

## UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG school of business, economics and law

# The day after tomorrow's marketing

- A discourse analysis regarding the future of marketing

University of Gothenburg The School of Business, Economics, and Law

> Bachelor's thesis in marketing FEK315 Spring term 2021

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Thank you!

Gothenburg, 6 June 2021

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# Abstract

**Title:** The day after tomorrow's marketing. *A discourse analysis regarding the future of marketing.* 

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In today's society, billions of people have access to an overflow of information (Sima et al., 2020). New marketing strategies are introduced at a faster rate than ever before as a response to customer's rapidly changing needs. This new transformation will be unalike anything that humans have ever experienced before. Firms need to follow the fast development of society we are experiencing.

The purpose of this study aims to analyze general discourses surrounding marketing in the future. Foucauldian Discourse Analysis was conducted to analyze our semi-structured interviews. The interviews consisted of eleven chosen informants; students, managers from different firms, one assistant professor, and a marketing professor. We identified four discourses; 1: Brand Experience Design, 2: Flexibility/Adaptability, 3: Digitalization, 4: Integrity. They were identified after the analysis of the interviews which aids to answer our research question: *What are the general discourses surrounding marketing in the future?* 

We recognized that all the informants we spoke to had a connection and an idea of what the future in marketing might look like. Since we examine thoughts and language patterns about the future, the answers are speculative, and we do not know if the discourses we have found today will apply tomorrow.

**Keywords:** Marketing, Future marketing, Foucauldian Discourse Analysis, Brand Experience Design, Consumer Experience, Marketing trend, Marketing strategies.

# List of concepts

**Brand experience design -** J. Jos ko Brakus, Bernd H. Schmitt, & Lia Zarantonello (Brakus et al., 2009) explains the concept of brand experience design as "*subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cog- nitions) and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, pack- aging, communications, and environments."* 

**Consumer** - The Oxford Lexico (Oxford Lexico, n.d.) defines a consumer as "*A person who purchases goods and services for personal use.*"

**Consumer culture theory (CCT)** - Arnould, E. J; Thompson, C J. (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) defines the concept of consumer culture theory that *"refers to a family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings."* 

**Digitalization** - Gartner Glossary (Gartner, n.d.) defines digitalization as: "*Digitalization is the use of digital technologies to change a business model and provide new revenue and value-producing opportunities; it is the process of moving to a digital business.*"

**Discourse analysis -** Jorgensen, M.; Philips, L. (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002) defines discourse analysis as: "...underlying the word 'discourse' is the general idea that language is structured according to different patterns that people's utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life, familiar examples being 'medical discourse' and 'political discourse'. 'Discourse analysis' is the analysis of these patterns."

**Integrity** - The Cambridge English Dictionary (The Cambridge English Dictionary, n.d.) defines integrity as *"the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles that you refuse to change."* 

**The Experience Economy -** The Localist (Localist, 2021) defines the term as "an economy in which many goods or services are sold by emphasizing the effect they can have on people's lives. Experiences are their own category, just like "goods" and "services."

# Table of contents

1 Introduction	1
1.1 Background information on the importance of marketing	1
1.2 Problem discussion	2
1.3 Purpose and research question	2
1.4 Delimitations	3
1.5 Outline	4
2 Literature Review & Theoretical Framework	5
2.1 Discourse as a theoretical concept	5
2.2 Brand Experience Design	6
2.3 Consumer culture theory	7
2.4 Flexibility/adaptability	8
2.5 Digitalization	9
2.6 Integrity	10
2.7 Interconnection of the literature review and theoretical framework	12
3 Methodology	14
3.1 Discourse analysis as a method	14
3.1.1 Foucauldian discourse analysis	15
3.1.2 Method approach	17
3.1.3 Method discussion	18
3.2 Semi-structured interview	18
3.2.1 Interview approach	19
3.2.2 General Presentation of Interviewees	20
3.2.3 Method discussion	22
3.3 Principles of research ethics	23
4 Results & Analysis	24
4.1 General presentation of discourses found in the interviews	24
4.2 The Four Discourses	25
4.2.1 Consumer Experiences	25
4.2.2 Flexibility/Adaptability	30
4.2.3 Digitalization	33
4.2.4 Integrity	37
5 Discussion & Conclusion	41
5.1 Implications for researchers	41
5.2 Implications for marketing & society	42
5.3 Conclusion & answer to the research question	42

References	45
Appendix	49
Appendix 1	49
Appendix 2	50
Appendix 3	51

# 1 Introduction

The introductory chapter will provide a background to the topic, followed by a problem discussion. Subsequently, the research problem will be formulated with the assistance of the purpose and research questions. Further, delimitations are stated and a brief account of the outline of the study.

## 1.1 Background information on the importance of marketing

We live in the fourth industrial revolution, where billions of people access an overflow of information (Sima et al., 2020). This revolution has led to a rise of new marketing strategies created to meet the customers' rapidly changing needs. In its scale, scope, and complexity, the transformation will be different from what humanity has experienced in the past. We as humans are ever-changing, and companies are obliged to follow this change. To illustrate the future, we need to integrate and involve all possible stakeholders in marketing, from the public and private sectors to academia and society (Louth, 1966).

These new marketing strategies have led to new marketing approaches, one of them being the experience economy. In the 1990s, Pine and Gilmore (1998) wrote an article for Harvard Business Review where they described a new marketing approach called the experience economy: *"The Experience Economy marks the debut of an insightful, highly original, and yet eminently practical approach for companies to script and stage compelling experiences."* (Pine II & Gilmore, 1998). This new approach means that companies are using experiences as a tool to sell their products to consumers, which creates a bond and memories linked to their specific product. The memory that a consumer captures from a particular event becomes the product itself: the "experience". Pine and Gilmore (1998) argued that more and more people spent their money on experiences instead of the actual goods they consumed.

The future of marketing varies depending on whom you ask or refer to. This thesis aims to give guidance to both firms and consumers by possibly answering the question of what the future of marketing may look like and what components are going to be important. To answer this question, discourses regarding the future of marketing will be studied.

### 1.2 Problem discussion

Ideally, every marketer would like to know what the future of marketing will look like to better understand the challenges of tomorrow and how to tackle them. Unfortunately, we found there is limited material available that explores how the future of marketing may appear. This could be because researching the future can be seen as impossible, simply because the future has not occurred yet and is not researchable.

The next best thing to do is get as close as possible to what the future might hold. By seeing the issue from today's perspective, and analyzing the varying discourses about marketing, we can better understand the future. It poses a challenge to investigate the future because it is ever-changing and somewhat unpredictable (Hartmann et al., 2020). No one can say with certainty what will happen in the future and how it will develop, making it even more interesting to investigate and analyze to seek out occurring phenomena (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002). Yet again, nobody can foresee the absolute future, but in this thesis, we will attempt to speculate and discuss it with the aid of our informants.

So, why is it interesting to study the future of marketing? Many companies and organizations need to have leading-edge marketing to succeed. To some extent, foreseeing what will happen in the future can play a significant and crucial role in loss or profit. Creating better opportunities for improved strategic decisions, investments, innovations, competitive advantages, and so on are some of the benefits that could arise from future predictions in marketing. The future is a very prominent subject and will always be important for businesses to investigate because of the benefits it can create (Hartmann et al., 2020).

### 1.3 Purpose and research question

This thesis aims to analyze general discourses surrounding marketing in the future. This is done by illustrating the image students, researchers, and various marketers share regarding the future of marketing. By analyzing these discourses, we want to predict what the future of marketing may look like. In order to fulfill the purpose of the study and assist the research forward, the following research question will form the basis of this thesis:

#### *RQ*: *What are the general discourses surrounding marketing in the future?*

The aspects mentioned in the research question are based on the informant's views of what the future of marketing for various companies, society, and ordinary people may look like.

### 1.4 Delimitations

To study the future of marketing, delimitations are required as it is a vast topic and the future is obscure. Therefore, we have chosen to limit this study to focus on future marketing from a consumer perspective, five to ten years from now. The interviewees were sought out because of their knowledge of the subject, but they will be representing themselves as consumers. Therefore this thesis will utilize their knowledge and experience regarding marketing. One of the delimitations made in this thesis is the selection of our informants for the interviews. Due to the prevailing circumstances, we have chosen to use people in our vicinity. In addition, the informants were chosen based on the demographic variable that everyone has studied marketing at the minimum university level.

A delimitation was made regarding the choice of informants, as we wanted input from newly graduated students, experienced professors, and marketers. This will provide us with diverse perspectives. By doing this, we aim to achieve a limited spread between the students', the professors', and marketers' knowledge of the subject but still provide a range with different experiences to be analyzed.

As the future of marketing can include various topics we felt the need to delimit our thesis even more. We chose to focus our study on the informant's thoughts regarding consumer experiences in the future, from this, other perspectives came about. In addition, a sustainability perspective was not included as this would make the study too broad and the thesis would risk becoming prolonged.

These delimitations are made to provide a deeper understanding of the recognized problems, offering a depth that a broader perspective could not offer.

#### 1.5 Outline

To clarify the division of the study, we have chosen to present the structure of the study through the outline (figure 1) below.

> Chapter 1 Introduction

The introductory chapter will give a background to the topic, followed by a problem discussion. The research problem is formulated with the assist of the purpose and research questions. Further stated delimitations and a brief account of the outline of the study.

Chapter 2 Literature Review & Theoretical Framework

This chapter will deal with various theories and concepts that are relevant to the understanding of this study.

Chapter 3 Methodology This chapter aims to explain the chosen methodology why this methodology was chosen and how it supported the purpose of the study. Furthermore, we will present ethical research principles and the critique of the method and sources.

**Chapter 4** Result & Analysis

Chapter 5

Discussion & Conclusion

framework for the conducted study. We will highlight

This section will present the discourses identified and selected from the interviews. In addition, an analysis will take place by linking the theories to different quotations within the chosen discourse. All the identified discourses are based on the presented theories in section 4.1.

In this section, we will discuss the new insights that have been discovered during our research. Future research about the analyzed subject and clarification of how this study could contribute to researchers, marketers, and society is presented. In conclusion, new insights are going to be discussed regarding what knowledge has been added to our chosen theories.

Figure 1: Thesis Disposition

# 2 Literature Review & Theoretical Framework

This chapter deals with various theories and concepts that are relevant to the understanding of this study. This section discusses Discourse, Brand Experience Design and Consumer Culture Theory as theoretical concepts. Furthermore, Flexibility/adaptability are presented.

#### 2.1 Discourse as a theoretical concept

Discourse analysis theory is based on the fact that we create representations of reality with the aid of language. These notions (representations) contribute to creating reality. Language and its use are not seen as neutral instruments but as social activities shaped by the social context they are presented in. Therefore, the important matter is what meaning certain words and contexts have, what metaphors and images one uses, and what is taken for granted (Winther Jørgensen & Philips, 1999).

Discourse is a theory that will aid us in understanding the future; therefore, it will be an essential part to include in this thesis. The definition of discourse is debatable; it depends on what the interpretation of discourse encompasses and its meaning. Winther Jørgensen och Philips (1999) defines discourse as "...*a determined way to speak of and understand the world (or a part of the world)*..." (p. 7). Different discourses are created when we delimit the world we live in. These are used to describe different parts of the world. There are different ways of saying the same thing in linguistic patterns. In this thesis we can use this theory by, for example, comparing how people talk about the future of marketing. Foucault (1993) implies that it is pointless to search for an underlying, unspoken truth about reality's nature since this truth does not exist. Instead, what can be done is using methods to study the current discourses that explain and interpret parts of the said reality. This, like discourse analysis, never aims to fully explain what people mean or how things are but more so to gain understanding. Language and its representation of the world lead us to conclude that the only subject that can be studied is how different concepts or discourses are constructed and spoken about (Winther Jørgensen & Philips, 1999).

One can thus question why is it necessary to use discourses? Why not just say things precisely the way they are? According to Burr (1995), things are never what they seem; as

soon as we use language, we start to interpret the world, hence why discourses are necessary to arrange our existence and categorize our knowledge. If discourses would not be utilized, people would always have to explain what they mean since nothing said or written can be taken for granted. There would be no understanding; every single situation and phenomenon would have to be explained again with non-valued words every time it was spoken about, which is impossible to achieve since all the words of the language are charged with different values. Winter Jørgensen and Philips (1999/2000) believe that there is no neutral way to describe the world; language creates or recreates discourses. It is impossible to speak or write about reality without simplifying, interpreting, and to some extent distorting things. Discourse analysis is not about retelling reality with the assistance of language; it is more about constructing and shaping it. What one says or writes inevitably becomes a subjective representation of reality, not an objective representation (Bergström & Boréus, 2005).

The theory and method parts are linked (Danaher et al., 2000; (Burr, 2003). The theoretical part weaves in the starting point of the discourse analysis. In contrast, a more detailed explanation and discussion of Foucauldian discourse analysis will occur in the method part.

### 2.2 Brand Experience Design

Following the discourse analysis theory, the conceptual framework of Brand Experience Design is to be explored. Brand Experience refers to a specific evaluation generated by brand-related incentives. This theory is relevant for this thesis as it might be an interesting, upcoming theory and we want to examine its prospects in the future.

This evaluation occurs when there is a connection, directly or indirectly, to the brand depending on if the re-interaction takes place online or offline (Brakus et al., 2009). Emotions, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoke brand-related stimuli (Brakus et al., 2009; Hamzah et al., 2014, ). This can be part of a company's design, identity, packaging, marketing, and store environments. All interaction between a company and a consumer constitutes an experience that causes the consumer to form an opinion about the company. Furthermore, Schmitt (1999) explains how brand experience design creates customer experiences through five dimensions (table 1): sensory, affective, cognitive, behavioral, and social.

Table 1: Illustrates the five different dimensions of brand experience design according toSchmitt (1999)

1

Dimension 1:	Dimension 2:	Dimension 3:	Dimension 4:	Dimension 5:
Sensory	Affective	Cognitive	Behavioral	Social
Sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell.	The emotional, brand, and what emotions are aroused.	Engage consumers and influence thinking	Lifestyle, activities, and actions.	

From the marketing climate seen as of today, it can be noted that it is important to evoke feelings among customers when they are buying products or services. The integration between a company and a consumer can be defined as the brand experience. Excellent service and attentiveness to customers are only the tip of the iceberg for brand experience, where numerous aspects weigh into the entire experience. These "basic" services offered to consumers are designed to satisfy an unknown desire which arises when our senses are stimulated (Brakus et al., 2009; Hamzah et al., 2014,).

### 2.3 Consumer culture theory

Consumer culture theory (CCT) consists of several different, unified theories concerning a shared theoretical alignment towards studies in cultural complexity. CCT is based on the behaviors and consumption choices made from a cultural and social perspective, not from an economic or psychological perspective. As we want to investigate the differences of human interactions in varying social contexts, CCT will serve as a relevant complementing theory to our thesis.

The cultural and sociological perspective processes the dynamic relationship between consumers' actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Instead of regarding culture as a homogenous system where an exchange of elements and a mix of different cultures become united; Americanization and McDonaldization, which are characterized by one-world-one-culture, CCT explores *"the heterogeneous distribution of* 

meanings and the multiplicity of overlapping cultural groupings that exist within the broader sociohistoric frame of globalization and market capitalism" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, 869).

Even though the same global companies are available worldwide, their meanings are interpreted differently amongst the local cultures where they are combined with local customs to create unique hybrid versions. The relationships between the culture, the social resource, the meaningful way of living, and the symbolic material resources are conveyed through different markets (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). CCT examines attitudes, feelings, and preferences which can affect a consumer's buying behavior. Different reference groups, family members, and social status affects consumers; meanwhile, the cultural influence concerns an individual's core values, the culture inhabited by their parents, and their relatives' culture. This, in turn, can affect how different companies may think about their marketing in the future to meet the customer's rational/non-rational behaviors.

According to Hartmann et al. (2020), one of the basic premises in CCT is that humans consume based on previously learned experiences and the different desires we have of belonging to a specific social group in society. This means that the products/services that people choose to consume are not chosen based on rational values of information from different sources, nor based on rules and norms. They are based on our experiences of being socially desirable and accepted within a specific cultural setting and within a specific group.

### 2.4 Flexibility/adaptability

The key for firms today is to have some digital presence to gain a competitive advantage on the market; this will create value for consumers, firms, and society. The Internet has changed the traditional idea of oral marketing and testimonial marketing and has taken it to the next level. Today, the line between a consumer and producer is not clear. Consumers are performing the labor which, solely, producers used to do, thus making a considerable change regarding marketing in today's society. Many companies may not like the development, but according to Hartmann et al. (2020), the digital era is here to stay.

We cannot ignore the fact that our world is constantly changing and therefore we have chosen to scrutinise flexibility/adaptability and use it as a theory. For companies to survive the

digitalization trend, preparation and adaptability for changes are required (Business Tech, 2017). To attract consumers, companies need to be receptive, and working routines need to be customizable after what is demanded on the market. Berg (2018) believes that companies that do not adapt to the digitalization trend will outnumber their competitors. Organizational adaptability is a continuous learning process that creates prerequisites for innovation. This can increase the organization's ability to manage external changes in the world (Angle & Perry, 1981).

### 2.5 Digitalization

When discussing general discourses surrounding marketing in the future, digitalization is an aspect that cannot be omitted. Digital tools and technologies have been shown to drastically change the way companies work, communicate, and collaborate (Capgemini Consulting, 2011). Digitalization has become necessary for companies to survive today and achieve the competitive advantages that new technologies and organizational models can offer (Day-yang et al., 2011). Companies that do not attempt to digitalize risk losing their market value to their competitors (Andervin & Jansson, 2016). According to Hagberg and Jonsson (2016), digitalization is a societal change and trend that will affect all companies. Cöster and Westelius (2016) believe that digitalization has become a central part of organizations making it an essential part of companies' different strategies.

The emergence of digitalization is the biggest reason why the world has become smaller and time is faster (Gilan & Hammarberg, 2016). The internet has made it possible for consumers to create grassroots movements; they have the same spread as politicians on social media. At the same time, this can contribute to an uneven polarisation in society; if it is easier to reach out to more people, there could be an overflow of voices (Hartmann et al., 2020). Hartmann et al. (2020) imply that the internet and social media are connected to globalization. The consumer and marketer have access to everything on a more global scale, music, brands, products, pictures, fantasy, ideas; everything is accessible today thanks to the internet.

"A person from Ängelholm in Sweden can easily check out a local craft BBQ sauce maker in Tennessee, and that army veteran sauce maker from Tennessee can, in turn, look at the Instagram pictures of a Swedish craft-knife maker from Simrishamn."

(Hartmann et al., 2020, 243)

In the same way, the Internet can benefit the consumer as it is tailored to the consumer's wishes. The internet has created new markets for companies. Today there are apps, web pages, and online shops that make every day easier for consumers and create business for companies. For example, dating apps have made it possible to date, workout apps make working out more accessible, and so forth. Hartmann et al. (2020) write that the key for companies in today's society is the usage of:

"Facebook-page, Instagram-profile, Twitter-account, webshop or Snapchat-profile "..." Same rules, norms and ideas apply to marketing and how it can and how it should create value for consumers, companies and society, even if it involves different digital tools." (Hartmann et al., 2020, 244)

### 2.6 Integrity

The technological revolution has brought about many changes in our society, which has also meant a change in the importance of personal integrity. With technological development, integrity has received more significant attention from the research community and the media. In this thesis, we have chosen to limit ourselves to the integrity of the internet, more specifically, protecting the personal collection of data on the internet.

In the Swedish language, the concept of personal integrity is defined as the right to have one's "... *inner sphere respected and not to be subjected to personally disruptive interventions*" (Nationalencyklopedins Internettjänst, n.d.). In the 1890s, the concept of privacy was interpreted as the individual's right to be left alone (Cavouikan & Hamilton, 2002). The definition of the term is comprehensive because it contains many different interpretations. According to Neill (2001), the right to privacy can be seen from historical, sociological, metaphorical, legal, moral, and psychological perspectives, among other things. If you look at the legal interpretation of the term, it is a bit complex; Solove and Schwartz (2006) believe that the law cannot determine what privacy is; it can only appoint in which situations it provides legal protection; meanwhile, privacy as a concept refers to the subjective meaning and how it is valued. The subjective interpretation underlines the words "irritating" and "intervening," which demands further clarification to clarify that the concept is often linked to the sanctity of one's private life. However, independence and autonomy are also closely related to the term. The meaning of integrity has changed over time, urbanization and more outstanding material standards have increased the possibilities to withdrawal, people can move around in big cities without being recognized. At the same time, most things nowadays are more accessible where surveillance, just like technology, has continued to develop.

According to Ström (2003), there are four different types of integrity; Information integrity how information about individuals is used, handled, and spread; Body integrity - how individuals are handled physically, for example, through body inspection; Communication integrity - the right to communicate freely through for example letters, email and telephone; Territorial integrity - integrity inside some territories like home and work (Ström, 2003). Body integrity will not be addressed in this study as it does not affect marketing; communication integrity will not be addressed either because this study focuses on marketing on the internet. Siepel (1997) explains that personal integrity is hard to define because it is based on subjective opinions about what feels and is experienced as uncomfortable.

According to Digitala Juristerna (Juristerna, n.d.), the data protection legislation will make it more challenging to gather information about individuals and track their consumption patterns. The data protection legislation aims to protect individuals' integrity which is favorable for the individual, but it puts more pressure on companies as they have to be responsible for collecting personal information carefully. New internal routines and more preparedness are demanded from the companies (Juristerna, n.d.). Digitala Juristerna (n.d.) states that some companies might even lose a part of their income since they can not sell customer registers to other companies as they did before.

### 2.7 Interconnection of the literature review and theoretical framework

A summary of the theoretical frame of reference is summarized below (table 2), and an added brief description of each theory is included. Table 2 is created below to give an overview of how the theoretical framework is presented.

Literature/Theoretical Framework	Author	Description
Discourse Analysis	Winther Jørgensen & Philips (1999)	Different discourses are created when we delimit the world we live in. These are used to describe different parts of the world.
Brand Experience Design	Hamzah et al. (2014)	Brand Experience refers to a specific evaluation generated by brand-related incentives.
Consumer Culture Theory	Arnould & Thompson (2005)	CCT examines attitudes, feelings, and preferences which can affect a consumer's buying behavior.
Flexibility/Adaptability	Hartmann et al. (2020)	Defined as the ability to be flexible and adapt to changing markets.
Digitalization	Cöster & Westelius, (2016)	Digitalization is described as a tool of digital technologies to market a company's products/services.
Integrity	Ström (2003)	The right to have one's inner sphere respected and not to be subjected to personally disruptive interventions.

 Table 2: Compilation of the theoretical frame of reference

With the aid of discourse theory, we can analyze the patterns of the spoken language, which leads us to form small ideas about what may happen in the future (Winther Jørgensen & Philips, 1999). Because we wanted to see how our informants spoke about marketing and consumer experiences in the future, Brand Experience Design needed to be presented in the theory chapter to utilize as a basis for the thesis. When our informants talked about consumer experiences, we chose to include Consumer Culture Theory. Arnould and Thompson's (2005) Consumer Culture Theory explains how feelings, attitudes, and preferences can affect consumer experiences. Furthermore, we concluded that the informants talked about flexibility

and adaptability as something firms have to consider if they are to be competitive. Flexibility and Adaptability led to the identification of another theme: digitalization. As the theory chapter suggests, firms will face many challenges in the future unless they are digitalized. From the collected data, digitalization could be seen from a positive light and a more negative one. Therefore, we chose to include both digitalization and integrity as theories in our literature review. Our analysis will be based on these findings.

# 3 Methodology

This chapter aims to explain the chosen methodology framework for the conducted study. We will highlight why this methodology was chosen and how it supports the purpose of this study. Furthermore, ethical research principles and the critique of the method and sources will be unveiled.

To fulfill the purpose of our study, which was to analyze general discourses surrounding marketing in the future, we chose to use discourse analysis as the primary method. We also decided to conduct semi-structured interviews to obtain nuanced answers that could lead us to what discourses were available to analyze. The discourses subsequently formed the basis for our analysis and discussion.

### 3.1 Discourse analysis as a method

A market does not exist unless spoken about; this is the core meaning of discourse analysis. Norms and ideals are created because people talk about them. For example, how we speak about what it means to be a man or woman establishes the reality of discourses about the subjects in our society. Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) believe that discourse analysis can be, for example, how expert knowledge is conveyed in different ways in the mass media and how other consequences for power and democracy are discussed in different channels. This creates the subjects and objects we talk about where discourse is a system of sentences and language that creates purpose for individuals and society.

As mentioned, to analyze general discourses surrounding marketing in the future, it will henceforth allow discourse theory to be the primary method. As a complement to the method, we used Foucauldian discourse analysis in this study to analyze our semi-structured interviews. This analysis method aimed to produce different discourses regarding what our informants thought about the future of marketing. With the assistance of discourse analysis as a method, we interpreted their different perceptions.

Discourse analysis is conducted through a research process of four steps: The first step (step 1) is to record an authentic conversation, which means the informants would be recorded

during the interview. Transcription of the conversation (step 2) included converting the recorded conversation into text (David et al., 2016), finding themes from the transcriptions. Step three (step 3) identified similar patterns amongst the informants and then analyzed the results found and conclusions were drawn (step 4).

#### 3.1.1 Foucauldian discourse analysis

As a complement to the discourse analysis, Foucauldian discourse analysis was used as a method. There is no specific template for the Foucauldian discourse analysis when analyzing one's collected material. Instead, it functions as a toolbox where the researcher picks out the parts of the approach that are considered most appropriate (Willig, 2007). This study chose to use Willig's (2007) proposal, where the Foucauldian discourse analysis consisted of six steps (table 3): discourse analysis, discourses, action orientation, positionings, practice, and subjectivity (Willig, 2007).

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
<b>Discursive</b> constructions	Discourses	Action orientation	Positionings	Practice	Subjectivity
How the informants talked about the object and how it was constructed.	Similarities & differences in constructions - Located in broader discourses.	Context - What constructions achieves (functions and profits).	Subject position in discourse - Rights and duties	How constructions & subject positions opened up or closed down possibilities	Emotions, thoughts, experiences - Social and psychological effects.

Table 3: A summary of Willig's six-step model step-by-step.

The first step in a Foucauldian discourse analysis consists of discursive constructions and how the discursive objects of interest are constructed in the text. This is done by identifying both explicit and implicit expressions that affect the discursive object: if nothing is said about what is being examined, this will say something about how the object is constructed (Willig, 2007). In this study, the discursive object consisted of marketing in the future. Here, our primary focus was identifying both the explicit and implicit expression of this. Once we identified the discursive objects, we highlighted the differences that the informants had regarding the future of marketing in different colors. Examples of a few cursive objects that we could identify were "*how to behave on the market*" and *"customer needs."*. Afterwards, we chose to copy the quotes in a separate document to keep the material organized.

The second step is to analyze whether there are differences between the discursive constructions identified in the first step; in what different ways are the discursive constituents spoken? Owing to this step, other discourses can be more easily identified (Willig, 2007). In this research, the second step was applied by thoroughly examining the different ways that the informants spoke about the future of marketing. As the result will show in section four (table 4), we identified four dominant discourses regarding the future of marketing. To make the material more tangible and easily handled, we chose to write all the quotes and put them in different category boxes.

The third step aims to take a closer look at the discursive context of the various constructions. This step builds up from step two; it is about finding the degree to which the identified discourses regulate different meanings and attributions of the investigated phenomenon (Willig, 2007). Willig (2007) believes that step 3 makes it possible to understand what "consequences" the discursive objects can have, that is, what power the discourse entails. Foucault believed power was exercised within discourses, expressed by how they control and represent single matters (Foucault, 1993). Flexibility/adaptability was one of the identified discourses which led to the question; who has the power in the future? Will companies who work with flexibility/adaptability have more power than companies who do not? These questions led us to the next step. Step three brought about the discursive constructions of the future of marketing in the interviews. We wanted to examine how these meanings and attributions were made in relation to the future of marketing. By analyzing these discursive objects connected to the text, it was possible to analyze consequences deriving from how these objects were constructed.

The fourth step identifies the subject positions of the identified discourses (Willig, 2007). This survey was created by examining the different ways the informants talked about the

future of marketing. We collected different quotes by looking at the subjective position of the informant's answer. We wanted to analyze what they expected the future of marketing to look like.

In the fifth step, steps three and four are connected. This is about seeing what possibilities and limitations the identified discourses and subject positioning entails for the surveyed (Willig, 2007). We looked at the possibilities and limitations of the discursive constructions and the identified subject position. This was done by looking at how the informants were expected to relate to the fast-changing world. As shown by the results in chapter four, some possibilities and limitations could be identified through the last two discourses (table 4); discourse 3 - companies/organizations must take integrity into account, and discourse 4 - flexibility and adaptation will be a part of future marketing.

The sixth step analyzes the relationship between discourses and subjectivity. One looks at how different discourses are connected and how the individual constructs his reality. This is done by examining the informant's thoughts, feelings, and experiences about the discursive objects within the identified subject positions. (Willig, 2007). Step six is based on interpretation and speculation: it is based on what can be thought, felt, and experienced concerning different subject positions and not regarding what the informants think, feel or experience in relation to them (Willig, 2013). By analyzing our informants thoughts and feelings together with their experiences we could draw conclusions about the found discourses.

#### 3.1.2 Method approach

When analyzing our semi-structured interviews, Foucauldian analysis was utilized as the main tool. The semi-structured interviews were conducted and analyzed first. Different sayings, different meanings of words, and so on were observed during the analysis of the interviews. With the aid of this analytical method, we could follow different perceptions of things despite them saying the same thing and vice versa. Discourse and knowledge are the central notions in these kinds of discourse analysis. Foucault's theories about power and knowledge aids in theorizing the current role of marketing in the future.

#### 3.1.3 Method discussion

Discourse analysis enables the interviewed person to speak freely, and it creates space for any unprepared questions that may arise during the conversation. Compared to other qualitative methods, discourse analysis is beneficial for our study as the actual, authentic conversation is recorded and analyzed. The recorded interviews allowed us to reconstruct and describe the actual communication processes during the interviews.

There are several ambiguities considering where to draw the line between the discursive and the non-discursive. Guidelines for how much sociological theories and social analysis are required do not exist, and discourse analysis can require a lot of time and effort. Discourse analysis focuses solely on language, giving a narrow picture, hence why it should complement other qualitative techniques such as observations or focus group interviews to provide an overall fair picture. It is not hard science; it is an insight or knowledge based on a continuous debate or argumentation (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002).

### 3.2 Semi-structured interview

In qualitative studies, semi-structured interviews are often used, which means that the interviews are more open. This means that new ideas can be taken up during the interview, depending on what the interviewer says. Bryman et al. (2019) believe that the interviewer in a semi-structured interview usually has general themes or questions that need to be explored and addressed. The questions are loosely structured, which gives the interviewee several opportunities to express themselves fully. Semi-structured interviews are an excellent way to gather information. An interview guide was provided beforehand as a tool for the interviewees to have as a starting point and get a general idea of what the interview would consist of. The interview guide was created based on Brand Experience Design's five dimensions as we wanted to find out the informant's thoughts regarding what the future of marketing may look like (Schmitt, 1999). The questions created for the managers, professors and students were based on Patel and Davidson's (2011) different techniques for gathering information. We also conducted Kvale's (1996) list of requirements on how to achieve a successful interview.

We used semi-structured interviews to fulfill the purpose of this study. The aim was to analyze general discourses surrounding marketing in the future. To achieve the best possible answers from the informants, a semi-structured interview was conducted to not constrict the conversation in any way. Our study was about the future, and since no one can predict the future, we prioritized a flowing, natural conversation where the informant could speculate and think aloud. Table 4 below described in short, how the data collection for the semi-structured interviews was collected:

Form of method	How we acquired the data	Purpose	Goal
We conducted semi-structured interviews with informants who have worked with marketing over the years.	We conducted video or live interviews (20-35 minutes) with five informants working with marketing in different industries.	To find different discourses linked to the future of marketing in various industries from a company perspective.	Gain a better understanding of
We conducted semi-structured interviews with informants who study/have studied marketing and two professors researching the field of marketing.	We conducted video or live interviews (20-35 minutes) with four students at bachelor's and master's levels and two professors researching the field of marketing.	To find different discourses linked to the future of marketing from a student and professor perspective.	what the future of marketing may look like.

Table 4: Data collection table for semi-structured interviews

#### 3.2.1 Interview approach

To conduct a meaningful study with satisfying empirical material, we decided to have eleven semi-constructed interviews with former marketing students in Sweden, a senior marketing lecturer and assistant professor, another professor, and managers from different companies in Sweden. We started by choosing six different companies, big and small, which were considered interesting for the research and thus emailed them asking if they would be interested in participating in our study. Unfortunately, three big companies turned down the request following work overload due to the pandemic. The three other companies replied that they would happily participate in our study. We contacted two other companies, and luckily, these companies replied wanting to participate. After contacting different companies, we also contacted four different students, a professor and senior marketing lecturer, and a professor.

The selected students were friends of ours, and they have all acquired a bachelor's degree in marketing. The senior marketing lecturer researches consumer behavior from a financial context perspective, and the professor researches marketing and specializes in consumer experiences. Everyone was very interested, and they all wanted to participate in the study.

After receiving a confirmation email from the participants, we sent out a schedule of dates and times to conduct the interviews. The email included an attachment containing an outline of the purpose of our study. We asked the participants whether they would prefer to do the interview live or via zoom. While waiting for responses, an interview guide with a thematic title for the future of marketing was created. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016) believe that it can be advantageous to formulate different titles/categories before the interview to keep the materials systematic and comprehensive simultaneously as the interviews are kept conversational. This will aid to maintain an informal tone during the interviews and stick to the chosen themes.

The interview questions were constructed with a focus on keeping them as simple and neutral as possible to create reliable and relevant answers (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). We chose to mix direct and indirect questions to reduce the encouragement of dishonest answers. Bryman et al. (2019) describe an indirect question that can make the participant answer what they think but may not want to acknowledge as their own opinion. Therefore, it is favorable to mix indirect questions with direct questions, making it easier to receive the informants opinions and preferences in the direct questions. The questions differed slightly depending on whether the informant was a manager (appendix 1) or a student (appendix 2). We conducted all the interviews, one of us asked the questions, and the other took notes during the interview. By agreeing to do so, the transcribing process was easier to implement afterward. All informants were kept anonymous when transcribing the interviews to ensure that no one would feel inhibited to answer the questions during the interview (Bryman et al., 2019). The anonymization allowed us to ensure rules of good practice when quoting the informants.

#### 3.2.2 General Presentation of Interviewees

Our choice of informants ranged from marketing students and marketing professors to managers from different companies who worked with marketing. The selection of these people gave us new exciting angles and perceptions utilizing their skills and knowledge regarding the future of marketing. Investigating existing discourses regarding the future of marketing was fascinating as there are not many similar previous studies about this subject.

				i	
Informant	Age	Gender	Occupancy	Date & Duration	Location
1	53	Female	Graphic designer, illustrator, and Project manager	April 26, 30 min	Zoom
2	26	Female	Bachelor degree in marketing at the University of Gothenburg	April 28, 30 min	Zoom
3	56	Male	Marketing strategist at two different companies	April 30, 40 min	Zoom
4	25	Female	Business Development Manager	May 5, 30 min	Zoom
5	55	Female	Assistant professor and Senior marketing lecturer	May 5, 30 min	Zoom
6	28	Female	Bachelor degree in economics at City of Gothenburg Education	May 6, 30 min	Face to face
7	23	Female	Bachelor degree in Marketing at the University of Borås, currently working as an Instagram influencer.	May 6, 25 min	Zoom
8	35	Male	Co-Founder of two different companies - Purchasing Manager & Sales Director	May 6, 40 min	Face to face
9	32	Male	Digital strategy and e-commercial specialist	May 6, 40 min	Face to face
10	23	Male	Currently studying a master's program in Innovation and Industrial Management at the University of Gothenburg.	May 7, 30 min	Zoom
11	64	Female	Professor	May 20, 30 min	Zoom

 Table 5: Interviewee Tables

#### 3.2.3 Method discussion

Semi-structured interviews allowed the interviews to be formed in a non-restrictive way, interpreting the questions freely. This gave the informants the possibility to express more nuanced, detailed answers (Bryman et al., 2019). Bryman et al. (2019) suggest that semi-structured interviews provide more benefits; The interviewee can recognize information depending on the informant's answers and how the informants answer a question. This was noticed after constructing the interview guides. Some things were difficult to put into words, but when one interpreted the entirety of what the informant was trying to express, we understood the message. To analyze this paper in the future, it is necessary to know when this paper was written in time to imagine what the world looked like. For example, this paper was written during a global pandemic hence why the interviews were mainly done online via zoom.

There are several uncertainties considering semi-structured interviews because there is no predetermined script that is followed. As a result, the questions can be somewhat sprawling. We have received wide-ranging answers from the interviews, meaning there has been a lot of data to process and analyze. The majority of the informants gave similar answers to the questions, only differing slightly; therefore, we needed to sort out data to avoid repeating information.

Because this thesis aimed to analyze general discourses surrounding marketing in the future, non-probability sampling was used (David et al., 2016). This means that not all people had the same probability of being chosen for this study. Our study focused on the different interpretations about a knowledge intensive-subject which did not make all people favorable participants of the study. Therefore, we made a strategic choice when we chose our informants. For this study we chose managers who worked with marketing directly or indirectly at their firm because we wanted answers that could be linked to the trade and industry.

### 3.3 Principles of research ethics

Research ethics involves the researcher's ethical behavior and the moral issues that arise from research activities. Sweden's government renewed the principles of research ethics legislation in 2017; the new legislation was practiced in our study: human research must be done in coherence with good scientific uses and exploration (Fahlgren & Östgren, 2017). The interview guide in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 was constructed with a non-harming principle that negatively affected the interviewed candidates. We informed the candidates about the purpose of our study by email and asked them to conduct the interview via zoom or live.

# 4 Results & Analysis

This section will present the discourses identified and selected from the interviews. Furthermore, an analysis of the chosen citations will be made. All the identified discourses are based on the presented theories in section 4.1.

## 4.1 General presentation of discourses found in the interviews

By uncovering answers to the research question, 4 general discourses were found. Despite all of the informants being asked the same questions, every individual responded uniquely and contributed to the wide-ranging and nuanced answers. The general discourses will be presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Four discourses regarding marketing, the future, experiences, digitization, and	
integrity	

Discourse	Description		
Consumer Experiences			
	Consumer experiences have to be included in tomorrow's marketing in order for a company to be successful.		
Flexibility / Adaptability	<b>Flexibility and adaptation will be a part of future marketing.</b> A company's success will rely on the ability to adapt its marketing to continue remaining on the market.		
Digitalization	<b>In the future, marketers will need to be digital.</b> If consumer experiences are going to remain in the future, companies/organizations need to keep up with digital development when they market their products/services.		
Integrity	<b>In the future, companies/organizations will need to take integrity into account.</b> As the world becomes more digitalized, more companies can collect personal information, hence why protecting people's integrity has become an important question.		

#### 4.2 The Four Discourses

After analyzing our interviews, consumer experiences were identified as the main discourse which was expected as we chose to delimit this study, focusing on consumer experiences. However, three more discourses were discovered as a complement to the main discourse. The four discourses will be presented in this section.

#### 4.2.1 Consumer Experiences

After analyzing the interviews, the first discourse was identified; Consumer Experiences. We have chosen to connect this to Brand Experience Design theory which includes five dimensions (Schmitt, 1999). Our informants admitted that consumer experiences have to be included in tomorrow's marketing for companies to succeed. Today it is essential to awaken sentiments in consumers when they are buying products and services; this interaction between a firm and a consumer can be defined as Brand Experience Design (Brakus et al., 2009; Hamzah et al., 2014). Firms offer the consumer "something extra" to satisfy their undisclosed desires, which arise when our senses are stimulated (Brakus et al., 2009).

Informant 4 (Business Development Manager) believes that consumers choose products based on their type of person or want to become.

"As a consumer you choose your brand based on what type of person you are. Before it was more common to shop with price and place for example, nowadays marketing with feelings is the big thing. Experiences are important, it is not just about price anymore, experiences are important to attract customers." (Informant 4, Personal communication, 5 May 2021)

Informant 4 implies that companies marketed their products based on different prices and places. Today, marketing is used to create a specific feeling for the consumer. Brakus et al. (2009) write about consumer experiences: firms want to awaken brand-related stimuli using feelings and cognitions when selling their products or services. This can be done using identical packaging or carefully planned store environments (Hamzah et al., 2014).

Informant 9 describes how consumer experiences are something that will exist in the future.

"The common factor for consumer experiences is that it awakens a feeling with the consumer and the companies who do that with user experience whether it is design or whatever in the future, they are the ones who are going to win. What is the next big thing? We have already made very big technical steps so now, only consumer experience is going to be what makes a company succeed." (Informant 9, Personal communication, 6 May 2021)

Informant 9 (Digital Strategy and e-commercial specialist) states that consumer experiences awaken consumers' feelings and firms need to adjust their marketing to awake feelings in consumers. Informant 3 (Marketing strategist) agrees; "[...] You do not always buy a product because it is good, a lot of the time you do not know what you want" (Personal communication, 30 April 20201). Consumers are not always aware of what they desire, what is most crucial in these moments are whether the product gives the consumer "the right feeling". "[...] Most of the time I decide what product I want based on what feeling the product gives me and if it is a product with good quality." (Informant 3, Personal communication, 30 April 20201). Furthermore, Informant 2 (Student) says that: "[...] The bigger the consumer experience is, the more interested the consumer is going to be in the product or service" (Personal communication, 28 April 2021). As long as a company awakens feelings in one way or another with their marketing, it is going to be a winning concept. Informants 9, 3 and 2 statements are linked to Schmitt (1999) theory about Brand Experience Design. This theory says that in dimension 1 a firm can create feelings through packaging, design, communication and environment to catch the consumers attention. This is called Sensory. "[...] For example "Abercrombie and Fitch"; This brand created a "happening" by letting half-naked men pose by the store's entrance. It was an experience which attracted consumers to the company's stores" (Informant 2, Personal communication, 28 April 2021). Informant 2 implies that the experience which "Abercrombie and Fitch" creates to catch consumers' attention worked perfectly.

Informant 7 (Student), who works as an influencer on Instagram, agrees that experiences will be crucial in the future.

"Like, there is no reason that experiences are not going to be bigger in the future. It is hard to get customers to buy a product with only normal marketing by advertising on commercials on TV, social media or banners. I really think it is going to be beneficial for all companies to influence other senses to affect the consumer." (Informant 7, Personal communication, 6 May 20201) This is connected to Dimension 2 in Schmitt (1999) theory; Effective - which means that marketers try to create a solution to a problem created through curiosity, commitment and creativity. The informant states that he/she uses this type of thinking when posting content for different companies. "*I try to awaken curiosity with my followers, in this way they are going to want to buy what I show them.*" (Personal communication, 6 May 20201). Informant 7 (Student) believes this is going to continue to develop in the future. "*The consumer needs to have a feeling of the product before he or she buys it*" (Personal communication, 6 May 20201). The informant gives us an example of how experiences can be used in the future:

"[...] Buying a perfume might look different in the future. Maybe there is a little room, where you can watch a film about the history behind the perfume, then you can smell the perfume in the room. After that, you will be able to buy it." (Informant 7, Personal communication, 6 May 20201)

Schmitt (1999) mentioned in Dimension 3, cognitive is about changing the lifestyle and behaviors of the consumer. Here, the company can motivate and inspire the consumer to make a purchase. This is linked to the statements Informant 2 (Student) makes: "[...] People like to be recognised. To buy a feeling: Volvo for example, when you buy a Volvo you buy security, stability, swedish labor and brand." (Personal communication, 28 April 2021). Informant 10 (Student) also thinks dimension 3 is beneficial for marketers: "For example, Tesla creates a connection between the users, this is genius! A Tesla driver drives a sports car but STILL thinks about the environment, who does not want to be THAT "cool"." (Personal communication, 7 May 2021).

Both Informant 2 (Student) and 10 (Student) talk about Dimension 4, behavioral, which marketers use to create commercials by awakening the consumer's feelings of belonging to a particular group who consumes this product or utilizes this service. *"You buy a whole identity and I think many people like the feeling of belonging to something or recognising yourself in something."* (Informant 2, Personal communication, 28 April 2021). Informant 10 (Student) describes how marketing automatically occurs without the companies having to do very much if they use Dimension 4 in Brand Experience Design:

"When you market in this way, the marketing goes on by itself, the company does not have to do much. If you own a product and you feel connected to others who own the same product, then consumers themselves take marketing further. They inform their friends, etc. I would say based on myself; I would trust someone I know more if they gave reviews and recommendations on something, than if the companies themselves did it. There is too much advertising and marketing today, and that makes it difficult to know who is telling the truth. Creating a sense of belonging will be very important."

(Informant 10, Personal communication, 7 May 2021)

Informant 10 (Student) implies that this marketing technique creates a domino effect because it markets brands, essentially, for free as more people feel the desire to belong to the specific group.

Informant 6 (Student) says that by basing marketing strategies around niched target groups, customer relationships are easier to obtain and maintain because the consumer will feel special and become more loyal towards the company. "*It's about being able to identify with someone, for example, I would rather choose a product that a celebrity recommends than a brand that I have never heard of before.*"(Informant 6, Personal communication, 6 May 2021). This can be connected to Schmitt's (1999) dimension 5 - social; for a firm, this can be expressed in the form of an ambassador who the consumers can relate to and trust. "*There is so much information so you need someone you know,* "*I trust you,*" *it can be a friend or an influencer, some type of person or platform where you are looking for the information.*" (Informant 4, Personal communication, 5 May 2021). Informant 6 (Student) gives us an example of this:

"Take myself for example, I train a lot and I turn to social media and search for someone who maybe runs a lot of races and who I know is genuine. If this person gives a good recommendation on sportswear, I will probably choose to trust this person rather than trust a popular influencer who gets paid to recommend clothes to people. Or I ask a friend who trains a lot instead of sitting and watching all the sports sites online and reading reviews. It's too easy. I still think influencer collaborations will play a big role but also companies need to choose the "right" type of influencers. Many large companies could have made a lot of money by choosing someone who does not have 40K followers, but rather choose actual athletes for a sports brand. If companies would choose more specifically who they want to collaborate with, they have much more to gain from."

(Informant 6, Personal communication, 6 May 2021)

Further, Informant 5 (Assistant professor and senior marketing lecturer) implies that humans make decisions based on previously learned experiences:

"I think a lot in terms of how people make decisions. When I examine my field, I see that this tendency to make decisions by seeking information and making a cognitively conditioned decision is decreasing. A lot of people make decisions from previous experiences they have had. "..." If you have read Daniel Kahneman he writes about this, there is a system one and a system two and he implies that we have two different ways of making decisions, one which is analytical, slow and thoughtful. The second way to make decisions is very fast, intuitive and emotionally based. I think that this and duality exists in people, which means that we have the opportunity to do both, but it may be that to spin back to your question that people in the future will be less likely to take the slow road and be more intuitive and then it almost necessarily becomes more emotion-based because we remove the cognitive in favor of "gut feeling", emotions or to react to a fire or to react to something that does not require reflection and analysis, so maybe it's going to be about people getting lazier? Are you less likely to be thoughtful and analytical, as well as go the analytical route?" (Informant 5, Personal communication, 5 May 2021)

Informant 5 (Assistant professor and senior marketing lecturer) says that humans make decisions based on two systems. System one makes decisions slowly, analytically, and thoughtfully. System two, on the other hand, makes decisions fast, intuitively, and emotionally. Furthermore, the informant implies that humans are a mix between these two, and situations determine whether system one or two is utilized. In the future, humans might tend to utilize system two and make decisions based on previously learned experiences. This is linked to Arnould and Thompson's (2005) theory about CCT; how attitudes, feelings, and preferences can affect a consumer's buying behavior. Perhaps different situations will affect decision-making more like the informant mentions, or will humans base their actions solely on their previously learned experiences? Hartmann et al. (2020) imply that one of the essential prerequisites regarding CCT is that humans consume based on previous experiences and the desire for humans to belong in a specific group in society.

Both informants 6 (Student) and 4 (Business Development Manager) speak about the future of marketing being connected with consumer experiences. "*The competition is so high on the market that customer experiences will have to play a role, this is what will differentiate companies' marketing in the future*." (Informant 6, Personal communication, 6 May 2021). Informant 4 (Business Development Manager) implies:

"It is going to be important to use consumer experiences, people are emotionally driven and you go with gut feeling. Which feeling you want depends on which brand you want to buy from. Everything matters, what type of music is played inside a physical store, what it smells, etc. When everything becomes more digital, it is even more important that everything is based on collected data and even more emphasis is put on specific target groups. You need to be more specific in your marketing towards your own target audience. Consumers have higher requirements, but companies also have more information so they know more specifically how to proceed." (Informant 4, Personal communication, 5 May 2021)

Informant 4 (Business Development Manager) implies that humans are more emotionally driven, making it easier for firms to adapt their marketing, so the consumer experience is fulfilled.

The quotes identified from this discourse suggests that consumer experiences will be vital for the future of marketing. Furthermore, the informants points out that the dimensions in Brand Experience Design will be fulfilled in different ways, but firms need to adapt to the new emerging markets if they want to survive in the future.

#### 4.2.2 Flexibility/Adaptability

When our informants spoke about consumer experiences in marketing, one crucial aspect was mentioned concerning flexibility and adaptability. Companies are required to adapt and be flexible with their marketing if they want to keep up with the market in the future (Berg, 2018). This section will mention digitalization in combination with flexibility/adaptability as these are closely related.

Both informants 3 (Marketing Strategist) and 6 (Student) explain that flexibility and adaptability are becoming crucial for companies in the future.

"[...] In general, I think marketing is going to change a lot. Competitive intelligence and Business intelligence is becoming more and more important. If we look at the world right now, in the middle of a pandemic, how has this affected our view on the market and sales? What has to be done to meet the customers needs? How can you target your offer? Flexibility and adaptive abilities become crucial." (Informant 3, Personal communication, 30 April 2021) "Today we can see that different industries are starting to use digitalization in their marketing. We can also see that marketing is more adapted to individuals. Much of the collection of data but also appropriating the marketing towards a specific consumer group. I think that is the key and you can already see that today." (Informant 6, Personal communication, 6 May 2021)

The informants explain that marketing needs to be adapted according to how the market for different industries changes. Informant 3 (Marketing Strategist) mentions that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought attention to this; companies need to readjust and adapt to be able to reach out to the consumer. This can be connected to Hartmann et al. (2020), who implies that digitalization is here to stay. Informant 6 (Student) says that many companies have started to use digitalization when marketing their products. Furthermore, the informant states that marketing is very adaptable and flexible to the changes in the world. These statements are linked to Hartmanns et al. (2020) discussion regarding the key to firms' success on the market, which lies in creating values for consumers, companies, and society. This is done by changing traditional marketing to digitalized marketing. This can be linked to Foucault's beliefs regarding power in discourses, the most flexible and adaptable firm will most likely have more power in the future than firms who do not adapt (Foucault, 1993).

Informant 6 (Student) thinks many firms will use social media and apps to reach success in the future.

"I think apps are going to affect consumers' buying behavior. Everything has to be available on your phone. But with marketing specifically I think Instagram is still going to be strong. Facebook has decreased a lot during the later years. But then something new is surely going to pop up, and that is the key for companies, but for companies it is also important to be updated and customized. You have to be very reactive on the market. If we look at TikTok, the companies who have hopped on that trend have earned a lot of money there. One has to be updated all the time and see what is happening and be able to customize their marketing; Consumer behaviours change over time and companies need to be responsive to this. "..." Companies may have different apps where you can try on clothes and buy the products and get home delivery fast, maybe even free of charge home delivery. I also think returns are going to be easier. Searching on different web pages and finding what is right for the individual is going to be easier. Maybe the "right" products for the consumer will pop up immediately."

(Informant 6, Personal communication, 6 May 2021)

Informant 6 (Student) states that consumer behavior has changed and will be affected by the digital world; everything will be easily accessible since we are always connected to our cell phones. Hartmann et al. (2020) write that the internet has created different markets for apps, web pages, and so forth. These are created by companies for consumers to find their specific products. This has happened because firms are adapting to consumers' needs for availability.

Informant 8 (Co-Founder, Purchasing Manager & Sales Director) continues on the same track; digital platforms and social media have become more important in their industry which revolves around selling children's articles online.

"Digital and social media have become more important in our industry. In earlier jobs there was more physical marketing, paper advertising and newspapers. More advertising is based on social media now. Google has taken up a lot of space, the digital form has taken more place than the analog." (Informant 8, Personal communication, 6 May 2021)

Informant 8 (Co-Founder, Purchasing Manager & Sales Director) explains that society looked different before when traditional marketing was used. Companies used to advertise their products through physical marketing; today, advertising is done via social media. Informant 8 agrees with Hagberg et al. (2016), who imply that digitalization is a societal change and a trend that is going to affect all companies in different industries. Berg (2018) even stated that if firms do not adapt to the digitalization trend, they will succumb and slowly disappear from the market.

Informant 4 (Business Development Manager) gives us a distinct example of how social media has changed and how firms advertise their products with the assistance of digitalization.

"40 years ago, one could never think that we are where we are today. I got on Instagram when I was 16 and now people have it when they are 12. I have thought about influencers as something that really works, the makeup brand which Bianca Ingrosso owns is really successful, the same thing with the brand Nelly. "..." In the future, ehhm, I think it may be difficult to connect who is what, who is the consumer and who is selling something on social media? "..." The future will require more niche influencers, in order to be able to discern who is what. "..." influencers have to be more relevant and stricter requirements have to be made. You want to follow them because they have interesting opinions and values. There is going to be more broadness in the future. I think there is going to be more of everything in the future!" (Informant 4, Personal communication, 5 May 2021)

Informant 4 (Business Development Manager) says that in just a few years, the world has changed a lot. Today's younger generation adapts to the digital world at an early age; companies caught on to this early and thus adapted to this change. A big issue with today's marketing, which could create a problem for future marketing on social media that the informant mentioned, is distinguishing who the consumer is and who the producer is. This further aligns with what Hartmann et al. (2020) mention; it is harder to draw the line between consumers and producers. Consumers have a greater voice than they have ever had before; there are too many opinions on social media. Informant 4 thinks the future is bright due to this kind of adaptation of marketing. Influencers on social media will be more niched, specialize in a specific lifestyle, and target more specific adapted audiences.

This discourse about flexibility and adaptability provided different quotes from the interviews. Some common factors were found among the Informants: first off, the importance of firms' adaptations to different marketing trends. Secondly, if firms do not adapt and are not flexible, competitors on the market who do that will be a long way ahead. Thirdly, the informants all agreed that digitalization has demanded more availability from firms; today, consumers want to follow everything on social media, and the need to be updated is constant. Lastly, there will be even more consumer focus since the consumer is becoming more and more aware of what they may desire, which puts bigger pressure on companies. So to summarise, companies' flexibility and adaptability are required more now than before as consumers are becoming pickier and the demands are ever-increasing. Unless companies adapt and develop, they will not survive in the near future. We believe this may lay the groundwork for an upcoming, exciting exploration in further chapters.

#### 4.2.3 Digitalization

During the interviews, the informants were asked what they thought would happen with marketing five to ten years from now. This led to the emergence of discourse three; Digitalization. Our informants agree that digitalization has changed and will change the future of marketing in many ways. Digitalization affects all parts of society and naturally, all companies are also going to be affected by this change (Hagberg et al., 2016). To achieve

competitive advantages today, digitalization is a must (Day-yang et al., 2011). The informants all agreed that digitalization is necessary today to be competitive as a company in the future.

Informant 6 (Student) states that digitalization will change the way consumers act and how it might change the future of marketing.

"I think everything is going to be more digitalized, It is going to be a requirement for every company to be able to stay on the market. Digitalized to the extent where people are not going to be walking into a physical store to shop, there might be digital changing rooms which are "virtual reality" based, you can try on clothes from home. I also think consumers are going to put more requirements on companies. I think consumers are going to be more picky. The requirements are going to be higher, which makes it more important for companies to be digitalized." (Informant 6, Personal communication, 6 May 2021)

Informant 6 (Student) believes that digitalization is going to be a requirement for all firms in the future. One way that digitalization might drastically change our current ways of traditional shopping, as informant 6 mentions, is a complete elimination of physical stores. The informant means that these are going to be replaced by "virtual reality" shopping instead. This is linked to Capgemini Consulting's (2011) statement that firms will entirely change their working, communicating, and collaborating ways due to digitalization. Technology's fast development aids companies during their conversion to digitalization.

Informant 1 (Graphic designer, illustrator and project manager) states that "[...]Thanks to the digital world and all the search engines, the consumer herself or himself can do a quick consumer analysis; compare different offers and evaluate propositions." (Personal communication, 26 April 2021). Today's digital search engines have made consumers' buying processes easier by making information about different companies easily accessible. As Hartmann et al. (2020) state, consumers and marketers have access to more information globally. This may aid to satisfy the consumer's demand faster. Search engines can make digital visibility for firms easier, and they might capture consumers in an early stage.

Both informants 2 (Student) and 10 (Student) explain how marketing is ever-changing and permanently affected by ongoing trends in society.

"I believe marketing changes very fast and it is constantly developing and it needs to develop. Trends change all the time and if you do not want to develop or change you won't be able to compete with your competitors. One has to accept the fast pace, otherwise you are out. A lot of serious companies are marketing themselves on "TikTok," which was [used to be] considered a digital platform for children. You start to realize the value of this [TikTok] that [once] could have caused backlash among many traditional companies, like it is below their level. But at the same time it is something that works. You kind of have to "go with the flow" when you marketize your products."

(Informant 2, Personal communication, April 2021)

"[...] sees a change with new platforms, the world is constantly changing. The platforms that were relevant a few years ago are not relevant today. It's weird that I have to go into it, but I see sponsored posts on TikTok all the time these days, this was not expected a few years ago. It goes quickly with which platforms are in or not." (Informant 10, Personal communication, 7 May 2021)

Information 2 (Student) describes how different societal trends are going to develop, and if firms do not accept these drastic changes, they are not likely to survive and thrive. Furthermore, the informants mention that the app "TikTok" will be used more for digital advertising. Informant 11 (Professor) agrees with Informant 2s statement "*Marketing will take place on social media, but of course it is always complicated to foresee the future*" (Informant 11, Personal communication, 20 May 2021). This is linked to Hartmanns et al. (2020) writing about marketers' need to use digital tools to create value for the consumer. The key today is being present in the digital world to gain a competitive advantage. Informant 10 (Student) says that firms are becoming more aware of the value created when traditional marketing is taken to the next level, which Hartmann et al. (2020) also imply.

Informant 4, who currently works as a business development manager for a company responsible for marketing products to pharmaceutical companies, states that:

"[...] marketing has changed alot since I started, it moves fast. Consumers are more aware and interested, especially their interest in digital marketing. Pharmaceutical companies have become more aware and they wonder how they are going to reach out to their patients with information about their diseases. "..." The challenge today is that the pharmaceutical market has of course many regulations and that can be tricky to handle but our digital sales are increasing a lot. This also means that everything needs to be very thought through." Informant 4 (Business Development Manager) implies that marketing has changed a lot which led to the change of consumer behaviors. Consumers' awareness has increased, especially regarding pharmaceutical companies. This has also raised the question among pharmaceutical companies: how will we reach out to our patients correctly? Giving the wrong information about diseases could potentially cause complications. Hartmann et al. (2020) state that digitalization has created an uneven polarization in society. Furthermore, informant 10 (Student) says that it is hard to know how marketing for pharmaceutical firms will be affected by digitalization since that specific market is very information-sensitive.

Informant 1 (Graphic Designer, Illustrator & Project Manager), who works as a project manager and graphic designer and illustrator at a clothing company, states that digitalization might be the future of marketing:

"Digital development is going to continue to be a big part of the changes. AI, voice searching, even more targeted ads, personalized content etc. Companies' strategies are probably going to be based on ongoing societal trends, for example at my company we are trying to adapt to digitalization by changing our marketing approach. For example, before there was only a webpage available but now we have also opened up an Instagram page."

(Informant 1, Personal communication, 26 April 2021)

Informant 1 believes digital development will play a significant part in future marketing since it has already left a big imprint on society today. Cöster and Westelius (2016) state that digitalization has become a centralized part of today's firm's strategies. The informant gives us an example of how it has affected their company; they chose to create an Instagram account to meet the consumers' needs more effectively and at the same time keep up with today's trends. This can be connected to what Hagberg and Jonsson (2016) tell us, digitalization is a societal change and trend that affects today's companies and the companies of tomorrow.

The digitalization discourse gave us different quotes from the interviews on how companies will use digitalization for marketing their products in the future. Everyone agreed that companies must digitalize in order to survive and be competitive in the market today and in

the future. Not all industries will utilize digitalization at all stages; it might be more about adapting digitalization to the industry you work in, in the best possible way. Most informants believe that regardless of what digital platform companies are going to use, digital marketing in some form is necessary to meet future consumers' demands.

### 4.2.4 Integrity

The new digital world has created problems, which leads us into the following discourse, integrity. Most of the informants implied that integrity is an integral part of future marketing. Integrity is used by companies to market their products to the "right" consumer. Ström (2003) explains that four different areas surrounding the concept of integrity are; Information-, bodily-, communication- and territorial integrity.

Informant 2 (Student) says that all personalized ads are not necessarily helpful; they are more of an invasion of privacy and personal integrity as one tends to feel monitored.

"I understand the value of companies needing to be at the forefront and have a lot of campaigns and ads in several different places, but it can get so heavily infected. Advertisements are popping up everywhere; Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Snapchat. And the sickest thing is that all the advertising that comes up might be something I have searched for earlier on Google." (Informant 2, Personal communication, 2 April 2021)

As Informant 2 describes, a threat against integrity can happen when an individual's consumption patterns are sold to a third party without the individual's knowledge. The individual may feel offended by this and their personal information can be exposed to unreliable sources (Siepel, 1997).

Informant 10 (Student) says it is uncomfortable that one's personal integrity becomes visible to anyone.

"[...] GDPR came for a reason, personal security is important. It's a little uncomfortable, all the information companies can gather from you. When you press "allow cookies," you barely have any idea what it is you are allowing companies to track." (Informant 10, Personal communication, 7 May 2021) A lot of times, you have no idea what it is you are allowing companies to see. This is connected to what Ström (2003) conveyed about the different territories within personal integrity; your home and work. The individual sees their territory as their own personal space (Ström, 2003). Since digitalization has opened up a whole new world on the internet, it is possible that our informants feel that their territory (mostly digital services and social media) is threatened. An invasion of their territory can feel uncomfortable, almost like someone is following them. During our interviews, we have discovered patterns that can be regarded as a threat to an individual's integrity. Even though every informant's perception is different, there is a common theme regarding what personal integrity means for individuals and how they imply that this will affect future marketing in a digitalized world (Siepel, 1997).

All of the informants discuss information integrity. Ström (2003) explains that information integrity covers how a person's information is saved, spread, and used. One way of looking at information integrity can be done from a consumer and company perspective.

Informant 10 (Student) who is enrolled in a master's program in innovation and industrial management and works at a company that provides healthcare solutions, discusses integrity as something important for the future of marketing.

"Data security and the GDPR have become more and more important. This makes the issue of integrity more important, which can of course make a difference for companies. On the other hand, I think that you as a consumer will be able to make your own preferences visible, this in itself could make it easier for companies. If I want to be enlightened by things that I am interested in, companies do not have to spend time and money on paying for "unnecessary" marketing. It will be a win-win, it will definitely be more difficult."..." hopefully we will be able to control how we want to be seen and I think it will make it easier for the company because then they will not have to look for it themselves."

(Informant 10, Personal communication, 7 May 2021)

Informant 10 implies that the debate around integrity is an important question to include in future development. In many aspects, integrity can create limitations for companies who want to follow consumers' consumption patterns. On the other hand, Informant 10 suggests that it can be convenient for companies to consider the individuals' personal information. This could lead to the individual being able to tailor their information and control what is shown on their social media. The Informant means that this will be a win-win situation for the

company that does not need to waste time and money on unnecessary marketing, and the consumer does not get bombarded with advertising and commercials on their channels.

From a company's perspective, which Informant 9 (Digital strategy and e-commercial specialist) gives us, the threat against personal integrity is more complicated for companies to consider when it comes to their marketing because the possibility to track an individual's information is limited.

"[...] Many companies need to be more contextual with their marketing in order to survive, I think this is due to a consequence of technical factors; the new development with tracking. "... "It is more complicated now. The new IOS update with IDP, same thing is going to happen with Google Chrome now, it is not possible to track people the way we did before. Before we could follow the consumer from the moment they logged on to the webpage all the way to when they pressed the first product and put it in the shopping bag. Now we can only see that the consumer logged onto the page and see when they left." (Informant 9, Personal communication, 6 May 2021)

According to Informant 9, it will be much harder for companies to survive when companies cannot follow a consumer's behavior unless they can track the consumer's information on digital platforms. This is connected to the article written by Digitala Juristerna mentioned in the theory chapter, which states that the new data protection legislation will make it more difficult for companies to track their consumer's consumption patterns as it is more complicated to access individuals personal information.

The quotes from the interviews were found which fit this discourse. The common denominator described amongst these quotes was the benefits and disadvantages of stricter rules regarding gathering personal information for companies and individuals. This shows that several informants are aware of what it can mean if stricter rules are introduced in the future. Another shared factor among the informants who answered from a consumer perspective was an invasion of their privacy on digital platforms.

As described by our informants, integrity will play a significant role in companies' future marketing strategies and in order to be a leading company on the market, they have to be updated and aware of the rules regarding personal integrity to be future market leaders. Siepel

(1997) implies that integrity is hard to define which will make it difficult for companies in the future to handle since there is no clear definition of the problem. Our informants mention the problem of integrity in the same way that Digitala Juristerna (Juristerna, n.d.) discusses companies' future challenges regarding integrity. On the other hand, as Informant 10 (Student) mentions, a potential solution to this problem could potentially aid consumers and the company.

The fact that more people view integrity as something important can be seen as positive. More companies understand that they have a big responsibility to protect personal information. Companies can market their products and services in the "right way" with consumers close to their side. The consumer is not going to feel tricked or crowded by companies. According to the information we collected from the interviews, companies are aware of their actions and understand the impact integrity will have in the future.

# 5 Discussion & Conclusion

In this section, we will discuss the new insights that have been discovered during our research. Future research about the analyzed subject and clarification of how this thesis could contribute to researchers, marketers, and society is presented. In conclusion, new insights are going to be discussed regarding what knowledge has been added to our chosen theories.

### 5.1 Implications for researchers

The future of marketing is interpreted differently depending on whom you ask; this was made clear after analyzing our informants answers during the interviews. Professors, marketing managers, and students all view the future of marketing differently. However, one common notion shared among our informants was: consumer experiences will be a part of tomorrow's marketing and discourses about flexibility and adaptability, digitalization, and integrity.

Our study shows that different discourses exist regarding how people talk about the future. The thesis is constructed, partly, according to Schmitt (1999), regarding the five dimensions of consumer experiences, which we have chosen to put in context for the future. Additional discourses were found which will play a significant role in the future: flexibility/adaptability, digitalization, and integrity. Discovering different discourses about the future of marketing is generally viewed as positive because people believe marketing will continue to develop in the future.

We want this study to arouse an interest in reflections to continue researching what the future of marketing may look like, but with the other discourses as analysis tools for creating new issues. That is, new opportunities to analyze other relevant aspects. If similar studies are to be conducted in the future, it would be interesting to include more perspectives. Interviews with politicians, governments, and authorities regarding their views of what the future of marketing may look like and constructing new strategies based on this could be conducted. How can it be implemented in their organizations? If they are already examining the future of marketing today, how can they create strategies that can be implemented in the future? Governmental bodies have a social responsibility, and they need to influence members of society; examining and discovering discourses regarding the future of marketing might aid this. It would be exciting to examine answers taken from a bigger crowd of people. Would additional discourses be discovered if this were to be done?

Another riveting exploration would be to examine whether our informants would answer similar to a comparable study in five to ten years. Would it be possible to obtain the same answers by using the same method and questions? Furthermore, the existing trend regarding consumer experiences could be interesting to examine in the future. Is it going to survive, or will there be a different trend dominating marketing?

# 5.2 Implications for marketing & society

What can this thesis contribute to marketing today? We believe this paper can guide readers into understanding the chosen subject, and the research may contribute to future marketing studies as it explores a potential future. Our informants thought it was an exciting topic to discuss, and oftentimes the individuals had to reflect a lot before they could answer the question we asked them.

Hopefully, our study will serve to provide companies some food for thought regarding the subject of the future of marketing where a new awareness of how to reach out to consumers will be achieved. Whether it is today, but also in the future, they might come to realize the value of the consumers' demands, which are experiences. Similarly, we believe that society can economically benefit from firms enhancing their skill and knowledge regarding the matter and adjusting marketing strategies to meet these new consumer demands.

# 5.3 Conclusion & answer to the research question

In many ways, one can argue that the future is already here. The development of society moves at a pace so fast we can barely keep up with the new technology that keeps getting introduced. To answer our research question:

RQ: What are the general discourses surrounding marketing in the future?

The general discourses existing concerning the future of marketing are:

- (1) Consumer experiences,
- (2) Flexibility/Adaptability,
- (3) Digitalization,
- (4) Integrity.

The first discourse our informants mentioned was consumer experiences as a prominent part of firms' future marketing strategies which are going to be important to survive on the market. Brand Experience Design theory was born out of consumer experiences, and it was therefore easy for us to connect consumer theories to this term of the relatively unknown theory (Brand Experience Design). Although not directly implicated, elements from the theory were continuously mentioned leading us to draw this conclusion. The second discourse regarding flexibility/adaptability arose when the informants spoke about companies' ability to continue being successful on the market. Companies need to be susceptible to change and be willing to adapt to the market's ever-changing trends. The third discourse, digitalization, came about as informants were asked about what they think may happen to the market in the next five to ten years. Heavy emphasis was put on the importance for all firms to digitalize in the future. The fourth and last discourse that emerged from the interviews was Integrity. Some of the informants, primarily the marketing managers, viewed it as a hindrance to developing and continuing their marketing strategies. The students saw it as beneficial for the consumers, and one of the students even gave us a potential solution to a problem of which Integrity can create.

With these new findings, we believe that adding one new dimension to the original five ones created by Schmitt (1999) is necessary for tomorrow's marketing. The new sixth dimension will be Flexibility/Adaptability. Schmitts (1999) five dimensions are most likely not going to be sufficient in the future as marketing is developing faster than ever before based on the results found in this thesis. A sixth dimension is needed because we live in a time where changes happen drastically and frequently; for example, an almost unforeseen pandemic occurs, seemingly out of nowhere leaving the world forever changed. Therefore we argue that companies and consumers need to be more flexible and adaptable to these market trends and changes. As presented in the results, digitalization is a necessary conversion firms need to implement to become more flexible and adaptable to ongoing trends making it an essential component of the new sixth dimension. Integrity is an additional element added to the sixth

dimension as becoming more digitalized also means that personal information is spread on the internet. Today's market requires flexibility and adaptability more, hence why Integrity and Digitalization are deemed components to flexibility and adaptability and not individual dimensions. Regardless of marketing trends today, firms are always going to have to adapt to the market, so we believe a sixth dimension needs to be added.

To conclude and answer our research purpose, we recognize that all the informants we spoke to had an idea of what the future of marketing may look like. Since we examine thoughts and language patterns about the future, the answers are speculative, and we do not know if the discourses we have found today will apply tomorrow. Everything is therefore speculative, and time can only tell what will happen in the future.

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# Appendix

# Appendix 1

We start the interview with these questions:

- Welcome and thank the informant for participating and for taking the time
- Explain the purpose of the interview and ask if the informant has any questions
- Explain the conduct of the interview and that we record the conversation, but the informant's answers will be completely anonymous in the thesis.

And then follow up with these questions:

- What is your name and how old are you?
- What is your professional background? (Job/education)
- Why did you choose to work with marketing?
- Since you started, do you feel that marketing has changed, and if so, how?
- Do you think that marketing will need to change in different industries to meet consumers' needs better?
- Will consumer experiences become more / less important in marketing?
- What do you think will happen to the consumer experiences 5-10 years into the future?
- Will consumer experiences be a leading marketing strategy in the future?
- Will emotional marketing play a more significant role in the future?
- How do you think businesses will handle marketing in the future?

# Appendix 2

We start the interview with these questions:

- Welcome and thank the informant for participating and for taking the time
- Explain the purpose of the interview and ask if the informant has any questions
- Explain the conduct of the interview and that we record the conversation, but the informant's answers will be completely anonymous in the thesis.

And then follow up with these questions:

- What is your name and how old are you?
- What is your current occupation, and what have you studied?
- What do you think marketing's primary role is?
- Do you think that marketing will need to change in different industries to meet consumers' needs better?
- Do you feel that the consumer experience will be whiter / less important in marketing?
- What do you think will happen to the consumer experiences if we think 5-10 years into the future?
- Follow-up question: Do you think that consumer experiences is a marketing strategy that will be a leader in the future of marketing?
- Do you think emotional marketing will play a more significant role in the future?
- Which channels do you think will be leading in the future? for marketing
- How can a company stand out with its marketing in the future? How are they going to be different than other companies on the market?

## Appendix 3

Interview schedule:

- \*Monday 26/4 11 a.m. Graphic designer, illustrator and Project Manager Female
- \*Wednesday 28/4 11 a.m. Student with Bachelor degree Female
- \*Friday 30/4 12.05 p.m. Marketing Strategist Male
- \*Wednesday 5/5 12.03 p.m. Business Development Manager Female
- \*Wednesday 5/5 2.30 p.m. Assistant Professor and senior marketing lecturer Female
- \*Thursday 6/5 Noon, Student with Bachelor degree Female
- \*Thursday 6/5 1.30 p.m. Student with Bachelor degree Female
- \*Thursday 6/5 2.45 p.m. Co founder-purchasing manager and sales director Male
- \*Thursday 6/5 2.45 p.m. Digital strategy and e-commercial specialist Male
- \*Friday 7/5 10 a.m. Student with Bachelor degree Male
- \*Thursday 20/5 2 p.m. Professor Female



### UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG school of business, economics and law

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