of the next age would look like and his prediction was very accurate to what we now refer to as agile working methods. Drucker predicted the end of industrial work and the rise of knowledge work, as well as a new class of workers who would demand empowerment and freedom. (Wartzman, R.; What Peter Drucker Knew About 2020; 2014) The autonomy of these workers and the restructuring of businesses is essential, according to Drucker, to increase the flow of information and therefore innovation. Through digitisation Drucker's vision becomes reality since technology enables managers to create clearances and provide an agile working environment. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 106-108) He also refers to the need of purpose that knowledge workers

require to become highly motivated and identify themselves with the company's vision. Managers therefore need to build strong company values and engage closely with their employees. (Wartzman, R.; What Peter Drucker Knew About 2020; 2014) The challenge of today's managers also lays in the competitiveness of the recruiting industry. Knowledge workers know about their value and are not afraid of changing working environments. If they cannot identify with the company or do not feel heard by the managers, they will leave for another job. Digitisation changed the powers within the employment market; hiring processes take far less time and are uncomplicated to organize. Since values, identity and self-determination matter more to today's knowledge workers than salary, managers are forced to implement change. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 108-110)

When it comes to digital leadership qualities, there are a few skills which are inalienable to possess as a manager. Former senior vice president of Google Laszlo Bock set up eight qualities of digital leaders which he discovered to improve productivity, motivation and happiness among their teams. His results are based on years of collected data and personal experience. The most important qualities according to Bock are:

- “Be a good coach.”
- “Empower your team and don’t micromanage.”
- “Express interest in your team members success and well-being.”
- “Be productive and results-oriented.”
- “Be a good communicator and listen to your team.”
- “Help your employees with career development.”
- “Have a clear vision and strategy for the team.”
- “Have technical skills so you can advise the team.” (Robbins, S.; Bergman, R.; Stagg, I.; Coulter, M.; Management; 2015; p. 23)

In summary it can be stated that the digital mindset is fundamentally important on every level of a successful digital company. It is needed to implement agile working methods and to restructure the organization accordingly. If the teams are working agile, the management level needs to adapt as well to facilitate a rich company culture and an atmosphere of growth.

## 4.5 Workplace mobility

Occupational mobility is a topic which is highly influenced by digitisation. Since modern digital companies are working cloud and internet based, employees are able to leave the office desk and work from home, a co-working space or even another country. If remote work is for some reasons not an option or not demanded by the employees, digital companies often create a special office environment to generate a creative atmosphere. Instead of just working at a desk for the majority of the day, employees are encouraged to make use of *creative workspaces*, *social interaction areas* or *meeting rooms*, which are especially designed to serve their assigned function. In many industries, but especially in the creative fields, this has become an opportunity to break with routines and thereby boost creativity and innovation. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 84)

### 4.5.1 Remote work

The digital age offers many chances for businesses to increase their value and build an international and highly skilled workforce. Through digitisation talents can be hired from all over the world without the necessity of relocating them as soon as possible. Communication and sharing information happens online through the internet, cloud-computing and many different mobile devices – when businesses take advantage of these opportunities, they are able to build strong teams and an unique workflow, especially designed to their individual needs. (Clemons, D.; Kroth, M.; Managing the mobile workforce; 2011; p. 3-4)

The concept of remote work enables not only the employers to hire worldwide but also gives the employees the freedom of choosing where they want to live and work from. In the book “Remote – office not required” the entrepreneurs Jason Fried and David Hansson call this concept “the new luxury of freedom and time”. (Fried, J.; Hansson, D.; Remote – office not required; 2013; p. 29) Having regard to the needs and wishes of the generations of the digital age Fried and Hansson predict that money and status symbols will no longer bond the young talents to

companies. Instead, the digital natives would rather decide for a company that offers them the freedom of creating their individual working environment, in which they feel the most comfortable. (Fried, J.; Hansson, D.; Remote – office not required; 2013; p. 28-35)

The benefits for the companies are not less relevant; by enabling their employees to work remotely they create a competitive advantage to other businesses and build an attractive reputation on the market. They are also less dependent on assets as they save money by renting fewer office spaces and reducing traveling. This money can be invested in new technology to continuously expand the team and the company. (Clemons, D.; Kroth, M.; Managing the mobile workforce; 2011; p. 46)

Especially in the creative industries remote work gets more and more essential. Knowledge based work is build on capability, efficiency and creativity – factors which do not work well within strict time frames or setups. The effectiveness of an employee is not tied to the hours he spends in the office but to the products or solutions he delivers. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 75-76) To be the most productive and to get into the right *workflow* the knowledge worker needs variety in his daily working environments and also the freedom to shape them the way he wants to. Structures which bond him to set working hours or an office desk will lead to frustration and unproductiveness. The company needs to build a trusting relationship to its employees to encourage them to structure their work day the way they can work the best. Only then the outcome will not only have the highest possible quality but also the employees will be highly motivated and engaged into their work and the success of the company. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 76-78)

#### **4.5.2 Co-working spaces**

To work as an remote worker demands high levels of self motivation and organisation and may not be an option for everybody. Some people prefer to have a clear separation between the place they do their work and the place they call home. To enable these people to still work in a creative environment and

offer an option to break the office routines, many companies start renting desks at co-working spaces. The roots of this movement lie in the growing freelance and self employment market. The desire for self determination and flexible working days does not include a wish for social isolation and losing the separation of work and private life. Co-working spaces were an answer to a problem, which simultaneously created a very attractive new form of work space for permanent employees. Members of co-working spaces do not only get the opportunity to work in a creative and innovative environment, they also profit from the resulting community and culture. (Pohler, N.; Neue Arbeitsräume für neue Arbeitsformen; 2012) The connection to people from different industries, but with the same working philosophy, encourages networking and opens opportunities for new projects. The result is a highly engaging community which works together open minded but also seeks for contact asides of the desk. (Spreitzer, G.; Bacevice, P.; Garrett, L.; Why People Thrive in Coworking Spaces, 2015)

Every co-working space also tries to build its own individual atmosphere and culture to create a unique workspace and experience for everyone. The goal is to create a space where people feel creative, inspired but also comfortable. Usually people chose a co-working space based on their feeling of identification with the space. Especially for creative people the surroundings and atmosphere matter a lot and they gain their motivation and inspiration from the individual settings. Depending on their preferred way of working and interacting they chose the place they feel most comfortable with. (Spreitzer, G.; Bacevice, P.; Garrett, L.; Why People Thrive in Coworking Spaces, 2015)

Startups and digital companies have started to implement the structure and atmosphere of co-working places into their office spaces, because they see the benefits for the company and the work culture. As mentioned earlier, they started to provide areas in the office that encourage collaborative work but also quiet rooms to enable employees to work concentrated and without any disruption. (Spreitzer, G.; Bacevice, P.; Garrett, L.; Why People Thrive in Coworking Spaces, 2015) The variety of working environments and the engagement of the company has in most cases a positive impact on working processes and company culture. The reason for that is on the one hand the enabling of ideal conditions for agile working methods, but also the change towards seeing the human behind the employee and giving them the ability to unfold. Co-working spaces are directly

linked to the globalised and digitised market and represent the current needs of the creative workforce. Harvard Business Review did a survey in 2015 and interviewed several co-working space founders and members. The result was that the importance of letting employees be true to themselves was never higher than now. Creative knowledge workers are more committed to the company if the company is supporting them to be the best version of themselves. (Spreitzer, G.; Bacevice, P.; Garrett, L.; Why People Thrive in Coworking Spaces, 2015)

### **4.5.3 Virtual Leadership**

Working remote does not guarantee success. Remote work comes with a lot of challenges and requires not only a highly motivated team, but also competent leaders. A manager of a virtual team has to have different qualifications, compared to manager who sees the team on a daily basis. Technology after all is just an enabler for remote work and needs to be used in the right way to support teamwork. (Pullan, P.; Virtual Leadership; 2016; p. 89-91) The basic requirements for a virtual manager are build around the digital mindset. The manager has to know what the appropriate tool or method in a given situation is and how to generate growth with it. Furthermore he needs to be a fully competente contact person for possible upcoming questions or problems from the team. (Pullan, P.; Virtual Leadership; 2016; p. 91) The even bigger task is the team management itself, which gets far more complicated through distance and time differences. The motivational factors for remote workers lay in self determination and the freedom that comes with occupational mobility. But equally important factors are the feeling of belonging and the purpose of the own work, as well as a rich working culture and the possibility to grow. (Pullan, P.; Virtual Leadership; 2016; p. 29) All these aspects are build on social interactions and hard to maintain within a virtual team. The manager has to provide an atmosphere where all these factors are possible, while being responsible for all communication processes. To do so it is important to build a strong awareness towards the own attitude and behaviour. Online communication particularly leads often to misunderstandings and conflicts, so it is necessary to build a routine behaviour to avoid impulsive reactions. (Pullan, P.; Virtual Leadership; 2016; p. 39) Respect is one of the fundamental attributes of successful virtual leadership.

This does not just refer to the communication with each other but also to the individual circumstances the team members have to deal with. This for example includes their cultural background or local context and how it may influence their work. This is especially critical within international teams. (Pullan, P.; Virtual Leadership; 2016; p. 39-40) To avoid distrust and enviousness it is also important to build a foundation of trust. Trust towards the individual team members, the management and the organisation itself is highly crucial for virtual teams. Trust has a big impact on the outcome and quality of the product, as well as on the engagement. When employees feel trusted and trust management back, the workflow improves and gets more efficient. (Clemons, D.; Kroth, M.; Managing the mobile workforce; 2011; p. 73) Building trust within a team that works from all around the world can be a challenge and needs to be tackled by the manager. A virtual leader has the ability to build fast and strong relationships to team members and to convey their individual purpose to the project. By allocating them their own area of authority he proves trust and earns it back. (Clemons, D.; Kroth, M.; Managing the mobile workforce; 2011; p. 79)

In their book "Remote – office not required" the entrepreneurs Jason Fried and David Hansson focus on the management side within remote teams and how to strengthen these relationships. The founders of basecamp, formerly 37signals, an online project management and team communication tool, built their whole company towards remote work and believe strongly in the success of their approach. In terms of building trust and relationships to employees and co-workers, they recommend a well structured meeting plan that involves online, but also frequently organized offline meetings. These offline meetings are important to build a company culture and to improve communication within the teams. (Fried, J.; Hansson, D.; Remote – Office not required; 2013; p. 185) Aside from the regular online meetings with the whole team they also recommend one-on-ones with every employee every few months, to improve the communication and to eliminate areas that create problems. (Fried, J.; Hansson, D.; Remote – Office not required; 2013; p. 195) Team members that feel heard by the management and have a good connection to the rest of the team and the company contribute to a strong company culture. They are also more involved in innovation processes and work efficiently for the growth of the company.

Agile working methods and occupational mobility lay the base for a strong business strategy in the digital age, but they can only work as catalyst with a fitting management structure. Now more than ever managers need to give up control, focus on building strong teams with shared values and work as leaders who enable their employees to be the best version of themselves. (Fried, J.; Hansson, D.; Remote – Office not required; 2013; p. 182)

#### **4.6 Particularities of digital working environments**

Building a strong and sustainable organisational culture which fits the needs of the digital age is an important part of digital leadership. As mentioned in the last chapter, company culture and shared values have a large impact on motivation and productivity of employees. In a digital company it is about forming those values, attitudes and behavioral guidelines into an organizational culture which, in the eyes of the management team, is suitable for the desired working methods and working environments. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 108-110) Therefore guidelines are needed which define the target values. Through rules, norms and standards these values get tangible, operational and give a more concrete orientation for cooperation within the company. The challenge is to translate these values into actions and build a strong groundwork that generates growth in every sector, because only actual lived values effectively create a new culture. On this account it is essential to make sure the employees truly identify with the set values on a personal level. However, this does not mean imposing certain ideas on employees. Values and rules should be geared to the needs and desires of the workforce and be aligned with the company's vision. A strong company culture can not be forced, it is a natural process which must be promoted by the management level. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 110-111) Silicon Valley represents the digital leadership and work culture of our time and established today's known attributes for digital organizational culture. The following describes the most decisive ones.

### *Receptivity to visions*

One of the main characteristics of digital work culture is the *moral of feasibility*. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 111-113) In the digital age everything seems possible, especially for the digital native generations. They grew up in a disruptive market and are not afraid to take risks and follow visions when they truly believe in them. Digital companies need to incorporate this way of thinking into their culture and also follow the visions of employees.

### *Willingness to change*

As well as the belief in vision, the willingness for change must be cultivated. The digital market is changing rapidly and agile frameworks also require an open work culture to be successful. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 111-113)

### *Trust*

Digitisation exacerbates the need for trust. Anyone who wants to cooperate in networks must be able to rely on their network partners, same goes for digital companies who work agile or remote. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 113-114) Digital companies need to build an atmosphere of trust and provide the necessary funds to foster team building meetings or activities, to create a supporting community.

### *Technological culture*

Another pillar of a digital organizational culture is the technology cult, which is based on the conviction that even the most complex problems can be solved with digital technology. This attitude includes trust in technology, digital decision-making and big data. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 114-116)

### *Self motivation*

Technical innovation processes are always accompanied by setbacks that can have different causes. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 114-116) As this process is part of agile working methods the company and managers need to be aware of that risk and still encouraging the employees to believe in the vision. Otherwise they risk losing motivation and engagement. Self motivation is generally important to keep agile working methods and occupational mobility efficient, as mentioned in the previous chapters.

### *Creativity*

Creativity is essential for digital businesses in two ways. On the one hand there is the creativity that generates innovation and reacts to disruptive market movements, so the company stays competitive. Creativity and imagination are important factors when it comes to the development of new business models and product visions. On the other hand, creativity gains a new meaning thanks to digitisation. Digital products and information have a whole new level of complexity which is not always comprehensible for customers or other stakeholders. Sounds, pictures, graphics and animations are highly important to visualize the technology and make a product more tangible. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 116-118)

Digital companies distinguish themselves through establishing these values. Because even though the digitisation of products is very important nowadays, the human factor is also increasingly in the focus.

## **4.7 Generation Y and Z**

The digitisation has a big impact on the market development of our time. But not only the market reacts to the digital shift, the impact on young generations is also more than clear and changes the understanding of work-life-balance completely.

They are called generation Y and Z, the digital natives, or millennials. Members of these generations were born in the 90s or 2000s and either experienced the digital shift throughout their childhood and teenage years or grew up with it. These generations feel more self-confident and focused in terms of self-actualization, both private or professional career. They tend to reject a work ethic based on diligence, discipline, and obedience, and strive more towards goals and tasks that are more meaningful to them. A major motivating factor of the digital natives is the aspiration to combine personal beliefs with professional careers and to live the values that they personally believe in. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 119-121) In contrast to the previous generations, the millennials are no longer lured with power positions or material possessions, but rather find motivation in strong organisational culture and flexible working conditions. Fulfilling their private life goals is more important to them than stepping up in a company and they welcome methods such as agility that enable them to live more independently and freely. The entrepreneurs Jason Fried and David Hansson call this new understanding of work-life-balance *the new luxury of freedom and time*. (Fried, J.; Hansson, D.; Remote – Office not required; 2013; p. 28-29)

The digital natives also have clear ideas for their professional environment, desire responsibility and freedom in what they do and support in the training process. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 121-122) They thrive in agile company structures and get motivated through options like remote work or co-working offices. Of course, the needs of the new generations arise in connection with digitisation. For them the fast pace of the digital age is the only world they know and they do not understand the hesitation of the market when it comes to digitised working structures. But the difficulties for established companies lay in the big differences of the generations. Although the digital natives are entering the job market, the main workforce is still part of the “non-digital generations”. These generations, too, have their values and working needs which they do not just give up. (Creusen, U.; Gall, B.; Hackl, O.; Digital Leadership: Führung in Zeiten des digitalen Wandels; 2017; p. 118-119)

The clash of these unequal generations can lead to challenges in implementing agile ways of working or introducing new company values.

## **5. Summary of the findings**

The collected information illustrates that digitisation places high demands on companies. The implementation of agile working methods is a necessary change if companies want to survive in a constantly changing market. However, this not only depends on the introduction of the required technology, but also on rethinking structures and values. Agile working methods only work in an environment that is characterized by the digital mindset of the entire organization and requires leaders to work with their employees at eye level. Agility allows companies to react quickly and flexibly to market disruption, as well as to obtain relevant feedback in close contact with the customer regularly. In addition, employees are empowered and able to fully participate in the projects. This not only leads to a higher level of innovation within the company, but also to highly motivated and committed employees. The role of the manager in this new constellation refers to intensive team building and ensuring that employees can work undisturbed and without any barriers. In order for this to be possible and for the newly implemented working methods to mature properly, the restructuring of classic company hierarchies is necessary. The disruptive market demands these changes as well as process circles which allow flexibility and a direct connection to the customer and the relevant market. Agility is therefore on one hand necessary for companies to stay competitive and successful. On the other hand it enables companies to attract the new workforce of the digital native generations. These new employees thrive in agile processes and long for strong companies values and a good work-life-balance. They are comfortable using new technology and tools and are therefore much more open towards change processes than previous generations. A management position in such companies requires therefore new qualities which are no longer orientated on technical knowledge or academic education. Managers nowadays need to be coaches to their teams and develop a strong digital mindset in order to recognize which tools they need and how to adapt processes accordingly. The manager needs a competent understanding about the market and possible threats in order to build the product life cycle. He also is responsible for team building measures and the development of a strong sense of community. Therefore he has to be able to connect employees even if they work from home or from different countries. The

freedom of workplace mobility is another important factor especially for creative companies. Different environments foster creative processes and lead to more innovation and motivation amongst the employees. To encourage employees to choose where they want to work shows trust and respect and has a positive impact on work processes and communication. The employees feel valued and understood in their needs.

## **6. Methodology**

### **6.1 Qualitative research method**

The following chapter describes the qualitative method of data collection and evaluation used for this thesis. So that the collection and evaluation of the data by means of qualitative methods can fulfill a quality standard, not only the method is described, but also the research way is comprehensively set out.

The non-standardized expert interview was selected from the field of qualitative social research as a survey method. The peculiarity of this form of interview is the non-binding preparation of the questionnaire in terms of formulation and order. The prepared guidelines only ensures that all relevant issues are addressed. (Gläser, J.; Laudel, G.; Experteninterviews und qualitative Inhaltsanalyse; 2010; p. 41) The open access of this method allows an authentic capture of the perspective of the respondents and provides information that is often lost in a quantitative approach due to their standardization. (Prof. Dr.Mayer, H.; Interview und schriftliche Befragung; 2006; p. 24) Another strength of the quantitative content analysis is the methodical analysis, which is carried out according to a category system. (Mayring, P.; Einführung in die qualitative Sozialforschung; 2016; p.114) The category system created for this thesis will be discussed in more detail in the following.

### **6.2 The expert interview**

The result of the interview is supported by the statements of the interviewee in addition to the own findings. Therefore, a conscientious selection of the interview partners is essential to generate a certain level of quality. According to Gläser and Laudel, someone who has specific knowledge in a certain area qualifies as an expert for such an interview. These may be scientific facts or personal insights and opinions. In addition, they are not considered as "objects" but rather as "witnesses" of the processes about which the researcher wishes to gain insight. The expert has a special position in the social context under investigation and provides information of particular value to the thesis. It is about reconstructing situations and processes and finding a social-scientific explanation. The expert has the task to make the researcher access special knowledge. From this it can be concluded that the status of the expert can be deduced from the goal and purpose of the interview. (Gläser, J.; Laudel, G.; Experteninterviews und Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse, 2010; p. 12-13)

### **6.3 Representative sample selection**

The hypothesis of this thesis refers to the situation in the cultural and creative industries, which is why the selection of experts took place in this area. In Germany the creative sector is subdivided in twelve submarkets:

- music
- book
- art
- film
- radio
- performing art
- architecture
- design
- press
- advertising
- software- and games
- others (Monitoringbericht Kultur und Kreativwirtschaft 2017; 2017; p. 4)

Since not all submarkets could be analyzed in detail, the selection process focussed on the sectors with the most growth and market shares over the last years. The biggest market shares in terms of formation of enterprises are the sectors for games- and software, advertising and design. (Monitoringbericht Kultur und Kreativwirtschaft 2017; 2017; p. 23) Therefore, experts in the following interviews are people in leading positions within these sectors of the creative industry. These people either run a team or they are experts in the field of New Work topics and have corresponding qualifications. To represent the “old” media as well, one expert was chosen from the field of press, radio and television. This group of experts functions as a representative sample.

#### 6.4 Selection of the interview partners

The selection of the experts is based on the criteria of the representative sample selection. The experts were approached via social networks such as Xing and LinkedIn, as well as via email. They were selected on the basis of recommendations and personal contacts of third parties to ensure that they were able to provide the necessary knowledge and information. A total of 15 interview requests were sent out with a result of seven answers. Five experts were able to take the time for an interview within the fixed period. In order to guarantee the anonymity of the individual interviewees, names or company names are not included in the following. The differentiation of the experts occurs through their qualifications and their affiliation of the sectors. The following table provides an overview of the different experts and their profession.

Expert	Age	Sex	Profession
E(1)	37	female	founder, expert for new work topics
E(2)	42	female	multimedia editor for radio and TV stations
E(3)	43	female	senior brand & marketing manager
E(4)	28	female	executive for team development and communication, organisational development and project

			management
E(5)	49	female	CEO, founder, expert for new work topics

Table 1: List of experts

## 6.5 The interview framework

As mentioned earlier the non-standardized expert interview was selected from the field of qualitative social research as a survey method. Therefore an interview framework was prepared to ensure that during the interview every relevant aspect was covered. According to Gläser and Laudel the questions should be assigned to specific topics but still leave room for the interviewer to act flexible. The number of questions must also be based on the given time and content. In addition, the questions should be fully formulated so that the individual interview partners hear them in the same wording. (Gläser, J.; Laudel, G.; *Experteninterviews und Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse*; 2010; p. 144) To ensure a smooth process Gläser and Laudel provide specific rules for the creation of the guidelines, which were applied to the questions of this thesis. The questions should be formulated in clear and plain language and not contain any unnecessary technical terms. Furthermore, questions of opinion should only be asked when the reasons of act are relevant for the answer. The interviewee should also always be encouraged to narrate in order to eliminate detail questions. Provocative questions should only be asked if the outcome is crucial for the interview, otherwise they should be avoided due to their risk of manipulating the answer. The last important point deals with the anonymity of the other experts. If the interviewer wants to refer to information of another interview he has to make sure not call names or companies. (Gläser, J.; Laudel, G.; *Experteninterviews und Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse*; 2010; p. 145)

To structure the interview, the questions were assigned to four topics that are based on the theoretical part of the thesis.

1. Agile working methods
2. Company hierarchy

3. Management
4. Workplace mobility
5. Generation Y and Z

The aim was to investigate if the expert would rate the outcomes of the literature research as true and what kind of experiences they made in terms of the implementation of these models.

## **6.6 Transcription**

The interviews were digitally recorded with consent of the interviewee. This generates a qualitatively higher outcome because no data is lost. Another advantage of the sound recording is that the interviewer can focus completely on the other person during the interview. This creates a much more natural conversation situation. (Gläser, J.; Laudel, G.; *Experteninterviews und Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse*, 2010; p. 193) In the following transliteration, standard orthography was used to eliminate pauses and non-verbal expressions. In addition, colloquial expressions and incomplete sentence structures have been corrected to simplify the analysis process. Furthermore, small talk, explanations of the interview process as well as personal anecdotes or situation-related interruptions were not included in the transcript due to missing content-related relevance.

## **6.7 Execution of the interview**

The interviews were conducted in the period from 14/7/2018 to 1/8/2018. The interview language was German because some respondents rated their English skills as insufficient. Since all interviews should be based on the same conditions, all were conducted in German. The interviews were carried out by phone due to schedule urgencies and the current whereabouts of the participants, lasting between 45 up to 70 minutes. The recording of the interviews was done through the computer program Quicktime Player and were carried out by the author of

this thesis. Since all interviews took place in 2018 there won't be a declaration of the date in the analysis.

## **6.8 Evaluation method of the interviews**

The qualitative data collection provides a large amount of raw data that will be evaluated below. Fitting with the survey method, the qualitative content analysis was selected for the evaluation. There are several methods that can be used for this kind of evaluation. In the context of this thesis, the methodology according to Philip Mayring was chosen because the analysis is carried out systematically and in comprehensible steps. In order to structure the evaluation according to qualitative aspects, Mayring provides nine analysis steps:

1. Determination of the material
2. Analysis of the situation
3. Formal characteristics of the material
4. Direction of the analysis
5. Theoretical differentiation of the question
6. Determination of the analysis techniques and the process model
7. Definition of the analysis units
8. Analysis steps using the category system
9. Review of the category system for theories and material
10. Interpretation of the results in relation to the research question
11. Application of content-analytical quality criteria (Mayring, P.; Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse; 2015; p. 54)

The analysis steps 1 to 7 have already been explained in the previous chapters. In order to begin the analysis of the obtained data, a category system is defined. The category system forms the core element of content analysis according to Mayring. The categories are created on the basis of the research question and the existing material. During the analysis, they are revised and re-examined. (Mayring, P.; Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse; 2015; p. 61) The content summary of the gained material is chosen as an analytical technique to assign the contents of the interviews to the respective categories and to examine the associated

hypotheses. Therefore the material is reduced and then assigned to the appropriate category. (Mayring, P.; Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse; 2015; p. 59) Part of this reduction was already done in the translation and transcription of the interviews by omitting content-irrelevant passages such as smalltalk. During the analysis, duplicate paraphrases are deleted and merging passages are summarized. (Mayring, P.; Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse; 2015; p. 61) The content is assigned by highlighting the interviews according to the categories. Then the reduced statements are tabulated and assigned to the categories. These actions conclude step 6 and 7 from Mayrings analysis. In steps 8 and 9, the actual analysis is performed and the categories are finalised.

Due to the thematic structuring of the interviews, the categories could be derived on the basis of the specified topics. Since these topics have refrained from the literary theoretical part of this thesis it creates an accessible and easily understandable flow. The hypotheses, developed in advance, were subsequently assigned to each of these categories. The following analysis deals with the investigation of these hypotheses.

The developed categories are the following:

Category	Hypothesis
(C1) Hierarchy	H1 The successful implementation of agile working methods demands flat hierarchies.
(C2) Agility	H2 Companies need to implement agile working methods to stay relevant within the industry.
(C3) Management	H3 The most important quality of a manager is a digital mindset.
(C4) Workplace mobility	H4 Workplace mobility fosters creativity and productivity.
(C5) Company culture	H5 Workplace mobility has a positive impact on the company culture.

(C6) Gender gap	H6 Generation Y and Z are more open towards new work topics and adapt them quicker than older generations.
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Table 2: Developed categories and hypotheses

The final step is the setting up and the application of content-analytical quality criteria. The three classic quality criteria according to Mayring are objectivity, reliability and validity. The quality criterion of objectivity indicates that the result of the interpretation is independent of the evaluator and that objectivity is guaranteed in terms of implementation, evaluation and interpretation. Reliability is a criterion about the trustworthiness of the data and validity of their accuracy. (Mayring, P.; Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse; 2015; p. 53)

## 7. Data Analysis

### 7.1 Hierarchy

The first category for the interview analysis is *Hierarchy*. As can be seen in table 2, this is the first out of 6 categories that were used to analyse the material. This category deals with the hypothesis that agile working methods demand flat hierarchies and that companies need to adapt their organisational structure consequently to implement them successfully.

At first the experts were asked for their personal opinion about why the implementation of agile working methods fails in most cases. Two of the five experts attributed the reasons to poor senior management communication, to a poorly communicated purpose and a missing vision. (E (1), 76-89; E (5), p.62-69) Both argue that change processes always hit a certain pain point, both among managers and employees. Known processes convey security and competence; new structures however lead to insecurity and fear. The natural reaction of the employees is therefore to resist the changes. According to the experts, the fact that this behavior occurs and the implementation is hindered is the fault of the management level, which has to explain to the employees why change is

necessary and how they can benefit from it. (E (1), 378-389; E (5), 62-63) Another point in this regard, according to expert 1, is the lack of team feeling that is mediated in such a case. Employees facing change, among other things, are afraid of losing their jobs. Management needs to prevent such fears and ensure that all employees are able to adapt to the changes. (E (1), 383-390) Another expert pointed to a lack of willingness to innovate. The implementation of agile working methods would be half-hearted and superficial. Managers and investors are still unwilling to take risks that could cost money. (E (3), 56-61) Two more experts see the reason in the rigid structures of large and traditional companies, which prolong processes and thus prevent agility. With this statement, the experts respond directly to the hypothesis and reaffirm the assumption that these organizations need to flatten their structures. ( E(4), 111-115; E(2), 76-78) The experts describe the difficulties arising from their own experience and their expertise and recognize numerous causes in companies that prevent successful agile work. Despite these results, only two experts believe that agility necessarily requires a flat hierarchy in order to be successful. (E (5), 159; E (2), 76-80) One of the experts sees a particular urgency for the creative industry, because classical structures in a creative environment lead to stagnation and unspiritual employees. Agility creates an innovative work environment and demands the attention of the employee as he can take responsibility and manage processes himself. These measures require flat hierarchies:

*“We have often experienced this in our work. It starts in the offices. If the offices do not change then you can not implement agility. If I go to the same desk for 10 years, then the head may understand that a change is taking place, but the body does not. You have to show in every moment that agility is lived. (...) If I go the same way every day, you are completely on autopilot.” (E5), 159-164)*

The other expert refers in her argumentation to personal experiences in traditional hierarchical structures. The implementation of agile working methods was not possible in this context and failed. (E(2), 147-150) While the other three experts find traditional hierarchical structures cumbersome, they still see an opportunity for agility in such companies. They see agility as closely related to a

strong corporate culture and active values, as well as a strong purpose within the company. If these factors are the correct ones and are lived by both leaders and employees, agility can work in traditional structures as well. (E(1),130-141; E(4), 150-154) One of the experts sees a democratically lived decision-making and communication culture as the basis for agility in traditional companies. The barriers between management and employees should be as low as possible. In this way, processes are not slowed down and management has a clearer vision of the product, target group and resources of the team. (E(3),120-124) Although the experts have a very open approach to hierarchical structures, they also see the limitations that come with them. They point to models such as Scrum, which can be well integrated into hierarchical structures, but clarify that these models can never be completely agile. Agile working methods rely on self-management and this form of working requires flat hierarchies. Traditional structures only allow a reduced version of the methods and additionally require a very stable framework and excellent management so that agile work is possible at all (E(4), 187-193) :

*“Agile work can also be introduced in individual teams in a traditional company. For example, Scrum works well in companies with hierarchical structures. But if you want to do that in a self-organized way, then it does not work. Then you need the intelligence of the entire collective. As soon as you have strict hierarchies, you lose potential and opportunities to involve people who have the necessary skills. That's why I would say it is possible but only in limited form.” (E(4), 187-193)*

In terms of the flexibility required by the current disruptive market, two of the experts see the general future of large traditional companies as critical. On the one hand, they regard the inertia of these companies as a big disadvantage when it comes to innovation and competition, and, on the other hand, they see the future employee market as a very value-oriented market. With the increasing need for self-realization and self-reliance, it will tend to pull workers more into small businesses or networks, than large corporations. (E (1), 231-242; E(3), 155-156)

In summary, agile working methods can be successfully implemented in a reduced and limited form in hierarchical structures as long as the company has a stable democratic framework and committed managers. However, potential is lost and the actual idea of agile working methods is not fulfilled. In a technological context like software development, the chances seem to be better that models like Scrum can be transposed. In a much more creative context, flat hierarchies seem indispensable for a promising successful implementation.

## **7.2 Agility**

The second category is called *Agility* and deals with the hypothesis that companies need to implement agile working methods to stay relevant in the market.

All of the five experts agree that agile working methods provide a kind of flexibility that can not be achieved with other models. They rate this flexibility as highly relevant to the disruptive market and the competitiveness of the company. (E(1), 251-254; E(2), 51-53; E(3), 12-13; E(4), 144-150; E(5), 185-186) Agile companies have a distinct advantage over non-agile companies in many ways, which will enable them to gain a big lead in the market in the future. In addition to the flexibility to respond to disruption and trends, agile working methods increase employee participation and thus the degree of innovation of a company. The experts point to the much greater exchange of knowledge resulting from the integration of all team members and the associated benefits. The results of the work do not only reach a new level of efficiency but also are closer to the customer than ever before. (E(4), 162-172) In addition to the results-oriented advantages of the agile working methods, however, there is one other point in the focus of the experts, which makes the shift to agility indispensable. According to the experts, agility meets a great need of the worker, who is motivated by the desire for self-fulfillment and self-reliance. Agile methods therefore lead to more motivation, satisfaction, confidence and enjoyment of the work. These factors increase employee productivity and engagement as they feel a closer connection to the product and the company. (E (1), 197-199; E (3), 109-110) Despite their

belief in the need for agile working methods, two of the experts warn against rash implementation. They do not see agile methods as the solution to all problems and differentiate between routine tasks where agility does not have a positive impact. Moreover, they are aware of the uncertainty of the future and the fact that within a few years the market could possibly require a new way of working. The experts therefore recommend the development of individual solution approaches and project-based working models. (E(4), 146-153; E(5), 87-92)

*“(...) Every company has to find a way for itself individually and that can be completely analogous. If it works for this company in its market then it is the right way. The cards will be reshuffled in the next few years and what comes next can not be said yet.” E(5), 87-92)*

In summary, all of the experts see the urgency of a shift towards agility to ensure competitive advantage, but also to increase the level of innovation and productivity within the companies. Nevertheless, agility should only be used consciously and only implemented if the shift makes sense and positively influences the outcome. In companies with routine processes, individual solutions should therefore be found that are orientated towards the needs of the work and the employees.

### **7.3 Management**

The third category deals with the topic of management in the digital age. The hypothesis states that the most important quality of a manager is the digital mindset. This statement is derivatives from the collected information in chapter 4.4.

Asked about their assessment of the role of managers in digital companies, all experts responded with the same statement: managers today have the role of a coach. It is no longer about leading, but about empowering employees and allowing teams to work barrier-free. This shift is closely related to the topic of digitisation, as well as the implementation of agile working methods and flat

hierarchical structures. (E(1), 301-303; E(2), 166-167; E(3), 179;E(4), 230-232; E(5), 179-180) In order to make this form of work possible, the experts speak of different qualities that a manager needs today. Each of the experts points to a high level of empathy and social competence that executives must have. These qualities are still rare, especially in traditional companies. However, the focus in the digital age is above all on human relationships and the ability to develop and build trust. (E(2),179-181; E(3), 179-181; E(4), 233-234; E(5), 95-97) Due to this need of social skills it is important that the manager has a clear self-reflection and is able to handle feedback and criticism. One of the experts refers to personal experiences in which leaders had lost control of their own emotions under stress and were no longer able to lead their team properly. In times of employee empowerment, managers need to learn a new kind of trust that allows them to remain calm even in challenging situations and let the team work independently. (E(1), 295-303) In order to do so one of the experts strongly suggests coaching training for managers to enable them to adapt to the shift. (E(3), 179-190) Another point that appeals to three of the experts is the motivation and excitement of the staff. The clear communication of goals and visions is crucial for the motivation and the productivity of the employees and also ensures a strong sense of community. The experts see the manager in the duty to address his employees directly and to communicate at eye level. According to the experts, to make this kind of communication and empathy possible, managers needs one thing above all: empathy. Empathy makes it possible for the manager to recognize the needs of his employees without them having to address them. The manager can act proactively and address problem areas before they get out of control. (E(2), 179-181, E(3), 179-180, E(4), 233-234) In addition, the manager is able to assign his employees the respective areas of responsibility and tasks that correspond to their strengths and personal needs. As a result, everyone in the team can apply their strongest skills and feel more fun and satisfied at work. (E(3), 186-189; E(5), 178-180) In terms of digitisation and digital mindset, only two experts comment. One of the experts is convinced that while a good manager must be the contact person for technical questions about the product, he is not an expert. He has the role of manager or coaches and should build a team of experts who contribute their expertise. To that end, the digital mindset is relevant, but more relevant to the right assessment of the situation and hiring the

right people. Since in this point the social competence outweighs their importance, the digital mindset can be classified as secondary. (E(2), 170-172)

*“I believe that a boss or manager does not have to know everything. He has his experts in the team for that. But he really needs to be motivational and empathetic to lead a team successfully.” (E(2), 170-172)*

The other expert goes into more detail and sees a need in the manager's expertise to use the right tools and methods. With regard to the Digital Shift, the expert sees the danger that leadership positions can not distinguish between the technology they need and the technology that may work for others but that does not fit their processes. This capture of the technological possibilities is essential to use them efficiently. (E(5), 99-102)

In terms of the hypothesis, it can be said that the most important quality of a manager is not his digital mindset but his social competence. Empathy and the conveyance of visions are rated by the experts as much more essential than the digital mindset. Only one of the experts rated this directly as the most important feature. The argumentation of the experts refers to the interplay of agile working methods and flat hierarchies, in which the role of the manager assumes a teaching position and values such as community and trust gain in importance.

#### **7.4 Mobility**

The fourth category deals with the topic of mobility which became very relevant through digitisation. The hypothesis states that workplace mobility promotes both productivity and creativity. The opinions of the experts on this topic were very diverse.

At first, the topic of productivity was discussed, and whether a regular change of work locations promotes thus. Only one of the experts strongly supported this hypothesis. According to her experience, the more mobile a job is the better it is for the company as well as for the product and the employee. Only in this way

new perspectives are possible that can lead to innovative ideas and only in this way is it also possible to prevent the employee from falling into routines and working on autopilot. She is also sure that emerging problems or uncertainties are almost always due to the use of wrong tools. Especially for creative processes, people often lack the necessary technical know-how to use technology to their personal interest and for the interest of their work. She also addresses the problem that, especially in the cultural and creative industries, there often is an arc around digital tools out of fear that one can not express oneself as well as with pen and paper. But the personal working style is completely irrelevant, as you can also share analog work on photos or video recordings on platforms with colleagues. Above all, the expert sees the leadership in the duty to enlighten and to provide appropriate training on the tools to enable the employees to have a positive experience with the technology. (E(5), 43-56, 186-187) The remaining four experts have more critical view of the topic of workplace mobility and base their doubts on personal experiences. The topic of productivity is generally perceived positively. All experts agree that a regular change in the work environment increases efficiency and makes employees more motivated and productive. (E (1), 358-363; E (3), 212-214) The reasons for this are seen, on the one hand, in breaking out of routines, but above all in reconciling work and family life. Two of the experts see this point as particularly elementary, especially among the younger generations. Giving them the opportunity to forego the commute and instead use the time meaningfully from the home office will increase the engagement and commitment to the company. (E (1), 318-321, E (4), 52-54) An expert suggests that there are also certain tasks that require a certain level of concentration, and that much more time is required to complete these tasks in the noisy and bustling office and they are often carried out inaccurately. For such tasks, the home office is ideal. (E (1), 357-363) This point, however, already initiates the first criticism that two of the experts rate as very negative. Although remote work can increase individual employee productivity, the absence of these team members inhibits office efficiency. According to the experts problem areas arise when certain decisions can not be made because a certain person who is not present. Although communication through tools is possible, certain situations require quick and competent decisions in the very moment. Calling the responsible person would lead to a chain of explanations which makes the process very inefficient. (E(1), 363-365) Another point is

addressed by another expert who has often experienced an imbalance between the employees in the office and the ones who work from home. The office team usually has to take care of suddenly arising tasks or urgent client feedback. To entrust the colleagues in the home office with these tasks would again be a cumbersome and time-consuming process. For the office workers, however, this often means more stress and less productivity because they can not finish their own tasks on time. (E(4), 263-265) Three of the experts also see the issue of communication as very critical. Although the necessary tools are available, people communicate differently when they are not sitting in front of each other. The experts talk about unresponsiveness during meetings and about having to approach people directly for some form of reaction. Of course, they also see the personal motivation required to get involved, but because of the distance the employees often do not feel part of the discussion. The experts say to prevent these situations they have to plan and structure meetings with remote employees much more intensively, and also need to interact and moderate more during the meeting. (E(2), 282-231; E(4), 80-82)

*“This flow is difficult to achieve online, if at all possible. My team and I are a well-rehearsed team because we know each other offline as well. But I can not imagine how it works if you do not know each other. That needs a completely different kind of coordination and I think that creativity suffers as well.”*  
(E(4), 86-90)

This quote already introduces the second part of the hypothesis, which deals with the increase of creativity. The opinions of the experts on this point are very different as they have a different understanding of creativity and work differently with it. Expert 5 again is the only person who feels that workplace mobility has without exception a positive impact on creativity. The other experts clearly differentiate between independent creative work and teamwork. They see great potential when it comes to independent work tasks and are generally in favor of implementing remote work. In terms of team processes though they are far more critical. As can already be seen from the above quote, expert 4 sees a significant disadvantage in terms of communication during creative processes. The best ideas would therefore arise in spontaneous discussions, whereas the virtual

exchange often takes place slowly and hesitantly. (E(4), 83-85) Expert 3 affirms this statement and also points to the difficulties in visual work that arise through virtual teamwork. The expert refers primarily to design processes which require decisions regarding colors and materials. The display of these components on screen varies depending on which device is used and sending samples by mail takes a lot of time. Efficient work is not possible this way. (E(3), 263-267) In order to avoid this problematic situation and enable all involved employees to have a successful and fulfilling work experience, the experts recommend project-based decisions that are based on the skills of the employees and the requirements of the project. It should be avoided to set up a set of rules or to generalize situations, as this may increase the frustration among the employees. In the interests of agility, job mobility should also be kept flexible. (E(2), 193-215; E(4), 253-259)

The results of the analysis show that while workplace mobility is a necessity for modern companies, it also requires a certain amount of management and preparation. It must also be recognized that the productivity of employees can only be increased if everyone has the same preconditions for doing their job. This means that the office team does not have to do extra work just so that part of the team can work remotely. In addition, a strong project management is necessary to work efficiently and all team members can be involved. Creative processes also require a lot of attention, as not all processes have a positive effect on the process flow. For this it must be recognized how the teams works best and which processes may not work virtually. A general solution does not seem to exist, instead project-based solutions must be found with which all involved parties can work well.

## **7.5 Company culture**

Category five is closely related to the previous chapter. The hypothesis of this category states that workplace mobility has a positive impact on the corporate culture and is based on the gained information in chapter 4.3 and 4.5. As noted in the previous category analysis, the experts agree that job mobility has a positive impact on the individual employee, but can damage team cohesion and

productivity in certain processes. The following analyses how the remote model affects the corporate culture.

All five experts see a big risk to corporate culture through the implementation of job mobility. They all make it clear that the positive aspects for the individual employee and the need for such an implementation outweigh this risk, but managers should be aware of the danger and work proactively against it. The experts explain this risk with the potential loss of corporate identity and values, because employees barely get to know each other and the sense of community and solidarity is lost. (E (4), 267-270)

*“What worries us a lot more is how our sense of community and drive suffers. (...) And then we have to ask ourselves how we can catch that. (...) We must therefore figure out how much freedom we can give the individual employee and how to find a pleasant solution for all. Because we have to ensure certain things to not lose our identity.”* (E (4), 267-270)

Based on this observation, all experts agree that a successful implementation of workplace mobility must always entails the encouragement of offline meetings and team building trainings. (E(1), 356; E(2), 200-201; E(4), 306-308; E(5), 200-202) If offline meetings are not possible for some reason, the management should organise online team building events where the employees are able to engage with their co-workers in a situation aside of the daily work structures. The experts refer to big companies like IBM which create online meeting rooms for their employees and let them decorate and furnish them in fun and creative ways. Individual avatars are another opportunity to let the employees show their character and humour. These interpersonal factors are important to ensure a feeling of togetherness and connect the employees closer to the purpose and vision of the company. (E(1), 338-353) Another potential risk is isolation. Even if the company has strong values and fosters team building events, the employee may not feel included if he is working mostly remote. Therefore the experts also suggest to make it mandatory that all employees join at least a few team meetings and the yearly company events and help them to organise their visit if they live in a different country. (E(3), 232-234)

The experts see a strong connection between the team experience and feeling of togetherness and the company culture. Values must be lived to affect the company positively and transfer on to the employees. Only then a strong identity develops which builds the company culture. To meet the needs of the employees in terms of work-life-balance and to improve the company brand it is important to implement models such as remote work nowadays. It motivates employees strongly if they are able to choose where they want to work and adjust their work schedule to their personal lives. To not lose the company culture over the happiness of the individuals, the company needs to focus on their human resource management and work more precisely on team building and corporate culture strategies.

## **7.6 Generation Gap**

Category six deals with the generation gap between the the digital native generations like Y and Z and the older generations. The hypothesis states that the younger generations are more open towards new work topics like agility and remote work and additionally adapt them quicker.

Although all experts see the tendence that younger people are more enthusiastic when it comes to new work topics, nobody agree with the hypothesis.

*“I think it is anchored in each of us to have fun at work and to feel enthusiasm. This is not related to age.”*

*(E(4), 295-297)*

The experts point out that the older generations see as well as the younger ones how the market needs to change and how they can benefit from new structures and models. The problem however lies in the different socialization of the generations. This includes on the one hand a very different social structure where possessions and career goals were highly valued. These generations also learned that they get their drive to work harder from a motivational system that younger generations do not care as much about. Promotions, a business car or

credit card, a new office or other benefits used to be the factors that lead to higher motivation and success. Nowadays people choose very carefully where they want to work and look out for company values and a corporate identity with which they can identify with. The young generations rather use car sharing services and work at co-working offices than long for these traditional amenities. (E(4), 290-293; E(5), 141-143) The experts also refer to experiences and learned behavior. The young generations see change as an opportunity and are willing to take risks. The older ones already had bad experiences with change processes and see danger in such a big shift like the digitisation. Their behaviour has manifested over the years and they adapted to the rules that they were expected to follow. Since these structures were established by the management level, they should also be in charge to give their employees a feeling of safety during times of change. Because only an uncertain atmosphere can lead to fear of losing a job or not being able to keep up with new models and tools. The experts therefore state that its the fault of the management level if employees of older generations have a hard time adapting to change. (E(1), 396-403) One expert also point the low tolerance culture for failure in germany out to be one of the main reasons why older generations hesitate to accept change. (E(4), 120-123) Learning something new always comes along with making mistakes and asking for help. A generation who used to be the experts in their field now has to learn from the young ones; a process that does not come easy for everybody. The older generations recognize that their way of working is not appreciated anymore and instead of making them part of the change many companies just hire new younger employees. This way there is no chance for closing the gap between the generations and the antipathy between the parties only grows. (E(4), 123-129) The experts also say that the young generations entering the labor market are now joining companies where the digital shift has already taken place in most cases. Models such as Scrum and Design Thinking are nothing completely new, and the leadership has already gained some experience with the new tools. The difficult period when all these topics were new and a lot of uncertainty and concern about the future has spread is already in the past. Today new visions are developed, but above all a lot has been learned. From mistakes and risks that were made in the past by the older generations who also had to bear the consequences. That's why the experts state to recognize the efforts of the older generations and make sure they find their way within the new structures. (E(1), 388-404; E(4), 131-141)

In summary it can be said that the opinion of the experts does not agree with the hypothesis. All the experts see a certain difficulty when it comes to the adaptation of the digital shifts within the older generations, but they see the reasons for this in the way they were socialized and not in their general attitude towards digitisation. Their years of work experience has shaped them and the internalized rules have to be broken to allow new ones. This process takes longer and makes them less flexible than generation Y and Z, who enter the labor market without this pattern of thinking. However, if these generations have worked in companies for 10 to 20 years, they too will have fallen into structures that are not easily broken. It is therefore natural for young generations to find new work topics easier to deal with, something that has nothing to do with the aversion or refusal of older generations. When it comes to the topic of openness towards topics like agility and remote work, the experts see an equally great interest and willingness in the older generations as in the younger ones. When the employees understand the purpose of the company and can identify with the values conveyed, they embrace change positive and full of motivation. (E(4), 131-141)

## **8. Summary of the results**

The summary of the results shows that none of the hypothesis could be fully proven. Two of the hypotheses were refuted and four were felt to be only partially correct.

The first hypothesis was assigned to the category *Hierarchy* and stated that the successful implementation of agile working methods demands flat hierarchies. The analysis of the interviews shows that agility can also work in traditional companies if a strong democratic framework is provided and company values are lived by both management and employees. When it comes to the definition of agility the experts emphasize that the core idea of an agile model is build on self-management which is not fully possible in traditional companies. This is necessary the more creative a process becomes. Agility therefore is possible within hierarchical structures and can be successfully implemented but only in a limited form.

The second hypothesis stated that companies need to implement agile working methods to stay relevant within the industry and was assigned to the category of *Agility*. The experts agreed that agile working methods not only provide the company with a certain flexibility, which is highly important within the disruptive market, but also allow the employees to work self-organised and freely. This brings new potential because a new kind of knowledge exchange between the departments can happen. As a result the company can react quickly to market changes and trends and is able to develop the product more closely to the customers needs. Nevertheless the experts do not see a necessity to implement agile methods in every company or process. These types of decisions should be project-based and do not fit to every company or team. Agility is therefore neither a good fit for every company nor a guarantee to stay relevant in the market.

The third hypothesis was assigned to the category *Management* and predicates that the most important quality of a manager is a digital mindset. The experts however rated human factors like empathy and intuition as much more relevant and therefore valued social competence as the most important skill. Their argumentation was based on factors like the team building and coaching, which are especially important in agile structures. The digital competence comes secondary as the experts for this field should be the team members hired by the manager.

The fourth category is *Mobility* and referred to the hypothesis that workplace mobility fosters productivity and creativity. The results of the interviews show that workplace mobility has a strong advantage for the individual employee. The freedom of choosing where to work enables a better work-life-balance and breaks the routines of more traditional companies. Therefore the employee is more motivated. Especially for creative processes this brings a huge advantage because the constant change of locations inspires and generates new ideas and perspectives. Despite all the positive results that come from a flexible workplace the experts agree that there are also disadvantages, especially when it comes to teamwork. The communication and organisation within projects gets more complicated and time consuming. The solution is again to decide on these models project-based and avoid strict rules.

Hypothesis five dealt with the topic of company culture and states that workplace mobility has a positive impact on the company culture. In relation to hypothesis four and the discovered results, this hypothesis again has been rated as only

partly correct. The experts again recognize and underline the importance of workplace mobility, especially within the cultural and creative industries, but also point to the effort that has to be made to develop a strong company identity under these circumstances. Team building and the development and implementation of corporate values is much more difficult with a remote team and requires engagement from all parties. The shown trust of the company towards the employees and the personal freedom everyone gains, however, have a positive impact on the company culture.

The last hypothesis stated that generation Y and Z are more open towards new work topics and adapt them quicker than older generations. This hypothesis was assigned to the category *Generation Gap*. The experts agreed that the younger generation have a more constructive and intuitive approach towards new work topics, but explained this behaviour with the different socialisation of the generations. Also years of work experiences and learned behaviour lead to a more complex way of rethinking structures. The experts therefore do not see less interest or refusal from the older generations towards new work topics.

## **9. Summary of the findings**

The aim of this thesis is to answer the research question which influence digitisation has on the work environment and work processes in creative companies.

For this purpose, the literary part was first used to research the definitions of the individual concepts and, in the following, their implementation and effect.

The first chapter dealt with the general influence of digitisation on the cultural and creative industries. First, it was made clear what a significant influence the digital shift has on life in general, and that developments such as Industry 4.0 prophesy further major changes for the future. Innovations such as artificial intelligence, the internet of things and 3d printing cause disruptions in markets and industries worldwide. For the cultural and creative industries, these disruptions primarily led to the development of new markets such as software and games development, but also to the further development of traditional markets such as graphic design and advertising. The new technology enabled quicker and resource-saving work, but also a stronger and deeper connection to the customer and target group. The

development of the consumer market also led to a stronger focus on service performance in the CCI and demanded rapid reactions to trends and market changes. In order to make this kind of thinking possible, a development of the so-called VUCA-world is necessary. By definition, this world is uncertain and demands flexible choices that are made without access to the full information. Depending on the reaction of the market and the target group, the product is then adapted. Digital leaders are opening up this world by using agile working methods and new technology. The impact of digitisation becomes therefore particularly clear when you look at the changes in working environment and processes.

The next chapter therefore dealt with the five best-known agile working methods; design thinking, scrum, kanban, lean startup and the business model canvas. These agile processes are, on the one hand, an answer to the disruptive market because they allow flexibility and are oriented close to the consumer, on the other hand they fulfill the need of the new knowledge workers who long for responsibility and self-determination at work. The first agile process that is explained is the model of Design Thinking. This approach has a human-centred philosophy and explores the true need of the customer. For this, the employees need a high degree of empathy and intuition to recognize the roots of customers' problems. In prototype circles the respective outcome is then tested and adapted according to the feedback of the customers. The goal is to conserve resources and build a trusting relationship with the target group. The project management framework scrum has its origins in the software industry but is now used in derivative form in many other industries. Again, the focus is on the customer and the continuous optimization of the product, but here are already product and idea fixed. The small and self-organized teams work completely independently and in short sprint phases, which are discussed in weekly meetings.

An agile project management tool that has established itself for working with these methods is the kanban board. It serves to visualize the work process and leaves employees productive and organized work. On the board, which in most cases is digitally shared with everyone involved, they can see at any time which tasks still need to be done, who is currently working on which task and which ones have already been completed.

The lean startup model is often used in an agile context, when it comes to the market entry of a product. The resource-saving model builds on the development of an MVP, a minimal viable product. This reduced version of the product is not tested on a test group, but launched directly on the market. This is the only way to achieve an accurate recording of the customer journey and real feedback can be collected. The product is then periodically optimized to suit the market and customer needs.

The business model canvas is often used in agile and digital companies to create a flexible and adaptive business model. The model breaks the company down into nine segments to get an overview of each area. This helps to quickly identify which influences affect which segments and how they need to be adjusted without losing the identity or vision of the company.

In the next chapter, the organizational structures of digital companies were examined and the framework conditions required for agile working methods were established. Flexible structures and self-management demand first and foremost flat hierarchies and managers who introduce teams like coaches into the new environment. To implement these new structures, management must be able to communicate values and build a strong company identity that employees resonate with. The digital mindset is fundamental for this to recognize necessary changes and problem areas.

The topic of job mobility is particularly important when it comes to working environments in companies. Workplace mobility has become a major topic through digitisation and is in high demand, especially in creative companies. Empowering employees to design their own work environment creates trust and loyalty, and enhances creativity and productivity. This strengthened commitment to the workforce also creates a strong corporate culture and increased employee participation.

The drivers for these new developments are above all the generations of digital natives. Generation Y and Z establish a new understanding of freedom and excitement about work in general and encourage companies to adapt to those needs. They find their motivation in a strong purpose and strive towards goals which are meaningful to them.

Based on these researched facts, six hypotheses were developed and tested within five expert interviews. The content analysis was done according to the framework of Mayring and was structured through categories which were based on the hypotheses. The results of the analysis made it clear that none of the hypotheses could be fully confirmed by the experts. The experts showed enthusiasm and euphoria regarding the new work topics and rate their urgency as undisputed. Nevertheless, they rate the implementation as a process that has to happen individually and project-based in order to not lose employees or the product halfway. Many of the new work topics require a special degree of social competence and commitment, and even in experienced teams, not all processes can be implemented without difficulty. However, the experts see the problem not with the employees or within a generation conflict, but in the generalization of methods and tools. Especially in the creative field complex situations require complex solutions and above all the commitment of the entire company. Also, they see the compulsive manner in which agile methods are sometimes introduced into companies as a threat. Because agility does not always make sense, and a forced implementation can do more harm than gain benefits. The experts appeal to competent leaders who recognize the entirety of the situation and adapt their decisions to their team and their vision.

## **10. Conclusion**

Digitisation has brought many changes that affect working environments and processes in the creative industries in many different ways. With regard to the research question and the hypotheses put forward, it can be said that arguably the biggest influence of digitisation are the interpersonal factors in companies. The need of the knowledge worker for self-determination and self-fulfillment changes the entire working environment and can definitely be traced back to the digital shift. Digitisation makes it possible to hand over certain processes to machines and to put the human factor back in focus. In addition, knowledge workers' awareness of their market value is growing, as is their desire for a better work-life balance. The new needs were born with digitisation as there are now new ways to implement them. The abandonment of the hierarchical structures and the introduction of agile working methods in which the employees work

together with the leadership level on an equal footing all happen as a result and always have the human being at the center; be it in form of equal employees or the target group. From the expert interviews conducted, it became clear that changes in working processes or working environments only work as long as this focal point is not lost. Even agile structures can fail if the interpersonal relationships do not receive the necessary attention. The companies have to recognize what motivates their employees and what values they want to live in the company. A strong purpose that unites the staff and a culture that meets the needs of all can therefore be much more promising than the compulsive implementation of new working methods. The key to successful agility lies in the interaction of the needs of the employees, the product, the company and the customer. It is not always necessary to restructure the processes. Rather, it's about finding individual solutions because these constellations are always about the needs of people. Generalization of processes therefore makes no sense.

The influence of digitisation on creative companies is therefore the prioritization of the human factor in every respect. The leadership must recognize which methods and tools help their employees to succeed based on the skills of the individual. Furthermore, they must build the working environments in such a way that the employees are encouraged in their creativity and can consequently work more innovatively and productively. These solutions must be adapted to the particular project or product, which must be strictly geared to the needs of the target group. Only then can a successful product be developed that satisfies an actual need. Accordingly, the working methodology must also be project-based, since it must be considered at which point the customer should be introduced and to what extent the competence of the collective is required. These factors have a positive effect on corporate identity and corporate culture, as employees feel understood and have the opportunity to identify with the company's vision. By providing the necessary tools and the associated training, the company can not only ensure that its employees are encouraged to improve processes, but also to inspire them for upcoming change. Only in this way a work atmosphere can be created in which innovation and growth is possible.

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## **12. Appendices**

### **12.1 Interview framework**

Hello [name], thank you so much for doing this interview today. The interview will take place as part of my master's thesis on the topic "The impact of digitisation on working environments" and will be digitally recorded. Is that okay?

#### **Introduction**

1. Digitisation has an impact on almost every aspect of our everyday lives. As a result, the world of work has of course also changed a lot. Which change is the biggest or most important one for you personally?

2. How do you rate the importance of the digital shift in creative companies?

#### **Topic Agility and agile working methods**

1. The digital transformation is primarily affecting traditional companies that need to change their work structures and ways of working and adapt them to digitisation. Where do you think are the biggest difficulties and why?

2. How do agile working methods affect work processes?

3. What influence does the implementation of agile working methods have on the employees and the corporate culture?

4. Did you notice a change in the productivity and motivation of the team members? If so, how could you measure it?

5. Do you think that creativity suffers from the influence of digitality and agility?

#### **Topic hierarchy and organisational structure**

1. What foundation must be created in a company for agile working methods to thrive?
2. Do you think companies need to reshape their structure towards flat hierarchies to be able to implement agile working methods successfully?
3. How do you think the corporate structures of creative companies of the future will look like? Do you think there will continue to be large corporations that dominate the market?
4. Employees empowerment is an important topic in human resources. How do you think this management style affects the company? Do you think the employees develop a closer connection to the company and the product?
5. How do you define the role of the manager in an agile company with flat hierarchies? What qualities does a manager need today?
6. What challenges, especially in team management, do you see as particularly challenging?

### **Topic workplace mobility**

1. Digitisation has also changed the traditional working environment considerably; Remote work, home office and co-working spaces provide a change in office life. How do you rate this change in the working environment? Where do you see a positive, where a negative change?
2. In your experience, how does flexible workplace design affect the motivation and productivity of employees?
3. What influence can concepts such as Remote Work have on the corporate climate?
4. In your opinion, how have creative work processes changed through this way of working?

## **Conclusion**

5. Where do you see challenges in implementing these new working models?
  
6. What do you think about the generations Y and Z?
7. How do you perceive the openness of the employees regarding these topics?  
Are there big differences between the young and older generations?
  
8. When it comes to the future, what challenges should digital companies anticipate?

## 12.2 Transcripts of the expert interviews

### 12.2.1 Expert interview 1

1 **Interviewer:** So good afternoon again I am very pleased that you have time for this today. The interview will take place today as part of my master's thesis on "The impact of digitisation on working environments" and for this I will make a digital recording of our conversation. Is that okay?

**Expert 1:** Yes, that's fine.

**Interviewer:** Wonderful, then I start hereby with the questions. The first topic generally refers first to the topic of digitisation and work processes and their  
10 environment. Digitisation has an impact on almost every aspect of our everyday lives. As a result, the world of work has of course also changed a lot. Which change is the biggest or most important for you personally?

**Expert 1:** Um, that I can always work when I want.

**Interviewer:** And would you rate that as positive or as negative?

**Expert 1:** Quite positiv, actually.

20 **Interviewer:** Okay, and would you say that the importance of Digital Shift, which of course is hugely important to any business today, how would you view this assessment of digitisation as a creative enterprise?

**Expert 1:** Mh, I honestly have a query at this point; what does digitisation mean at this point? Because I keep observing that this term is used very broadly and differently, and when I talk about automation of business processes, for example, that is automation for me, even if it takes place outside production halls, for example in creative companies. But then, for me, that's not the classic definition of digitisation. Digitisation is more in my business model.

30

**Interviewer:** Yes, that is exactly what this refers to and also to everyday life in companies, in terms of working and how certain work processes change there.

**Expert 1:** Ok, then both. A mixture of digitisation and automation in my language. Can you repeat the question again?

**Interviewer:** How would you rate this importance of digital shifts in creative companies, when creative work processes have to adapt and, as a result, change?

40 **Expert 1:** Yes, so I can not think of an example at least where I would say it does not matter. But I also realize that I find a response like "It's super important!" also a bit boring somehow. In fact, I believe that it is becoming increasingly important in business models. In the work processes, too, I think. I think that it will take a bit time. With the business models, I have the impression that creativity is still very open, that could go a bit longer so to speak. But maybe I'm wrong. That means I see a very high importance there.

**Interviewer:** There are different voices, especially in the creative industry, who also say that this has a negative impact on creative companies because it  
50 changes the creativity and our understanding of creativity. And that's why they would rather want a different change for the creative industry.

**Expert 1:** Yes, I can totally understand that. You also noticed that I hesitated a bit at the beginning of the question. There is already quite a reference in the direction. On the other hand, I think there must be people in those organizations who do their homework then, so it can happen anyway. In order for good creative processes to take place, for example, certain foundations are needed. Irrespective of what influences and causes stress from the outside. Because that was already the case in the past. For example, if we remember the early days of  
60 event agencies, they always had the deadline stress, they were always in action and they had to come up with something new again and again. There had to be people who kept an eye on the fact that it was still possible to develop new ideas. That's why I would say that: Yes, but that's the job of the corporations. But you

still need a good organizational development. And that's where it gets exciting when we look at the creative industry, who has already achieved that.

**Interviewer:** Yes of course. Then let's just stay with the role of the companies.

70 Let's talk about the implementation of new digital processes, including agile working methods, of course. The digital transformation has also had a strong impact on the work practices and structures of traditional companies. Where do you think are the biggest difficulties for companies that are already established and now have to adapt to something completely new?

**Expert 1:** I believe the biggest challenge is where it always lies, when something established needs to change. And it does not matter that these are now digital work processes. Changing something that has existed for a long time, always hits a pain point in long-established companies. Very few companies are good at  
80 making their people aware of the purpose of this change outside the leadership level. The moment people know what a change is good for and what it brings to them personally, in that moment, in my opinion, one can more quickly observe a willingness to change among all those involved. But if I communicate the purpose only on the management level, then of course that does not work. (...) I consider it critical to remain in classical decision-making structures when I want to introduce something like agility. The concept of agile goes in the complete opposite direction. And I believe that the greatest challenge lies not in the technology, but in introducing people into the change with meaningfulness and at an early stage.

90

**Interviewer:** So you would also say that there is a direct connection between digitisation and the company structure or hierarchy?

**Expert 1:** I think there are also highly digitized companies that work in very classic structures. But I think, for example, if many employees had to go already for a low level of change, then you're right. Of course, companies have already exchanged their entire workforce to promote change, and that too can work. And then you do not have to restructure the hierarchy directly.

**Interviewer:** Alright. Now I would like to talk about your personal experiences.

100 **Which agile working methods have you already worked with and how did you perceive the respective changes they brought with them?**

**Expert 1:** For me, it's almost the other way around. I noticed that my personal way of working attracts attention in companies. At the beginning of my professional career, I had more of an HR profile, but at the time when the issue of digitisation became more relevant, I was in a senior position. In this company, more and more programmers were hired and then I realized that these programmers made demands that were completely normal for me. As a human resource manager, it became clear to me that my professional group had adapted very well to the existing conditions. Even before the digitalization started, I had a kind of kanban board in my office, it just did not have that name. I have visualized a lot already. And now I would like to deepen your question again, if you tell me again, what falls to you all under agile ways of working?

**Interviewer:** As you have already mentioned, it is definitely about the classically known methods, such as Design Thinking, Scrum, Kanban and everything that is derived from it. The business model Canvas is also part of it. All these classical methods, of which, for example, startups build their structures out.

120 **Expert 1:** (...) I think I have actually worked with all these methods. Not always aware or exactly according to the rules. For example, I would find it difficult to describe a method in detail now. For example, I worked with Design Thinking in the founding context and experienced some major problems, as I did with the Business Model Canvas. I've also developed such canvas myself to visualize processes. What was the second part of your question again?

**Interviewer:** How the implementation has affected already established work processes. And whether they have changed positively or negatively.

130 **Expert 1:** Again, the answer from earlier fits. If the purpose was missing during the change, then the implementation was shitty. And then the method did not work. And then it did not matter if you were introducing agile things or classic waterfall models, for example in project management. If the purpose for the

people is not clear, then part of the method breaks down and that's how I've experienced it in a large international project team. The customer was very close, maybe even too close and they had to work agile software all at once. It was very exciting to see how, for example, different cultures react when you change things. Quite apart from the fact that, of course, they are used to working for a contract and are also used to strong hierarchical structures much more than we were. And  
140 there I would say quite fundamentally that even the introduction stands and falls with the mediation of the purpose. You have to tell them what it's good for. And then such an implementation can be successful. (...)

**Interviewer:** And if we now assume that an implementation has taken place successfully and the purpose has been successfully passed on to the employees, do you believe that this will positively change the corporate climate and working culture? And have you ever experienced that?

**Expert 1:** It depends. From my personal perspective rather positive. I generally  
150 appreciate it more when people are allowed to develop freely. Supposedly not everyone is able to do it, but I think that's not true. It may sometimes need some support, for example, if employees have had negative experiences in the past. It is quite human that you adapt your behavior. Back to your question; I have had very positive experiences, namely that people regain their confidence. In themselves, for example. Within all these new ways of working, there is often no longer a leader and the responsibility is automatically distributed broadly. There are very positive traits that happen to people. They gain self-confidence! But there are also areas where you realize that these methods are not quite effective. For example when it comes to their career. Then you realize that employees  
160 often lack orientation because the HR department has not recognized its responsibility. And that is also an important topic in society. There are status symbols, such as a company car, for example. This creates a pressure from the outside, which is why the purpose is so important. But in general, my experiences were very positive, especially in terms of long-term consequences. Things that were not visible at the beginning and then became relevant later.

**Interviewer:** If these agile working methods then take effect and the employees are exposed to the changes, have you ever noticed that the productivity and

motivation of the employees has changed? Be it in terms of responsibility or free work, team design.

**Expert 1:** Basically, this always affects something. Clearly. In my opinion, there is no such thing that you introduce such a thing and there is no change. And now comes a temporal consideration. If it had no such impact, why would you even consider using it?

**Interviewer:** Especially with agile working methods, however, there are often negative voices that are critical of the concept. Especially when it comes to topics such as trust and responsibility, processes may also develop negatively.

180

**Expert 1:** Great, thank you. That is very important! Of course, I also know these fucking arguments. But I think there is a mistake in them. If, as a human being, I believe that the other people in the company are lazy and do nothing, that simply is not the bottom line. The human mind is always positive, otherwise we would not have learned to walk. No one has shown us a PowerPoint presentation to motivate us. That comes from ourselves. What we see is adapted behavior. So if people behave like that today, then I have to ask the critical question; someone in their professional life has taught them that I work better with a motivational system. Mankind in itself is not like that. That's why I do not like this criticism on  
190 these topics. The person who says you need people to whom you can also give this trust will tell you in that moment that they themselves have the biggest problem with giving that trust. Feedback is always a reflection of myself as well. If I make a change from the waterfall model to Scrum, for example, and I do not think the human being is lazy and stupid, then I make that change possible in the best possible way. Of course it is bad when companies make these changes for the wrong reasons, for example because they are afraid that they will not get any more applicants. But in my opinion, agile methods depend on motivation, satisfaction, confidence, and enjoyment of work. This leads to more motivation and productivity. And the important thing is the introduction to make it all  
200 possible. Because I have to look at my team and recognize who may not be able perform in this system just yet. But the responsibility lies with the people who introduce it. And there are always negative effects when the introduction is shitty or there are people who believe that people need an incentive to be productive.

Or they believe that the employee basically does not want to take responsibility. Or even if the new system is disturbed. If, for example, a product owner can not fully fulfill his role because relics from the old hierarchies block the way. Then I will not achieve any increase in productivity. Then I disturb the system, then I do not introduce clean.

210 **Interviewer:** Interesting. Then we come straight to the topic of hierarchy and company structure. You said at the beginning that you do not think it necessary to always change old structures. Have you ever experienced that agile works well in classical structures?

**Expert 1:** Yes, that is possible. I used to work in a company that made films about such companies. They also works agile and understood technology and digitisation as a tool. I have experienced organizations that had a very classical hierarchy structure and the people within the teams still worked very agile. The hierarchy was upheld because it provided a stable framework for letting the  
220 teams work independently. Besides, it will take a while for us to change German company law, for example, or the GmbH or AG laws. Say I still have the challenge today that I have to fill certain roles in a purely formal way, because the law in Germany expects me to name someone who is in that position. That means I have certain requirements from the outside, regardless of whether I need them or not. In the meantime, there are also many companies that have founded cooperatives, thus founding a business enterprise for which a cooperative was originally not intended and thus trying to create a different legal framework. These companies are creative and are adapting to the externally required structure so that they can meet them.

230

**Interviewer:** How would you generally rate the trend towards completely flat hierarchies? Do you think that is a model that can work in the creative industry?

**Expert 1:** Anyway, I do not believe that in the future we will still have companies in the classic sense. I rather believe that there will be more self-organized networks. And that people just work together when they have joint projects. In the creative area that happens in my opinion quite often. Fortunately, we have a certain self-employed armada in the creative sector, which is already very active.

And they work together for certain things. There will probably always be the solo entrepreneur in the creative sector because there is simply a customer base for it. But I find it very exciting to observe how, for example, agency groups in the creative industry are expanding. (...) In Berlin, for example, a few years ago, about 11 agencies have joined together to form a network. From this, finally, a large company emerged, which had different identities. I think that was very exciting when that happened, because I actually thought that a pure network would have been smarter. But I think we will not see these big players in ten years from now. Because I believe that it becomes more and more expensive for an organization to keep its size alive. Especially when they have to change.

250 Change processes cost companies a lot of money, the bigger the company the more difficult both process and financing. (...) And also the pace! That's what the whole agile model finally pulls off. That you remain flexible and can adapt quickly to new situations. At some point, the big companies will not be able to keep up. (...) Small businesses can adapt quickly and cheaply. And in parallel, we are entering the fourth great era and I believe that the era has something to do with people in the center. Man will increasingly come to himself in the knowledge and no longer want to be part of such a large enterprise, where he can not be himself. I also do not believe that there will be only change from the technology that requires maneuverability and speed, but also in the people themselves. They will  
260 more likely want to work with people they can identify with and work on projects that matter to them. And so, as a person, you become part of several large networks. Therefore, I personally do not believe that big organizational models, no matter how shallow or agile they are, will be the image of the future. (...)

**Interviewer:** Before we get to the topic of job mobility, I have one more question regarding the new role of the manager in digital companies. The role of the manager has changed dramatically through agile working methods. In your opinion, what skills does a manager of the digital need to be successful?

270 **Expert 1:** This question has a certain challenge for me, because I honestly found the old role of the manager quite shitty. I have experienced it myself in a variety of constellations and it was never positive. A manager of a company must be a visionary for the business case in which the company is on the road and must have some commercial skills, because in case of doubt he will be called to

account. And when the moment of trust disappears, such a person immediately falls into micromanagement because he is afraid. That is an automatism that takes place in many people. And then he has to be a good leader, so great to pick up the different people who stand under him. In case of doubt he has to negotiate too, because he is involved in certain strategic project deals and  
280 because we also have the phenomenon socially, that you always have to want to go higher. At the same time, however, that means that many people who are on the way to leadership level are trying to gain recognition and are not at all at peace with themselves. That's the biggest danger. Most people who have had leadership positions bring their own untidy life theme with them. And then we have another phenomenon in Germany that really annoys me. Who do I make the sales manager? The best seller. That's nonsense. Because the best seller is the best seller. And not the best leader. But we have this twisted chain. If you were the best for years, then you have to eventually get the recognition for it. And then, funnily enough, many people become unhappy because they are taken  
290 away from the position in which they are actually so good. How else do you characterize such a person except perhaps with more money? That's why I find the question very difficult, which properties a manager must have. It is indeed an approach from a very male-dominated economy to ask for it. If our economic world had experienced more female attributes in the last hundred years, such a question would not exist. This is of course a very disruptive approach. One of the most important qualities leaders need to have is that they are pure with themselves. That there are no triggers. And that's something that we rarely have on the agenda. There are so many managers who lose control under stress or negative feedback because they feel personally attacked. But if you imagine that  
300 there are only people in the leadership roles who are totally fine with receiving feedback and the option to do something better, then certain things will not happen anymore. Then you do not even have to talk about it, that a leader should rather act as a coach. (...) In the change speed we have, we need exactly these people. To live up to all these topics of digitisation and stay one step ahead of the fast pace of the market, it takes personalities to move forward visionarily without bothering with their own triggers.

**Interviewer:** The next topic is workplace mobility. Also a very topical subject, which is particularly demanded by the younger generations. The classic work

environment has changed dramatically, whether through remote work, home office or co-working spaces. How do you evaluate this change? Did you perceive it positively or did it make working difficult?

**Expert 1:** Actual job mobility, I actually observe rather returns. And that's exactly why these new concepts come to bear more and more. (...) Today the technology makes it possible that I no longer have to turn on the computer in the office in order to access my data. I can do my job from anywhere. And then I realize very clearly, people are no longer willing to spend their lifetime in the car or in transport. This is dead lifetime. The topic becomes even more acute when, for example, people decide to start a family. Or if you take care of a care case. Then  
320 the topic gets even more explosive because people are stuck in traffic for hours every day. And they do that every day. And I say that honestly; I would not do that. Longer than half an hour is already too much. That said, I believe, on the one hand, that the willingness to reduce, for example, co-working spaces would be even greater, comes primarily from companies that do not commit themselves enough. They do not understand that they can also set up a secure VPN network there. If they were to invest, that would be great. And they would benefit from it! The employee is guaranteed to spend half an hour unpaid overtime. That's why I do not even understand why there is not invested. Even if the employee did not make the overtime, he is much more productive because he has not been stuck  
330 in the traffic for an hour in the morning. And he's also more productive in the afternoons because he knows he'll be home quickly after work.

**Interviewer:** You have already addressed many points that I also feel are important. Of course, there are also negative voices saying that communication within a remote team is difficult when the employee is working from another country, for example.

**Expert 1:** There are many companies nowadays where I personally know people where these topics are no longer a problem. At IBM for example. If there is the  
340 product team in China, then the conference call is in the middle of the night. That's part of it. But: they also pay their people accordingly for the expectations they have. And they equip them with the right equipment. There are technological standards to simplify such processes. That means they have reasonable cell

phones, stable lines, flat rates and so on. It must be clear that the way we work today was linked to an economic system that was organized very differently. And if I abolish such cornerstones as leadership, then I must be clear that then the rest of the system is shaking. This is such a massive intervention in the classic model that I must be aware that there are long-term consequences. And it will be especially exciting to see how the technology will help us. For example, the  
350 virtual reality area. In the meantime virtual spaces can be created in which international teams can "meet". They get their own avatars and meet online. But I think that more needs to happen at this point so that a real team can emerge. For example, they can set up the rooms themselves, creating a team experience. Whether this makes processes easier, but I do not know for sure. I think it can take another ten years to get really big results with the new generations who have already grown up with it. As the situation is now, offline meetings are essential. (...) For many companies, the home office concept is already very disruptive. It is also often said that this is not a concept for everyone. In my time as an employee, I have often experienced that there were certain tasks that  
360 required a certain amount of concentration. And in an office with many employees, wherever there is a certain level of noise, there was no atmosphere for it. That's why I really appreciated my home office days. I was just as much more productive than in the office. On the other hand, of course, this has also led to problems, for example, when in the office questions remained open, where my decision was in demand. In the self-employment I really enjoyed the positive aspects of the home office. But then I quickly realized that I needed a delimited area, which is only attributed to the work. A room where I can close the door in the evening and dive into my free time. Otherwise it is super hard to switch off. What bothers me is this statement that the home office does not work for  
370 everyone. Of course that's true, but the open-plan office may not work for everyone too, and nobody questions that anyway. For example, if I have a lot of noise, my productivity drops to less than 70 percent. Because I can not handle all the sounds. (...) The new models are very critical and everything is questioned. I think it makes sense that the old models are tested just as hard. (...) One of the things that crosses my mind when it comes to change processes in the Western world is the statement: "We have to implement this cautiously, otherwise the employees get scared." People in war zones are scared. What we have here is not real fear. The confusion that takes place among employees is caused by

380 misconduct at the executive level. And one can also notice that sometimes paths have to separate. This is completely right. But that happens because you no longer share the same vision and not out of fear. The senior management should always make it clear that it is not in their interest to lose employees, especially in big traditional companies. It has to be communicated that nobody lingers. And that if questions or uncertainties arise, may be asked for help. That's even desirable. And when managers guide their team into change, no one is "scared." This statement is made by managers. And the reason is that they themselves are concerned about losing their position. Because when you introduce agility everyone should be at eye level. And you should not be surprised if the employees need time to properly implement the new ways of working. For years  
390 you worked very differently, such a change takes time. Then retiring as a manager and saying, "See, they can not handle responsibility" is unfair. Therefore, even the new spatial concepts can first cause uncertainty until the employees get used to it. For example, it is also observed that people who have not worked much in conditioning systems are much more likely to accept and implement new concepts. This applies among other things to the young generations. And that's not because it's easier for them to access, but because they have not had any negative experiences in the field yet. They do not see the risks or dangers, but only the new opportunities. Many organizations and HR managers therefore refer to the young generations as the "salvation". The  
400 behavior of the older employees has manifested over the years, due to the experiences they have made and the rules that have been taught to them - from the leadership level! And when the managers say they can not do any more with the old ones, that's unfair.

**Interviewer:** Finally, a few words on the future. What do you think must happen in Germany in the future in terms of all these technological topics? Which topic is neglected in your opinion?

**Expert 1:** For me, that's a mix of three things. For one, that's the education  
410 sector. We still have a system in education that was originally developed for industrialization. Something has to happen. The same applies to the system that we train children to be rewarded for achievements with good grades. We do not promote innovative or disruptive thinking. But we teach you that you must follow

strict rules and that you will be punished if you try to solve things differently. The second point actually takes place in the digital environment. We need to provide people with the technology they need to be productive. (...) In my opinion, in Germany we are not yet at a point where the technical foundation stands. For example, the issue of dead spots, even in big cities. This is absolutely incomprehensible to me. And other countries overtake us for years. And the third point is that besides all the technology we use every day, we must not forget the human being. We must not forget that digitisation and automation are eliminating many jobs that can be taken over by machines. This is a great thing in itself, but it will take away jobs for a lot of people. For example, the topic of unconditional basic income becomes important. And one must not forget that it is the human encounters that make life worth living. Technology should only be an enabler. This triad is currently relevant to me.

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**Interviewer:** A great answer! Especially when it comes to the people who are no longer supported by the economy in a few years. What happens to those?

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Concepts need to be developed so that these people are not left behind.

**Expert 1:** Yes, I think we also need a whole new model for politics. For me, for example, it's clear why politicians behave the way they do. But we need something else. As for me again the problem is visible that I had already addressed in terms of managers; There are people in power who have big problems with themselves, and therefore they can not rule as they should. We need new structures so that we can think disruptively there as well. We talk about agile methods in the economy and I do not know if the policy has ever heard of it. There is still a lot to do!

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**Interviewer:** Wonderful, we are at the end of the interview. Thank you for your time and your interesting answers!

## 12.2.2 Expert interview 2

1 **Interviewer:** Good evening, Barbara, thank you for doing this interview with me today for my master's thesis. The topic of the master thesis is "The impact of digitisation of working environment" and this interview is recorded digitally. Is that alright for you?

**Expert 2:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Wonderful. Then let's start with the questions. First of all, a general introduction to the topic of digitisation and the world of work. Digitisation has an incredible impact on almost every aspect of our lives. In terms of your personal  
10 work, what is the biggest change that has taken place in recent years?

**Expert 2:** In my field I would say that I had to acquire a lot of knowledge about software. Today I use them everyday but I had to acquire the knowledge myself to be able to do my job properly. Or I had at least had to know what they are able to do and why they are important. So I would say: work with software, being able to learn to work with software and knowing how to implement it.

**Interviewer:** And is this a process that you organize independently or does your  
20 employer provide you with the necessary funds?

**Expert 2:** It depends. Some of the training is offered to me, and sometimes I say "I need another training because there is that program I still have to know" or new software programs are introduced and then there are trainings for everybody. So there are three paths:

Either it is on the schedule anyway and is organized.

Or there is a training from the provider of the software.

Or I say, "I need that now." And organize it myself.

**Interviewer:** Ok, and if you look at the creative industry in general over the last  
30 couple of years and the changes that have taken place through digitisation, how would you generally rate the importance of the digital shift, especially in terms of creativity or creative work processes?

**Expert 2:** The creative process in my area, I'm an online editor, takes mostly part in my head. Of course, the implementation, the creative realization is digital, or the product is digital, because the creativity itself can be found in methods of brainstorming or in your head. Is that what you want to know?

**Interviewer:** Exactly. So, if you look at your work now, for example, then you would not say that digitisation paralyzes you in your creativity, right?

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**Expert 2:** Oh well, the only thing in there that paralyzes me is the time factor. This is not necessarily related to the digitisation itself, but with the fact that the programs do not work as fast as I would like. That we are technically not as equipped as we should be. At least in my company. And that there is so much time lost, that there is not enough time for creative work and brainstorms, because so much time is lost with technology.

**Interviewer:** That's interesting, because actually, one always says it all gets much faster through digitisation. But if the funds are not available or only the wrong ones, then of course it can also be contrary.

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**Expert 2:** Exactly, this is my impression in my company. Everything is getting so much faster and we should also be able to react faster but that it is often not possible because so many processes prevent us. For example the content management system. I am an online journalist and must be able to respond quickly to news. With the social media channels it's possible but for the homepage not. It is extremely time-consuming the bigger and more complex the content management system is. And that means we're not fast enough with this big, complex content management system. At least not as fast as we should be.

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**Interviewer:** Ok. I'll move on to the next topic: the working methods, more precisely the agile working methods. With which agile working methods have you already worked in your previous career?

**Expert 2:** Of course, I know the word "agile project management" and "agile ways of working", but since I do not know the methods now, I can not tell you what I've been working on.

**Interviewer:** That would actually be Agile Project Management, for example. And something like Design Thinking or Scrum or Kanban boards.

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**Expert 2:** Nothing yet. I thought about Design Thinking the other day in a workshop. At this workshop we had half a day of Design Thinking.

**Interviewer:** OK. Why do you think such methods are not yet implemented by traditional companies?

**Expert 2:** For my company, that's because we as a company are too rigid. Because the work processes like ours have been running for so long that it would of course be a big change. In any case. But this is not addressed for various reasons. On the one hand, this requires a change at the top. There are many reasons for this, but the biggest one is that the company is too rigid. The word "Agile Project Management" came to our company just two years ago. And in the projects that are managed agile do not use any new technologies.

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Of course, I can only speak from experience. But within the projects I was involved agility was not mentioned once. There were only traditional management methods.

**Interviewer:** Interesting. Do you think that this digital transformation is coming from the younger generation? Or do you think such changes would be generally accepted positively?

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**Expert 2:** I think both are possible. I think there are people who are open for something new and who would say "Finally we do something different. Or try things differently ". And then there are the people who say, "For God's sake, now they have come up with something new."

**Interviewer:** But is that independent of age?

**Expert 2:** Not quite, I tend to think that the younger people are more open-minded because they have not experienced so much in the company. But  
100 from the older ones in our company I can say: So much has changed in our company in the last two years. For example, through this leadership change at the top. If now more would be introduced, the majority would certainly be overwhelmed.

**Interviewer:** Interesting. Another point that I personally find very interesting is that agile working methods are known to increase the productivity and motivation of team members. Or even lead to a stronger bond for the company. Do you think that's true compared to a more classic model?

**Expert 2:** I think that every process off the norm and has something to do with  
110 open talk, open thinking and political correctness. But you need a suitable corporate culture. There are two aspects: The first aspect is, I introduce Design Thinking, for example. But then I have to say that everyone here is allowed to work freely and without barriers. And that has something to do with corporate culture. And many executives that I know in our company have not used them yet. Maybe they have already learned something like that. And they are then very fast in the assessment. And then we come back to the point: we have no time to do something like that. Or do not know how to do it by ourselves. Very often they give the impression that they know better and yet are not open to it. That's what I know now and I have worked for several departments.

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**Interviewer:** This is very interesting. So far, I have mainly talked to digital companies that have never worked with a classic waterfall model, for example. And that's why another point of view adds depth.

When I return to the subject of hierarchies in companies, how do you think that corporate structures of creative companies have to look like in the future? For example, the model of the large corporation. Do you believe this type of company will still exist in the future?

**Expert 2:** I think that there has to be a rethinking in general. It starts with the  
130 recruiting process. In the end you hire someone who was great within the interview situation but who can not work properly in the company. I have to do a

lot in the recruiting process. A lot has to happen within the company. There are also very different manners needed. There are very different motivations needed. We know how more creative companies designed their office spaces and how they build a strong company culture. They offer drinks, food and so on. That more and more important. Or that an agency cooks with the employees once a week. The social factor builds a strong team and makes work more fun. The old times have passed where you arrive at 8 o'clock and leave at 5 o'clock. And in  
140 between, you are yelled at by the boss or told what you have to do. It is more about the community and the freedom which comes with agile working models. That's when concepts like home office get important. I think everything has to change. Everything has to be questioned what is still the old world.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that corporate hierarchies and structures need to change so that agile method can be successful?

**Expert 2:** Yes, I do think so. I think what happened to us was a pseudo-agile process. It was under the headline "Agile Project Management," but there was nothing new about it. It was talked about how to implement this project, but  
150 everything remained the same, except that there was a specific group for the project. But they exist in other projects as well. And the group consisted of employees who already have other positions. Nobody was turned off as a project manager. The agile projects were led by people who actually have another full time job. The reasons were not really understandable I think they just wanted to save costs.

**Interviewer:** So it was not really agile work. And you would say that the corporate structure needs to be changed if the implementation is to succeed.

**Expert 2:** I think that more needs to be done than the headline "We are doing  
160 something agile now." We have to think about whether we let the employees work in other places. Or we just send them somewhere else to stimulate their creativity. More needs to happen than just the headline.

**Interviewer:** My next question is about leadership. How do you define the role of the manager in an agile company with flat hierarchies? What skills needs a manager of today?

**Expert 2:** I believe that the future managers will have to pay much more attention to human factors. In the past, employees were often promoted who had the best achievements. But these employees often did not have the right leadership skills. On the contrary, you lose a really good specialist from the department and gain a  
170 bad executive. I believe that a boss or manager does not have to know everything. He has his experts in the team for that. But he really needs to be motivational and empathetic to lead a team successfully. I myself have led teams. Every employee has different needs. There are those who want to be guided, and there are those who want to work completely independently. And you can not treat them the same. One of them would be offended if I gave him assignments and the other would ask for these tasks. So I have to treat my team members individually and be empathetic to know what they need right now. I think that the biggest challenge for managers these days is to motivate their team to have fun at work. This is the only way to work efficiently and still achieve a good working  
180 atmosphere. That means that as a manager I have to motivate extremely well in  
180 addition to empathy and situational leadership. So they can focus on their work and not be burdened with unnecessary tasks.

**Interviewer:** You have just talked about workplace mobility. A topic that has become possible through digitisation in the first place and also breaks with traditional work environments. Be it through remote work, home office or co-working spaces, which are increasingly coming from the US, and are becoming increasingly interesting for traditional companies. How do you rate the  
190 change in workplace mobility? Do you think that is something positive, or is there also negative change?

**Expert 2:** I think it is a good thing to leave it to the employees, depending on the job. But generally one can not say that it is always something positive. It depends on many factors. It's a positive thing to know that my co-worker works more when he spends a day at home. Because if, for example, the child is ill, he could not work at all. I'm also more productive and creative if I change locations once in a

200 while. But of course it is negative if people exploit the system and then do not work productively. Another challenge is the feeling of togetherness. If a team is rebuilt, it is necessary that you get to know each other offline. Otherwise it will not work. And man is by nature jealous: If one is 10 days in the home office, and the other only 5. That's a problem. This has to be managed from person to person, from task to task.

**Interviewer:** How do you think such concepts as Remote Work affect the corporate climate? After all, employees may see themselves much less.

**Expert 2:** Yes, sure. But as I said that must be distinguished on a case by case basis. If the commute is very long and the employees work very well and are 210 motivated you should at least test it. And maybe you have a short skype session in between, that you have contact, then this can work. In any case, it should be tested. Because it may also be that it does not work so well because the communication is not enough. But then you can also find other compromises. Like a week in the company, then a week from home. This varies from case to case, from employee to employee and from task to task.

**Interviewer:** You just said that workplace mobility makes sense for creative tasks. Can you name other areas where you think a flexible workplace makes sense?

220 **Expert 2:** That depends on whether you want to solve the task alone or as a team. There are people who can work very well from anywhere. For team projects, it makes sense to see each other regularly, but that does not necessarily have to be in the office. A new location can do a lot for the creativity.

**Interviewer:** More and more teams are working remotely and are scattered all over the world. How do you feel about this change?

**Expert 2:** I have not had a good experience with virtual teamwork so far. But I do not know exactly why. Maybe that's the sound quality of Skype, because I'm quite 230 auditory. Or because the person is not in front of me. In teleconferencing I am very unfocused. I can not imagine that good creative products can be created

through audio and video conferencing. It does not work for me, but maybe for others.

**Interviewer:** Are there any specific changes in work processes and work environments that you personally want for the future and that are not yet ready to be implemented? Be it for technical or management reasons.

**Expert 2:** Yes, many work processes need to be changed. I am working in the online area and this area is still very much neglected. Nobody bothers about it  
240 and not many people know about it. And that's why many processes are bad: for example, workflows, speed, technology, program stability. And these problems have not been solved in recent years and will not be resolved in the future. Sometimes there are no contacts for problems. Problems are passed on from person to person without finding someone who is responsible. For some problems there is no contact person at all, and either I solve them myself or there is no solution.

**Interviewer:** So there is no contact person for I.T. and technology problems.

**Expert 2:** Exactly. Unfortunately for many things. No one knows, for example,  
250 which department is responsible for ordering new technological equipment.

**Interviewer:** I have another question for you which relates generally to the German economy and our degree of innovation. What do you think needs to change in Germany to generate more innovation and enable more digital development?

**Expert 2:** The current status is catastrophic. Number one is Internet penetration and speed. Something must be done. This is a political topic and a topic of the provider. Point two is that companies do not dare to break new ground. And I think that it is also due to ignorance. In our company we have a lot to do with  
260 technology because our product only takes place online. And yet there is great ignorance about technology. Buzzwords are used without understanding what they mean. I believe that both managers and politicians should seriously consider what is possible and how we can work better in the future. And the market will

always be faster in the future. We have to be careful that we are still relevant in ten years. And I think that many do not think in a future-oriented way, but deal with the current. Especially the smaller companies are more adaptive and experimental.

**Interviewer:** Smaller companies have an advantage in terms of their size, because they can respond faster and are more versatile than large 500-man  
270 companies, where it's harder to get things done. But just what you said about the knowledge gap was right. If you look at the education system, there is a lack of development at the schools. Nothing has changed in the last few years, though it is so necessary.

**Expert 2:** Yes, absolutely.

**Interviewer:** My last question is about the digital age. Where do you see the focus of this age; on the technological advancement or somewhere else? (...) Or are there other things in focus? Also for us humans personally? Especially when  
280 you look at how the new generations are longing for empowerment, self-determination, co-talking and responsibility.

**Expert 2:** It is the age of speed, technology and confusion. Confusion through the infinite possibilities we have. (...)And what's added is the age of information overload. The amount of information we get every day through social media and whatsapp is enormous. Nobody can take that anymore. You have to be overwhelmed, because you can not absorb everything. Speed, information overload, technology. This is also associated with technology that made everything faster. That's how I would express that. But there are also political issues. If you look at it philosophically, we will also experience the age of revolt.

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**Interviewer:** The theme of confusion fits very well. For example, Generation Y questions not only a lot but also has problems positioning itself in this fast-moving world.

**Expert 2:** It is probably also this age in between. It's not old anymore, but it's not new yet. What's new is that I communicate with the plumber via WhatsApp, or

order a bottle of sparkling wine at the hotel. And old is that I come to the interview and asked to explain my CV. There are still some old elements, but also many new ones.

Now I thought aloud because the question is already philosophical. (...)

300 **Interviewer:** Thanks you so much for your answers, we are at the end of the interview!

### 12.2.3 Expert interview 3

1 **Interviewer:** Hello, Iris, thank you for taking the time to do this interview today. The interview takes place as part of my master thesis on "The impact of digitisation on working environments" and is recorded digitally. Is that okay for you?

**Expert 3:** Yes, that's alright.

**Interviewer:** Wonderful, then I start with the questions!

In the beginning, I would like to know how digitisation affects your personal life  
10 and work. What do you think was the biggest change? And do you see that as an enrichment?

**Expert 3:** In any case, I see that we generally need to become more flexible and leave our old structures. To be able to react faster, above all. I did a team leadership training last year specializing in team conflicts. In the company I am currently working on, democracy has been practiced and worked very agile for several years now. And I realize that this is good for me. I myself am in a leadership position as Brand Manager and I have a team of eight people. I see myself first and foremost as a coach. I already noticed that in my training, when I  
20 dealt with the topics digitisation and agile work. The topic of new leadership means coaching for me. So everyone in the team can contribute themselves and come up with ideas. As a manager of a team, you have to keep your employees free and let them work as freely as possible. I think that's very nice to watch as it was not possible in the fashion industry I worked in before. I also notice that my own attitude is well received by the team. You can always come to me, I'm open to everything and sometimes we even meet after work to work on ideas. But I also notice that some team members used to work in other structures and are struggling with the new ways of working. They need specifications and are not clear about their independence. I imagined that a little bit easier and now realize  
30 that I am reaching its limits. There are not all these intrinsically motivated people everywhere. But I also try to reach these employees and encourage them to get more out of themselves.

**Interviewer:** The second question relates to the creative industry. I have found many negative things in my research regarding creative work in times of digitisation. Do you think that digitisation is losing some of the creativity?

**Expert 3:** No, I do not think so as a designer. It is also a shame how this topic is commonly communicated in politics. The population is always just hearing how many jobs will disappear. But I see it very differently. There are so many new  
40 ways to evolve and discover new things. I think you can combine both well and digitisation helps us to further develop the topic of creativity. I also see it in fashion right now; Everything seems so interchangeable and it's all about numbers. It's time for something to change. Because ultimately, the consumer is eventually tired of the whole. I have now switched to the handicraft industry and find it totally exciting because so much is being addressed here. You have to see the topic of digitisation as an opportunity! I think the topic is totally positive, but that's also because I've been very involved privately with this topic. I think that people like me have to do some educational work now. Thus the topic Digitalisierung has a chance. Finally, the early adopters must also see that they  
50 can take the crowd with them. Exactly, so I think you can draw a lot from it. (...)

**Interviewer:** The digital transformation is primarily affecting traditional companies that need to change their work structures and ways of working and adapt them to digitisation. Where do you think the biggest difficulties are and why?

**Expert 3:** In fact, I think that's because these companies, especially in the fashion industry, are no longer run by visionaries. Investors have a huge impact on the company, and of course they're all about numbers. (...) They do not want to invest in new technology or innovative ideas, but only make so much profit that  
60 they can then sell the company again profitably. This is above all a problem in the fashion world. Nothing should be risked.

**Interviewer:** My next topic deals with agile working methods. First of all; with which agile methods have you already worked?

**Expert 3:** I have been working on Design Thinking since recently. At the moment, I would like to do a workshop with my team and develop a question that is worked

on together. At the moment we are also getting to know our end consumer, so that would fit very well. But I feel that there is still a certain amount of skepticism.

70 I will have to introduce this slowly. I just did a creative workshop with the team, which was about strategies that you yourself see the customer. I am working very slowly, but have already announced to the management, that I want to do an innovation workshop. And that would also be on the subject of design thinking. I myself have only experienced this kind of workshop as a participant or in universities. And my experience there was very positive. Especially the students were so well received and developed such exciting and different approaches. I thought it was great to see what you can do in such a short time. And I'm trying to bring this thinking into my current company. So far, unfortunately, there were no points of contact with Design Thinking, not even at the management level. To  
80 answer your question; I'm trying to build these kind of Design Thinking workshops to explore and get to know our customers better.

**Interviewer:** The topic of the students actually fits well with my next question. There is always a lot of complaining that all the New Work topics are so well received by the younger generation, whereas the older ones would show aversion. Personally, I feel a kind of uncertainty among the older generations, which is not negatively affected. How do you see this problem? Do you think that the older generations are actually afraid?

90 **Expert 3:** I think this assumption comes mainly because the older generation is not as flexible as the young. Especially Generation Y is in a different position than, for example, my own generation. On the one hand this can of course be a type issue, but I think that has a lot to do with comfort zone and insecurity. And insecurity quickly leads to fear, quite clearly. (...) Even in my personal environment, I have noticed that. When it came to topics such as innovation, design thinking, agility, there were questions and skepticism. They did not understand that at first. There were also people from large corporations, but they thought you have to explain to the customer what he needs. He does not know that otherwise. And I have always held against it. And after a while, he came  
100 back to me and said "Iris, you were completely right. I'll do it that way now." In the beginning I really experienced a lot of dislike in my circle of friends. Even with the

topic of innovation, that could never be understood. But you just can not know what's all there is to us and that unsettled insecurity.

**Interviewer:** Apart from the degree of innovation, which should also be increased by such methods, how do you personally think the influence of agile working methods on topics such as productivity, motivation and the corporate climate?

**Expert 3:** I think that makes a lot with one. These methods trigger euphoria and  
110 inspire the whole team. And then you discover what you can do when the whole team is there. But that also has a lot to do with the comfort zone.

**Interviewer:** What I personally still find very interesting is the topic of implementation. When it comes to implementing these agile working methods. And then you often come across the topic of company structure and hierarchy. Many German companies are still more traditionally structured. Do you think these companies need to restructure so that these methods can be successfully implemented?

**Expert 3:** For example, in my current company we have a mixed form. There is a  
120 classic hierarchy but a democracy is lived. We all work on equal terms and the opinion of the individual is highly appreciated. The company is very value-oriented. I know this from the fashion industry, where this kind of leadership and togetherness was not appreciated. I have always felt that this is very negative. After all, we are all human beings and not machines, and we all have certain values that we want to live up to. That's why it should be implemented in this way and, if possible, on a path that is fun. That's my motto too - work has to be fun! Nothing is worse than when the job you go to every day is no longer enjoyable.

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**Interviewer:** Do you think agility can work in a classic hierarchy?

**Expert 3:** I think it can work. You just have to implement it correctly and explain what the benefits are and how it can work for everyone. And you need time. Such a change can not work from now on the same and of course then must be regulated from above. That's a cultural question for me. If the management level

does not handle the methods properly or does not really want any change at all, that can not work either. You need someone who feels like it and recognizes the profit and knows what an agile team can do. There are a lot of conservative companies that I think are having a very hard time doing that, because for years they've just pulled their own view. And I think there are still old gentlemen on boards today who laugh about these New Work topics. I think you have to look as a CEO, which people you have to hire and replace, so that such a change is possible. That sounds hard now, but you really have to bring new perspectives to the companies. In part, there are some managers in the companies who have been sitting here for 30 years and do not necessarily support innovation. At least that's my experience.

**Interviewer:** What I also find interesting is the consideration that in the future there will no longer be the model of large corporations. Our market is already so incredibly fast and disruptive and there are some voices that say big corporations can not compete any longer. Change processes take much longer to be implemented and these companies can not act flexibly and agile. Do you think that's right?

**Expert 3:** Interesting question. I actually believe that big corporations will continue to exist, but in other forms. Like islands maybe. That there will still be a parent company but there are several agile islands that operate in the market. In a large corporation like Hugo Boss, for example, it takes forever for a decision to come through. There are no fast movements within the company, every decision must first be approved by ten different people. Something like that should not exist anymore in the future. For example, in our company, our boss is sitting directly in our office and not in the executive suite. He wants to be there and make decisions quickly. We can always approach him, that's so positive. Especially now that I'm still relatively new to the company and have many questions. He also said he is my mentor and I can always come to him, that's the way it has to be! And he also does not tell me how to do something but offers help. Like a coach. And that's exactly how I imagine leadership in modern companies. That's so motivating. In the fashion business it was very different because the bosses blocked a lot. That was totally annoying. You could not try anything new. And in my new company it's completely different, so I can try and

test it. And with the result you can then find out much better what needs to be improved. This results in a really good workflow.

**Interviewer:** I still have some questions about the manager in agile and digital companies. How do you define the role of the manager in an agile company with flat hierarchies? What does the manager of today have to bring with them?

**Expert 3:** Definitely a good coaching education. This is very important. And empathy! Above all, the human aspect is very much in the foreground for me. Above all, the team spirit should be in focus. (...) For example, I have very young employees in my team and they do not want to be run as they once were. They want to make decisions themselves, which gives them power and motivation. And they are good too! And you have to strengthen something like that. If you notice that someone is particularly good at something, then that should be encouraged. And when you realize that someone has a weakness then you turn the focus back to a positive trait. Everyone has good and bad sides and you have to focus on the strengths to make a good experience for everyone possible. This must be recognized by a leader today. And that's why I consider such a coaching education as very important, which has brought me personally a lot. Also to feel yourself, to feel its center. You should not always be number-driven as a leader. You also have to leave something new and open up. This is also a problem generally in Germany, this error culture. We always tend to see everything negative which did not work. In doing so, we can draw important insights. And I think leaders should be coaches and communicate visions. Of course, they have to keep track of things and stay in touch, but above all, they have to keep the team free and let them make decisions independently.

**Interviewer:** The next topic deals with the topic of workplace mobility, which has become possible through digitalisation. We can now work from where we want and when we want, and concepts such as remote work, home office or coworking spaces are now also being adapted by large companies. How do you personally evaluate this change?

**Expert 3:** I also worked in coworking spaces myself and I have to say that I realised that I personally need my own desk. But I think it's very good to have

different locations that you can work in. I think that's super positive because you are constantly getting a new perspective on your work. For example, in my current work, I regularly make individual or group discussions in other locations. Sometimes in the showroom or in the canteen. For a long time, I was very tied to my job, which was something like my second home and I did not want to give it up like that. But I've actually found that it's better for productivity if you change locations more often. And sometimes sitting opposite other people. That is again the subject of leaving your comfort zone. The young people are more flexible again and the older ones, who got used to their steady job, have more difficulties.

**Interviewer:** You have already answered part of my next question. There are also many negative voices opposing topics like remote or home office because they think employees are less productive. Because supposedly no control can take place. But you have experienced exactly the opposite and even noticed a growth in productivity?

**Expert 3:** Yes. That's just the future. Only in this way can we reconcile family and work. I would like to be able to choose myself when I do home office. Personally, I'm fine with that. This was a no-go for my old employer. Home office always has something to do with trust and they were of the opinion that one would only take a vacation in the home office. There was already a negative attitude from the outset. And in my current company, you can sort yourself out and nobody controls when you've worked for how many hours. The projects have to be finished on time. For example, if I know I have to prepare numbers for a meeting, I prefer to do it at home. In the company it is too restless for me. (...) I do however communicate a lot and approach people. You can not isolate yourself. I also like to be a communicator and people like that, that makes work easier. As a team leader, you have to be a role model and only lead the way you would like to be.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that despite all the benefits of job mobility, difficulties can arise when part of the team is not present in the office? Can this possibly even have a negative effect on the corporate climate?

**Expert 3:** Sometimes it is difficult. For example, if we do team meetings and the majority is not present but switched on via Skype. I really do not like that,

especially when it comes to important decisions. This is my personal opinion. I think it's better if the team is on site.

**Interviewer:** In any case, it is difficult to virtually achieve the same social interaction as if you were actually sitting opposite each other.

**Expert 3:** Yes, I find that very difficult. Especially the more people are involved in such a call. One often has the feeling one speaks with a wall. Especially if you  
250 have to moderate and there are no reactions. I've gotten used to addressing people directly, but there's still a certain distance. Maybe that's because we do not make video calls, I do not know. But I'm having a hard time with the telephone conferences. (...) I am also a very empathic person and the real contact is very important to me. With facial expressions and gestures and real reactions. This unsettles me when I can not see them.

**Interviewer:** Yes, I can understand that. That's a strange atmosphere when you're sitting alone and talking to 15 people on the phone.

But apart from the communication, how do you think a concept like Remote Work  
260 affects creative work processes, for example in fashion? Do you think that can work?

**Expert 3:** No. For example, when it comes to color concepts or fabrics, you have to look at it in the same light. Everything that goes in that direction or when visual decisions have to be made, that's totally hard to explain via Skype. As far as my experience is concerned this does not work. One then sends the things back and forth and does not really progress. That's not efficient.

**Interviewer:** Yes, the process would probably slow down even more.

270

**Expert 3:** Definitely. I've also experienced that myself when, for example, I worked with freelancers. Very difficult.

**Interviewer:** I still have a question about generation Y and Z. We had mentioned that briefly before. These generations are attributed the innovation drive and the

will to change things. What do you think are the biggest changes these generations bring to the workplace?

**Expert 3:** (...) You can tell that these generations are questioning a lot and that's something I really appreciate. Partially the early 20 year olds are already so much  
280 more enlightened than I was at that age, for example. I think that's good because they deal constructively with the topics and do not show such a passive attitude. I still know how I was as an intern I always did everything my supervisor told me. I did not dare to step into action. And there's something different about Generation Y and Z. I also think it's very important to promote this and therefore I really like to focus on the young team.

**Interviewer:** That's almost the end of the interview. I have two more questions that are more general and concern your personal assessment. For one thing, I would like to have your assessment of the German economy. What must change  
290 so that other countries do not overtake us technologically?

**Expert 3:** Yes, the German economy is a very difficult topic. There has to be some change. It must also be much more agile in economic matters. My favorite example is my own semester abroad in Copenhagen. That really opened my eyes, which has yet to happen on the subject of cultural promotion in Germany. Everything was easy and feasible. You could easily work at any time of the day in the university and if you wanted to do a project the necessary funds have been made available. They did so much at trust level and always wanted to support you. I also realized how important innovation was to them and that there was  
300 money to promote things. Then I came back and was directly killed by the bureaucracy. This slows you down and is no fun. In Copenhagen, I felt so free. We should really set the focus here differently. No money is ever invested in topics such as innovation and new developments. I do not like that. We also need more promotion at the universities to achieve more productivity in the economy. Germany is still very conservative.

**Interviewer:** Of course, the next generation is a big topic because our education system has not been adapted in any way to digitisation.

**Expert 3:** Yes, that's the next important point! The whole schools and curricula  
310 have long been outdated. When talking about agility and digitisation, we also  
need to think about teaching our children to work accordingly. You have to  
prepare them for the market and not continue to memorize stupid formulas. (...) In  
my opinion, this system is totally counterproductive for development.

**Interviewer:** My last question might sound a bit more philosophical, but I'm really  
looking forward to your answer. Do you think the digital business needs to focus  
on technology because we are in the digital age?

**Expert 3:** No. I would not say that. Rather focus on innovation. We must learn to  
320 stand out from our competitors. I think that's very important. We have to design  
products that are new and innovative.

**Interviewer:** What I personally find interesting is the trend towards topics such as  
Human Machine Interface, where much is derived from humans. And in general,  
we are increasingly focusing on social interaction, even though life is becoming  
more and more digital.

**Expert 3:** Yes I agree. We have to grow closer together as humans. (...) The  
exchange is so important. This has to be more sensitized and consciously lived in  
330 general. Partly we experience that already. There are more and more people  
making digital detox' to find their way back to themselves. Time without mobile  
phones and computers.

**Interviewer:** There must be a balance in any case. I've even seen that at  
universities, there are courses dealing with the topic of Digital Detox to create  
awareness among the young people.

**Expert 3:** That's important. I also realize when it gets too much. Then I do sports  
or go with the dog in the woods.

340 **Interviewer:** I agree.  
We are already at the end of the interview. Thank you for your time and your  
interesting answers!

#### 12.2.4 Expert interview 4

1 **Interviewer:** Hello, thanks again that you have time for this interview today. The interview takes place as part of my master thesis on "The impact of digitisation on working environments" and is recorded digitally. Is that okay for you?

**Expert 4:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Wonderful let's start with the questions! The first topic deals in general with the subject of digitisation and the influence on your personal work process and everyday life. What do you think was the biggest change? And do  
10 you see that as an enrichment?

**Expert 4:** In my personal situation, I do not have a 20-year career behind me that I can look back on. I did not really experienced the digital shift. I entered the world of work when digitisation in my industry was already in full swing. Also here in the agency. Nevertheless, of course I have an impression as how it was before. For example, Digitalization had a particularly great influence on our communication. We communicate very digitally and manage our knowledge accordingly. Nevertheless, in my company is a big focus on offline communication and direct cooperation. We are very aware of both. For example, we try to come together as  
20 a whole team during conception sprints and work a lot on the hands. Also with the right tools, such as scissors, pens and so on to then quickly synonymous in the prototyping. That's why we try to make a lot of visuals in the room, with flip charts and whiteboards and so on. And at the same time, we're working hard with digital tools to connect everyone and create a flow of information. We work a lot with Mattermost which has replaced Slack for us. It is very similar in function though. This tool has replaced email for us. In the meantime, I can not imagine working without this tool. That we really communicated everything via email back then is really unbelievable. At Mattermost we have different channels on different topics. And these channels also reflect our structures that we have in the  
30 company in the form of working groups. We organize our internal work in various circles such as human resources or finance, marketing, acquisition, accounting. And we organize our customer projects in teams. Each customer project always

receives a newly assembled team with the appropriate skills. And all these circles and projects have their own channels. And then there are channels that connect all these themes, like the General Channel. (...) We actually outsourced our complete project assignment to Mattermost. In addition, we have an offline project round which takes place once a week. If questions arise they can be discussed there. And then we work with a project management tool called Activecollab. This is an online platform which helps you to manage projects. For example tracking of working hours. (...) You can assign tasks and create task lists, you can create a project plan, you can enter notes and logs, you can in manage all financial planning through this tool. (...) Then of course we work with Trello for agile project management. Not with all projects, but with most. These are our main tools we work with most. But as I said we also attach great importance to our offline work. One challenge that we actually have is the topic of remote work. We have a variety of part-time concepts with us. There are people who only work a few hours a week, there are people who work five days a week, there are people who work exclusively remotely or exclusively in the office. There is really everything! Most of us only work four days a week. We currently have the problem that unfortunately we are not very diverse in our age structure. As a result, we are all at an age where we all have roughly the same life plan. Be it child planning, professional reorientation or a sabbatical. That is why the majority wants to work remotely. As a result, we need to figure out how to maintain this strong community and strong core locally. Because we realize that Remote Work can not offer that. We are now trying to find a solution for how to do it anyway and still be able to convey the same sense of community. This is definitely a huge challenge. And that is also a new topic for us. In the past few years we have always had only a few people working remotely. That has always worked well but not to the extent that it is now. So, to summarize, digitisation as we live it gives us a tremendous advantage. From the exchange of knowledge, from the networking of the team, from self-determination and co-creation. Also the possibility of online voting is great. This now leads to another topic, but we are working with very different decision-making processes and structures. One of them is the democratic vote. This leads to such an efficient and quick opinion poll. The more efficient flow of information has also improved. Keeping track of things was just harder in the past. So we have a much better transparency.

**Interviewer:** I will come back to the subject of remote work later. It is super exciting that you work so actively and develop concepts. First of all, I wanted to ask you something about creative work. There are many negative voices in the creative industry, in particular, that talk about digitisation destroying a lot of creative processes. Do you see it the same way or do you think there are now completely different solutions how to do that?

**Expert 4:** I can actually understand this criticism. Again to me: I work completely new remote for two months. I work in Greece for the summer and only come back to Berlin every two months. I work as an organizational consultant and am very involved in strategy and moderate a lot. That means I'm not a designer but still work on conceptual sprints. And I realize that common conception in which you have to be creative becomes difficult over the distance. It also requires a very different kind of preparation and control. I have to prepare methodically for an online conference how I want to proceed and what agenda I have. Also the moderating is completely different. For example, I notice a big difference when everyone is in the office and I am in Greece. Then the collective brainstorming is much harder. We then need to use structures such as hand-to-speak or silent work phases. Of course we try to work this way offline as well, but the best ideas arise during spontaneous discussions. This flow is difficult to achieve online, if at all possible. My team and I are a well-rehearsed team because we know each other offline as well. But I can not imagine how it works if you do not know each other. That needs a completely different kind of coordination and I think that creativity suffers as well. On the other hand, I also think that the term creativity is very overused. Often creativity is very forced and you have to be clear about what creativity actually means. For me, for example, creativity needs a lot of preparation. But that is a personal preference that is of course different for everyone. That's why we work with very different methods such as design studios or workshop methods. And I think it can work well remotely or online. What worries us a lot more is how our sense of community and drive suffers. The worry is that people in the office have to absorb a lot more than remote employees. Tasks that need to be done quickly in between times. And then we have to ask ourselves how we can catch that. Maybe that's just a problem of the organization. Where is the real problem? We are also a cooperative, that is why we build a lot on the principle of solidarity. That we are there for each other. We must therefore

figure out how much freedom we can give the individual employee and how to find a pleasant solution for all. Because we have to ensure certain things to not lose our identity.

**Interviewer:** Before I want to talk about your work concept again, I now have some questions about agile working methods. The digital transformation is primarily affecting traditional companies that need to change their work structures and ways of working and adapt them to digitisation. Where do you think the biggest difficulties are and why?

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**Expert 4:** I believe that these traditional companies plan very strongly for the long term, for example with 5-year plans. In the first year, they often research for ages, then they develop something that is then only a prototype and until then, the market has already developed again in a completely new way. This is definitely a core problem. Agile methods have the advantage of being always up to date and developing prototypes in a short time, which can then be tested directly. The other is just pure socialization. We grew up very differently. But for us humans, change is also very difficult. In the company, we also accompany many change processes and notice over and over again that real change only happens if the  
120 process hurts. For the older generation, who have worked their whole lives in a certain way, digitisation seems unfamiliar and scary. I think that has a lot to do with the fact that you do not know something and you can not do it that well. This is also because there is such a weak failure culture in Germany. One can not and should not show his weakness. I think it's a mix of psychological and procedural reasons. Getting rid of these structures is difficult for many. Agile work also involves a certain risk. You always have to break away from the plan and be courageous and adapt the goals again and again. (...) For people who have never worked this way and who have learned that departing from a goal means failure, it is difficult to get involved in such new things. Sometimes you have the  
130 feeling that people at a certain age just before retirement simply do not feel like learning something new. They only see it as a trend or have had bad experiences with digital tools. Often we also work with authorities which are in principle large administrative apparatus. Then you often hear something like that software has led to more problems than before. But it was just misused or not the right solution for them. Then the aversion grows. And you also notice that then on a deeper

level there is the fear of more work or effort. Then you have to ask yourself how to get people to like their jobs and how to make them believe in change. As a result, they would also want to learn things that would help the company. A lot of people do jobs that they do not want to do or that they can not identify with. And  
140 then there is not the awareness why a new tool could help. I think it is a very complex problem.

**Interviewer:** But do you think these companies need to make that shift to be successful in the long term?

**Expert 4:** I am convinced that our complex world will become even more complex in the years to come. And these complex challenges require complex solutions. You have to set up today so you can react quickly to market changes in the future. If it does not succeed in acquiring this more flexible approach then it  
150 will actually be difficult. On the other hand, if you have a strong vision or purpose that is aligned with a strong goal, something that the world needs, then that automatically regulates itself. Then there will be other outside influences. If you have a meaningful product, then it will exist and not fail due to structures or agility. But that's another topic. But companies that have no product that satisfies a current need have to adapt flexibly to the market. And they definitely need certain structures and processes.

**Interviewer:** You have already addressed the topic of agile working methods. How would you say these methods affect employee motivation, processes and  
160 corporate culture? (...)

**Expert 4:** It leads to the fact that we can live a much stronger employee participation. For example, in classic projects like a campaign. That's where designers, strategists, project managers, and developers work together, and in the past it would have been rather difficult to get involved in the process right from the start. Because you had to work much more with other formats and meetings that were much more lengthy. Now you can include all people from the beginning and make all steps understandable. We have a much stronger exchange of knowledge and capacity building. Of course this leads to much more  
170 motivation and enjoyment at work. (...) So you can also contribute proactively.

(...) And we definitely come to completely different results than before, which are much closer to the user and therefore work better. Of course, challenges are still there. There is a risk of not meeting certain deadlines, for example if there are too many prototype cycles. (...) But the classic waterfall model is actually very similar. You mean to develop a finished product but you either will not finish or it will not work. It has all its advantages and disadvantages. As soon as a certain complexity is exceeded you have to tackle things flexibly and iteratively in order to include user perspectives as well. (...) The waterfall model works well with routine processes. Therefore, I would not say that agile working methods are the  
180 solution to all problems. But whenever it comes to innovative processes where new solutions are needed then it makes sense to use them.

**Interviewer:** Now I would like to talk about hierarchy and company organization. Do you think that agile working methods need a certain company structure or hierarchy to be successful?

**Expert 4:** I think there are different levels on how to implement them. Agile work can also be introduced in individual teams in a traditional company. For example, Scrum works well in companies with hierarchical structures. But if you want to do  
190 that in a self-organized way, then it does not work. Then you need the intelligence of the entire collective. As soon as you have strict hierarchies, you lose potential and opportunities to involve people who have the necessary skills. That's why I would say it is possible but only in limited form. (...)

**Interviewer:** You work here as a cooperative right? Do you think that there will still be big companies in the creative industry in the future? Or will it be more and more about cooperatives and networks?

**Expert 4:** (...) I think agile working methods can be used in all industries. What it  
200 takes is a shift in our thinking. Away from this industrial thinking and towards questions like; What do I need in life that makes me happy? What do I want to contribute to this world? If the majority of people can answer these questions, then this motivation automatically comes to the best result. And if you want to achieve this result, agile work is a matter of course for me. That's the challenge.

And that's why I would not say that's definitely for everyone. I find that hard to estimate how long that will take. Nevertheless, of course I want to believe it. (...)

**Interviewer:** There are many voices who do not believe that large corporations will survive in the future. Change processes are very expensive and tedious with  
210 so many employees and flexibility is not really given either, at least not compared to small startups. And in terms of the purpose you already addressed, people are more likely to seek self-determination in the future.

**Expert 4:** But the question is; What makes a large corporation? It is not inconsistent that a large corporation has just as strong a purpose and employees can work self-determined. (...) I think that can work. But it's definitely a big  
220 challenge.

**Interviewer:** Definitely! I can not imagine what an effort such a shift must be. It depends on the employees, that everyone pulls together.

**Expert 4:** It definitely helps if such things grow organically and are implemented in the organization right from the start.

**Interviewer:** My next question is about leadership. How do you define the role of the manager in an agile company with flat hierarchies? What skills needs a manager of today?

230 **Expert 4:** The most important competence a manager has to have is motivating his team. Pull instead of push. That he inspires and assigns tasks to the team. He has to pave the way so that his team can work freely and feel safe. And then letting things grow and have faith in the team. This has a lot to do with social skills, emotional intelligence and empathy. This is also very different than before. At the time, unfortunately, there was a lot of authority and strict leadership. Leadership is also important today, but in a different way.

**Interviewer:** In any case, a lot has changed, especially with regard to the soft and hard skills. This is also interesting in terms of recruiting.  
240 Now I would like to talk about workplace mobility. Digitisation has also changed

the traditional working environment considerably; remote work, home office and co-working spaces provide a change in office life. How do you rate this change in the work environment? Where do you see a positive, where a negative change?

**Expert 4:** It's important to give employees the freedom and confidence to work in the way that works best for them. For example, when people work best at home. This also has a lot to do with work-life balance or work-life-blending. (...) One model describes the compensation of work and free time and the one the merge of the two worlds because the employee identifies with the work and have so much fun with it. That's why many people do not want a strict separation between  
250 work and living space. It belongs somehow together. Of course you have to be careful not to overwork yourself. Another difficulty is the challenge of planning things on the one hand to work for oneself but on the other for the team and the product as well. For example, if companies prefer our work on the basis of social interaction, then it makes no sense for employees to work from home. Then there are other situations where it makes sense and then that should also be encouraged. You just have to be careful that you do not set any fixed rules but remain flexible and make decisions project-based on how to work. Of course that's easy to say, but it's much more complicated to implement. Our company is a good example because we are such a hybrid in everything. Many team  
260 members are parents, others are consultants and travel a lot to clients, and then much of our work is based on social interaction. At the same time, we also have many processes where remote work or home office works well. We also have no solution how to best regulate this. (...) Currently we have the problem that too few people are in the office to take on spontaneous tasks. This is a problem especially with the designers. The proposal occurred to introduce a percentage rule so that the majority is always in the office. But then we quickly realized that we are not fans of such general regulations. We always try to work out principles and then derive knowledge from them. But then the question is, how do we handle that? Our principle is solidarity. But how do we enable everyone to have  
270 as much freedom as possible? Or is solidarity more about a strong community? It quickly becomes philosophical. (...)

**Interviewer:** Yes, and for a large corporation with a lot more employees, the issue is even more complicated. The topic of trust repeatedly came up in the

research and how difficult it is to control mobile employees in their productivity.

**Expert 4:** We do not have this problem at all and I think it's again related to the purpose! Either the employees are motivated and like working for the cause or not, but then it is simply not the right fit.

**Interviewer:** I think there is often a lack of energy or motivation to establish such  
280 a concept, which is a pity. Many companies would certainly benefit from this.

**Expert 4:** It would also be the ideal test! If you then realize that half of the people are not working properly you know you have much deeper problems.

**Interviewer:** Many of these New Work topics are attributed to Generation Y and Z who push these concepts. Do you think this is true or do the older generations want this change as well? Especially in Germany the older generations seem to have a certain fear of digitisation.

290 **Expert 4:** I do not necessarily believe that. Certainly there are tendencies. But the older ones are socialized in a completely different way. (...) It also annoys me that the whole New Work topics are presented as so new because they are not. (...) These movements were in the 60s and 70s and even much more extreme. Today we are aware that we need guidance to some extent to not fall into total anarchy. We need good leadership and good participation in a structured way. (...) I think it is anchored in each of us to have fun at work and to feel enthusiasm. This is not related to age. The longer you work in fixed structures, the harder it is to get used to new ones. That's why it's so much easier for the younger generations.

300 **Interviewer:** I have two final questions for you. What do you think are the next big challenges for digital businesses?

**Expert 4:** First of all, technical challenges, such as blockchain. But tools are always just an extension of how we live anyway. The real challenges are the topics I mentioned earlier. How do I convey a purpose? How do you manage to engage people and create team spirit in a digital way? And how to make fun

digitally experienceable! It will be hard to avoid offline social interaction. That is enormously important. One of the biggest human needs is social cohesion.

310

**Interviewer:** That's an interesting answer, especially considering that we are in the digital age. But digitisation really shows us that we urgently need the social aspects.

My last question for you relates generally to the German economy and our degree of innovation. What do you think needs to change in Germany to generate more innovation and enable more digital development?

**Expert 4:** That's a good question. Germany is really so far back, I always notice that. Alone the mobile phone network is so bad compared to other EU countries. The issue of fear is definitely a problem. We have a strong need for security and  
320 structures and fear for our property. (...) Part of it is certainly cultural. (...) The topic of education is also bad, not only at schools but also at universities. In the end, politics has to do something, but it needs this pressure to change. And it's still missing somehow. (...)

**Interviewer:** We arrived at the end of the interview. Thank you for your time!

### 12.2.5 Expert interview 5

1 **Interviewer:** Hello Nicole, thanks for doing this interview today. The interview takes place as part of my master thesis on the topic "The impact of digitisation on working environments" and is recorded digitally. Is that okay for you?

**Expert 5:** Yes, that's ok.

**Interviewer:** Wonderful, then let's start with the questions! (...) Digitisation has an impact on almost every aspect of our everyday lives. As a result, the world of work has of course also changed a lot. Which change is the biggest or most  
10 important one for you personally?

**Expert 5:** (...) There are several things. For example, I have just been to China and very few people speak good English in China. And I do not speak Chinese either. The communication is now completely on mobile, to be more precise on an app. Speech recognition then translates the Chinese text into all possible languages. And the outcomes are also incredibly accurate. The next step is that you have it as an in-ear application which is actually already developed. So the topic of language is no longer a barrier because the translations and speech recognitions are so well developed. In China you can generally see a lot of things being implemented that are still in their early stages here in Germany.

20 **Interviewer:** That's true. Germany is still not up to date in many things.

**Expert 5:** Yes quite massive. That's really bizarr.

**Interviewer:** My second question is about creative processes. There are many negative voices saying that technology and digital work negatively impact creativity and even inhibit creative processes. Do you think so too?

**Expert 5:** No, whoever said that does not understand creativity. Nor digitalization. Digitisation is not a means to an end, it just offers tools and it  
30 depends on the personal experience of how you handle these tools. We are

currently in a transitional phase in which these tools can still be a hindrance because they require a lot of attention. Emails are now a totally outdated communication tool that needs a lot of attention. But if you look at tools like Slack or other coworking platforms then you see that the processes are simplified. And if you're on such a platform, it does not matter how you want to work. You can do that completely analog. (...) Slack is in this case only the underlying tool that simplifies the processes so that one can also work together globally and internationally.

**Interviewer:** I've talked to some people who work in creative companies, where creative processes that were originally analogous have now been digitized. There were some people who thought that changed the creative process. Not automatically negative, but it is another form of creative work.

**Expert 5:** If you try to develop a form, then it may be useful to work with scissors and paper. And not in a digital drawing program. Because certain materials make visions clearer. And it makes no sense to transfer every design thinking process into the digital world. The tools that are used for online communication today such as Dropbox or Google Drive are already totally outdated. There must be proper collaboration platforms where you can exchange notes, thoughts and ideas and comment on them. What you then upload you have to adapt to the project, of course. But that can also be a model made from paper. You have to differentiate. For example, I am also a fan of paper and pencil in creative processes such as brainstorming. Because it's not about perfect visualization but about the process from the brain to the hand and to the paper. This is an important cognitive connection. And that's what makes things clear in the brain. We simply have "old" brains that are not adjusted to the topic of digitisation. Certain processes work better if you make them analog. This may change at some point in the future, but then the question of digitisation will not arise anymore. Then there will be new tools and challenges.

**Interviewer:** That's true. My next topic is agile working methods. The digital transformation is primarily affecting traditional companies that need to change their work structures and ways of working and adapt them to digitisation. Where do you think are the biggest difficulties and why?

**Expert 5:** Companies are made up of people and processes. We have very archaic brains and structures that are anchored in us. And our brains do not like change because change always means risk and danger. Uncertainty. That's the basic structure that man has. And a large group of people in such a company is developing something like a parent body. And this body has an immune system just like us. And then a company starts reacting just like people do and sees change as a threat. Changes mean complexity and the company's immune system is fighting against it. The more alien this change is the more it is fought. Unless there is a board that makes it its mission to bring this shift successfully into the company. But then something like that takes a very long time until there is a change in the minds of the employees. Therefore, there is also the theory that one should position changes only on the margins of the company. So that the immune system does not notice the shift immediately. And then when the business case changes it can happen that the processes that take place on the edge move inside. And then they can also replace the old core. But now there are also various theories that say that you can not really change companies. Because they always return to their DNA. You can maybe plant a second core that eventually overshadows the old core, but that's also a lengthy process. That's because people are socialized differently. (...) As long as there are no new heads in the boards of the old companies who are differently socialized and who for example already worked agile it is almost impossible to change anything.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that the implementation of agile working methods such as Scrum or Design Thinking is necessary for such companies if they want to be relevant in the future?

**Expert 5:** You can't say it like that. That's a bit like an evolution. You do not even know how the market will develop because of politics or environmental disasters or whatever. I think Scrum is the way of working for the future but the market changes are not linear anymore (...) and innovations like AI are so complex that you cannot predict what will be relevant in ten years time.

**Interviewer:** That's true. Our market is very uncertain and forecasts are likely to be very speculative.

**Expert 5:** One can only say that in a few years we can outsource many jobs to machines. In assembly, in call centers; everything that has a high standardization. Everything that can not be standardized are human qualities that seem less complex but require a high degree of social competence. For example, teamwork, creativity, care, education of children. Social literacy can not be digitized and these are the things that will be of great importance. Such as  
100 coaching. And what's even more important is the ability to decouple from digital waste. How can we not sink into the sea of digitisation? You have to decide very clearly what is relevant and what is not relevant to the amount of information we receive every day. You have to curate and assemble yourself to not become just a dull consumer.

**Interviewer:** Yes, just for young people this filtering is still very difficult.

**Expert 5:** There is an interesting statement said by a well-known futurist: Our  
110 society will no longer divide into rich and poor in the future, but in between those who can filter this social bubble and those who can not. (...) Those who are able to do so can apply these tools as they wish and thereby reshape their lives. That is the big difference. Whether you manage to create yourself or whether you remain a consumer. That is why it is recommended for a long time already to teach meditation to children. So that they find that mental strength to focus and deliberately refuse things.

**Interviewer:** Very interesting topic and a very big challenge.

**Expert 5:** Yes, and if you look at the historical connections it makes total sense. In the past, the individual empires collapsed whenever they felt the best. When  
120 they had too much of everything. Then decadence sets in and bored consumption. Then a culture degenerates and disintegrates. Then there is no further development. This will not happen to us because the technical possibilities are evolving so fast, but a big part of society will become dull consumers. Because they no longer see meaning in their actions. (...)

**Interviewer:** I have another question about agile working methods. (...) What are

the benefits of agility for you? Be it for the company, for the individual employee or the product.

**Expert 5:** Because we are a creative agency, we have always been agile. This has something to do with the demands on situations and timing. Over the past  
130 few years, the timings are becoming increasingly scarce and the requirements more and more complex and quite often we still have so-called "moving targets". This means that people are very used to being very open-minded and always keeping the optional parameters open. So if option a) does not work then there is option b), c) and d). And often it is decided at the last moment which version is implemented. (...) That has always been the case in the creative sector. Only now these methods have to be transferred to the classic companies, because the parameters generally stick to increasingly complex issues.

**Interviewer:** (...) Do you think that the drive within the creative industry towards agile working methods is driven by the younger generation? Or do you think that this is not a generation question.

140 **Expert 5:** That always depends on how they have been socialized. Of course, if someone has only been working as an executive for 20 years, then it is difficult to do self-management at once. And all these new tools are difficult to understand in the beginning. Most of the tools come from software development and there they make sense. But you can not easily transfer them to any process. There are also areas where it is totally destructive to be agile. For example in production. (...) Or in the maintenance or care area. And each person thinks so individually and there are people who are incredibly good in linear processes, such as accounting. Such people would be completely overwhelmed in an agile process. Conversely, this does not work with a creative person. In both cases, no good  
150 results would come out. Nevertheless, both have great relevance and appreciation in their respective positions. In the future it is about positioning each person where they can work successfully. (...) It's important that people enjoy their job and that they are happy. Then there is also a force unfolding. There is not one big thing that everyone has to do, there are different realities and they all have their place. (...)

**Interviewer:** But if a company wants to introduce agile methods right now, do you think that this has to have a direct impact on the company hierarchy and structure? For example, do traditional companies need to rebuild to work successfully?

160 **Expert 5:** Yes, in any case. We have often experienced this in our work. It starts in the offices. If the offices do not change then you can not implement agility. If I go to the same desk for 10 years, then the head may understand that a change is taking place, but the body does not. You have to show in every moment that agility is lived. The furniture must be movable. You have to work in different constellations to break old structures. You also need new creativity tools and visual incentives to clear your mind, something new is happening here. If I go the same way every day, you are completely on autopilot. (...)

**Interviewer:** Do you think that in the future the concept of large corporations will continue to exist? Or do you think that the market will be so disruptive that large corporations in traditional forms can no longer keep up?

170 **Expert 5:** (...) Well, if I wish I would know an answer to that question. I think it's less about having big companies, but rather about smaller networks who work collaboratively.

**Interviewer:** I have two more questions for you. Firstly, I would like to know what skills a manager of today has to have in order to work successfully in a digital company?

**Expert 5:** He must be a generalist and he must be extremely socially competent to assign the right people to the right jobs. So to curate people based on their strengths. And to bring them together in the process and to moderate the discussion. He is more of a coach than a classic manager.

180 **Interviewer:** My other question relates to job mobility. Do you think that remote work, home office and coworking spaces can have a positive effect on creative processes and the general corporate climate?

**Expert 5:** In any case. That is very clear. The more agile and mobile a job is, the better it is for cooperation.

190 **Interviewer:** How would you rate social interaction in this context? (...)

**Expert 5:** There must be a physical room where regular meetings take place. Because really deep cooperation is only possible if you know the other person. And if you experienced them physically. (...) And then you can work remotely and over long distances.

**Interviewer:** We arrived at the end of the interview, thank you for your time and your answers!

### **13. Affidavit**

I hereby confirm by means of my signature that I have prepared the submitted work independently and without the help of others, and have not used any sources other than those specified. All texts taken literally or meaningfully from published and non-published publications are indicated as such. The work has not been submitted in the same or similar form – not even as excerpts – to any other examination authority, and has not yet been published.

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Location, Date, Signature