Internal marketing through gamification

A qualitative study on the influence of game elements within an app on internal marketing activities

Alf Grönvall
Axel Holmmer Härgestam

Department of Business Administration
International Business Program
Degree Project, 30 Credits, Spring 2019
Supervisor: Galina Biedenbach
Abstract

The subject of gamification is a relatively new and novel concept when it comes to stimulating behavior. Gamification is the use of game elements in a non-game context. Gamification is a tool that can motivate people to engage with activities related to health, education and personal productivity. Gamification can be used in a plethora of areas, and business and organizational contexts are no exception.

This study investigates how gamification and the use of game elements in an organizational context influence internal marketing activities. Internal marketing is a management philosophy that explores how to treat employees as internal customers to increase the quality of service. This study investigates how gamification and game elements can help accomplishing this goal through influencing internal marketing activities. The study answers the following research question:

How do game elements within an app influence internal marketing activities?

The purpose of the study is to investigate how gamification and game elements of an app influence internal marketing activities. The app we are investigating was developed by Volvo Group for their employee ambassador program, called #WeAreVolvoGroup. The app is the context which is being investigated as it contains elements of gamification. A conceptual framework has been developed containing game elements as an influence on seven internal marketing activities, which are job product development, employee recruitment, training and education, motivation and reward, internal market research, internal communication, and retention of staff.

A qualitative study was conducted by interviewing managers and users of the app, #WeAreVolvoGroup. By using the thematic analysis, the results were presented and combined into themes that were further analyzed and connected to the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework was revised by retracting internal marketing activities that the app did not contribute to, which were job product development, employee recruitment, training and education, and retention of staff, and adding additional factors that the app contributes to. The findings of this study demonstrate that gamification influences the internal marketing activities that were present in the app listed as motivation and reward, internal communication, and internal market research, as well as additional factors which was company culture and personal branding. Our findings showed that the gamification and game elements of the app influenced these activities.
Acknowledgements

We want to express our gratitude to our supervisor Galina Biedenbach for her guidance and support through this perilous thesis work.

We also want to express our gratitude to Volvo Group for helping us with this research, along with all the participants of the study. Lastly, we want to thank our fellow student colleagues for the emotional support on this journey.

2019-05-20
Umeå School of Business, Economics and Statistics
Umeå University

×  ×
Alf Grönvall  Axel Holmner Härgestam
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 1
   1.1 Choice of subject .............................................................................................................. 1
   1.2 Problem background .................................................................................................... 2
       1.2.1 Gamification ........................................................................................................ 2
       1.2.2 Internal marketing .............................................................................................. 4
       1.2.3 Volvo Group and #WeAreVolvoGroup ......................................................... 4
   1.3 Theoretical background and knowledge gaps ............................................................... 5
   1.4 Research question ......................................................................................................... 6
   1.5 Purpose .......................................................................................................................... 6

2. Scientific Methodology ....................................................................................................... 8
   2.1 Ontology ....................................................................................................................... 8
   2.2 Epistemology ............................................................................................................... 8
   2.3 Research approach ....................................................................................................... 9
   2.4 Research strategy ......................................................................................................... 10
   2.5 Pre-understandings ..................................................................................................... 12
   2.6 Literature search ......................................................................................................... 12
   2.7 Choice of theories ........................................................................................................ 13
   2.8 Ethical considerations ................................................................................................. 14

3. Theoretical Framework ....................................................................................................... 16
   3.1 Internal marketing ........................................................................................................ 16
       3.1.1 Internal marketing objectives and activities ................................................ 19
       3.1.2 Company culture .............................................................................................. 26
       3.1.3 Internal marketing and HRM activity alignment ........................................... 26
   3.2 Gamification ................................................................................................................ 28
       3.2.1 Categories of gamification .............................................................................. 28
   3.3 Game elements ............................................................................................................. 30
       3.3.1 Mechanics .......................................................................................................... 30
       3.3.2 Dynamics .......................................................................................................... 33
       3.3.3 Aesthetics ......................................................................................................... 34
       3.3.4 MDA-framework conclusion ......................................................................... 35
   3.4 Meaningful gamification ............................................................................................. 35
   3.5 Octalysis framework .................................................................................................. 38
   3.6 Conceptual framework ............................................................................................... 41

4. Practical methodology ........................................................................................................ 43
   4.1 Data collection method ............................................................................................... 43
   4.2 Interview guide ........................................................................................................... 44
Table of Figures and Tables

Figure 1 - Relationship between categories of gamification ........................................... 29
Figure 2 - The MDA-framework and the experience of games ......................................... 30
Figure 3 - Conceptual model .......................................................................................... 42
Table 1 - Table of interviews ......................................................................................... 48
Figure 4 - The revised conceptual model ...................................................................... 74
1. Introduction

In this chapter, the choice of subject for this thesis along with problem background is presented. The theoretical background and research gaps for this research are also presented. The chapter concludes with the research question and purpose of this thesis.

1.1 Choice of subject

The first thing that comes to many people’s minds when they hear the term ‘gamification’ is technology and relation to video games. Gamification is however a much wider subject and it extends over the horizon of its digital application. Gamification is defined by Deterding, et al (2011, p. 1) as “the use of game design elements in a non-game context”. Chances are that you have come across gamification in your everyday life without even knowing about it. This is because game elements in business environments does not exude the aura of being games. The core of games is not entertainment, but a fusion of human nature and skillful design (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 9). Some interpretations of the subject of gamification has been around before the term was even established in research. An example of this would be a basic customer loyalty program at a cafeteria which stamps a card which promises that the 10th coffee you buy will be free of charge (Zichermann, 2017). But gamification is not only applicable for businesses that seek to reach external customers, but it is also a valuable tool to affect and motivate a firm’s internal customers, the employees, as well (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 13).

It would be a lie if we were to say that the choice of subject of gamification was not rooted in our affinity for video games. Throughout both of our lives, video games have been a big part of our upbringing. Part of our formation can and should also be attributed to games such as the massive multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) World of Warcraft (WOW) where we learned how to approach different kinds of problems as part of a unified team with diverse attributes and skills. Consequently, we owe a lot to video games. When it comes to the acquirement of our skills in language, teamwork and leadership it is certain that games have helped us develop.

Our story is not unique in today’s digitalized world and especially not when you adopt the idea of video games as being just a subcategory in the much larger context of games. The idea of games has been around for as long as human civilization’s existence (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 8). Throughout all of history people have learned similar lessons as us, not only through video games, but also through different kinds of sports, card games, puzzles, board games, children’s games, along with many more. Today, we live in a society where games play a part of every individual’s life (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 8). Because this also applies to any kind of individual (Elliott, 2008) it is appropriate to assume that games are and have been a part of you, the reader’s life as well. While games have been played for fun, the emergence of gamification has given games a practical use in a business context. However, gamification is not only used as a marketing tool for businesses. One usage of
gamification is also as a tool for improving internal business practices. Businesses use different types of tools to motivate their employees, it can be through monetary compensation or other intangible means. This is where we have decided to focus our research, the usage of gamification internally in organizations as a motivational tool.

As marketing students, we have been taking part of the ever-changing industry from an academic perspective. Our interest in the subject of gamification is, as before mentioned, most certainly centered around our interest in video games but also from our interest in marketing. Today, where communication is a key instrument in all aspects of our lives, the internal marketing of organizations is easily overlooked. Within our personal experiences, companies are not emphasizing the importance of marketing towards their employees. The question then arises how to solve this, and a possible solution might be through gamification which will encourage and motivate both staff and managers to partake in internal marketing activities.

Our interest in Volvo Group was born out of a wish to investigate how a global organization works internally and how it takes use of modern technology solutions to modern business problems. Volvo is a brand that every Swede is familiar with and we, the authors, are not an exception to this. This is not only due to the success of Volvo Cars but also the wide reach that Volvo Group has with their own brands, for example Volvo Trucks and Volvo Penta. Additionally, one of us is originally from Gothenburg where the headquarters of Volvo Group resides, along with many of its brands. Through personal contacts and a lot of calls we were granted access to research Volvo Group’s ambassador app #WeAreVolvoGroup. This is an exciting prospect since it allows us to see how a global organization can motivate its employees to go the extra step in representing their company and what impact this might have on Volvo Group internally.

1.2 Problem background

1.2.1 Gamification

A study conducted in 2012 by the ISFE (Interactive Software Federation of Europe, 2012) reported that 62% of Swedish people have during the last 12 months played a game, and 34% play games weekly (ISFE, 2012, p. 5). The games investigated in this study were games that are played on consoles, computers, portable devices, tablets, and phones. This included apps, online games, multiplayer games, and purchased games, among others (ISFE, 2012, p. 3). In this study, traditional games such as board games, dice games, and card games were excluded, which most probably would have generated a higher percentage. Games are surely a part of many people’s lives, and it is a fair assumption that everyone has played a game in their life. Either at the playground when they were a kid, or board games at home with the family, or video games with their friends in the living room sofa. Games are a cornerstone of entertainment and pastime in today’s society.

Games can not only be used as entertainment or a pastime to escape from reality. Games can be applied to real life and solve real problems that affect people. One historical example comes from the Kingdom of Lydia, as written by ancient Greek historian Herodotus in his accounts *The Histories* (440 B.C., cited by McGonigal, 2011, p. 5-6; Rawlison et al., 1861,
The Kingdom of Lydia was suffering from a great scarcity of food. The people were patiently waiting for things to get better without much complaining, but when the situation became dire, they came up with a solution for the problem. They decided that on one day people would play games and the next day they would eat. The idea was that while playing these games, the people would be so engaged and immersed in the games that they would not feel any craving for food. This idea held up and sustained them for eighteen years, during which time they had come up with many more games to play, e.g. dice, sheep knuckles, and balls. (440 B.C., cited by McGonigal, 2011, p. 5-6; Rawlison et al., 1861, p. 182). This is a historical example of how games can solve real world problems, in this case a scarcity of food.

With the development of technology, and games, there are other examples of how games can solve real world problems. Chore Wars is an alternate reality game that is played by a person in real life with roommates, family, or office colleagues. The games objective is to do chores and is described by its creator, Kevan Davis, as a “chore management system” (2007, cited in McGonigal, 2011, p. 120). Chore Wars lets you collect points based on the chores you complete in your apartment, house, or office, and lets you track your gained experienced points and compare it to the people you are playing with. The points that you use are assigned to a character that you create on the Chore Wars webpage (Davis, n.d.). As a real-life application, Chore Wars creates a fun game out of the tedious tasks of doing chores and turns them into a competition with the people you choose to play it with.

The two previous examples have shown how games can solve real life challenges and how to make them fun to perform. However, games can also be used to solve challenges in a business environment as well. One example of this is the Language Quality Game implemented by Microsoft. The Language Quality Game was a task that required the knowledge of native language speakers to apply their knowledge of their native languages and dialects to implement in Microsoft software (Smith et al., 2015, p. 1). In this game, Microsoft introduced several game mechanics that encouraged employees to “play the game” and contribute to the software development. The mechanics used are a crucial element of the gamification itself, as they facilitate the motivation to “play” and to attract players. The mechanics of the Language Quality Games were levels of progression, reward systems, graphical image movement, and leaderboard of performance (Smith et al., 2015, p. 3). Not only was the Language Quality Game a success, but participants even thought that the game itself was addicting and enjoyable (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 18).

These are examples of the use of games and game design elements to overcome real-life problems, which is one of the many applications for gamification. Gamification to overcome starvation, gamification to complete tedious tasks, and gamification in a business context. These examples show that the possible applications for gamification are versatile and can be applied in many different contexts.
1.2.2 Internal marketing

We, the authors of this work, both have extensive experience working at service stations for established brands and this experience have taught us that scenarios of miscommunication are common for many service workers. The question arises of where the fault lays, with the employee, manager, or the manager’s manager? The answer is “neither” as the fault lays within the organization and its view on employees. Too often do the frontline people take the blame when the real problem are the processes that do not work or makes sense (Albrecht & Zemke, 1990). A solution within organizations that deals with offering services to their customers has come in the form internal marketing. Grönroos et al. (2008, p. 377) suggests that companies should share their external communication with the personnel before releasing it to the public. This would lead to an avoidance of situations where frontline staff meets customers that have been exposed to external marketing campaigns while personnel have not. This in turn could also lead to increased employee engagement in wanting to fulfill the promises that are marketed to the customers.

The problem of seeking short-term goals in the form of sustainable competitive advantage in comparison to the more long-term orientation of putting focus on organizational processes have been around for decades (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990, p. 16-17; Bansal et al., 2001, p. 62). However, the implications of applying internal marketing within companies have not been ignored by practitioners. It has been stated that companies need to put their employees first in order to attain customer loyalty which can only be reached by applying this relationship building orientation (Bansal et al., 2001, p. 62-63).

We have identified a possible method of approaching internal marketing with gamification as a tool to engage employees in internal marketing activities. Since gamification can be used in several different organizational purposes such as marketing (Chou, 2016, p. 56-57; Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 20), and service marketing (Huotari & Hamari, 2012, p. 20) it is reasonable to assume the existence of a possible application of gamification in another business context, internal marketing. The term internal gamification has been addressed by Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 21) as the use of gamification to improve productivity within your organization. One practical example of internal gamification is the Language Quality Game by Microsoft where the users are engaged in a gamified system in order to achieve organizational goals. We see the potential for internal gamification to play a role in engaging and motivating employees to take part in internal marketing activities to achieve different objectives for their organization.

1.2.3 Volvo Group and #WeAreVolvoGroup

Volvo Group is a multinational manufacturing company that owns and manages several famous brands. These brands are listed as the following: Volvo Trucks, Volvo Buses, Volvo Construction Equipment, Volvo Penta, UD Trucks and UD Buses, Terex Trucks, Renault Trucks, Prevost, Nova Bus, Mack Trucks, and Arqus. They also play significant roles in different joint ventures within the similar types of manufacturing work. This impressive brand portfolio suggests that the operational scale of Volvo Group is quite massive. In order to manage their extensive brand portfolio, the company puts emphasis on their internal marketing (Volvo Group, n.d.). Therefore, in March of 2017, the company implemented their
Employee Ambassador Program. This program came in the shape of an application called #WeAreVolvoGroup that connects the employees of Volvo Group globally through a network of over a thousand users but intended for the over hundred thousand current employees globally. The application works so that all the external social media communication of the company from every platform are presented to the users of the app who have the option of liking, commenting or sharing each post. These actions earn the user a decided amount of points that results in a place on a global leaderboard within the application. The existence of points and leaderboards are the factors that we have identified as game elements, making it an example of a gamified system suitable for this thesis. The idea behind this program is that each employee is a representative ambassador of the Volvo Group brand towards their own private social circles. Another purpose of the program is for employees to take part of the communication directed externally. This gives each employee a chance to follow what their brand is doing and has the added benefit of reducing the dissonance between internal and external marketing (#WeAreVolvoGroup - App on Google Play, 2019, March 29).

1.3 Theoretical background and knowledge gaps

Internal marketing is a management philosophy that was conceptualized in the 1970s in order to maximize the quality of service building and management (Varey & Lewis, 2000, p. xv). In the later years of the ever-changing business environment the term has adapted a broader definition that incorporates more management activities (Tansuhaj et al., 1988, p. 31; Varey & Lewis, 2000, p. xv). Today’s understanding of internal marketing is built on the original definition given by Barry (1980, referred to by Foreman & Money, 1995 p. 759) that internal marketing is achieved “… by emphasizing its relevance to service firms in particular; and, in general, by seeing the employee as an internal customer who is an important party in delivering satisfaction to external customers, and whose support of overall marketing strategy is essential if this is to succeed”. The importance of internal marketing was specified by Kotler and Armstrong (2014 p. 263) when the authors stated that internal marketing must precede external marketing. This is because it is detrimental to a firm to have trained and motivated staff for them to be able to supply customer service. Among other things, internal marketing simply involves getting the employees to fall in love with the brand of the company they work for so that they in turn can get the customers to love it (Drake et al., 2005, p. 3). Further insights about the subject were offered by Tansuhaj et al. (1988, p. 31) who stated that “Internal marketing is a managerial philosophy and a set of activities which view employees as internal customers and jobs as internal products, and then endeavors to offer internal products to satisfy the needs and wants of these internal customers, while at the same time addressing the objectives of the organization.”. This quote highlights that the goal of internal marketing coincides with the overall objectives of the company. Since internal marketing directly affect customer attitudes and behavior, it is possible to assume that it has an impact on the overall performance of the firm. Therefore, internal marketing can affect a firm’s market share, sales, profitability, along with other financial ratios (Tansuhaj et al., 1988. p. 36). Within literature many of the authors approach internal marketing from a macro perspective and do not address the many underlying factors that makes up for internal marketing at a company. This thesis builds on the assumption that by separating the subject into smaller and more specific activities it is easier to investigate the nature of influence a gamified system might have on the internal marketing at a company.
Since there exists no complete list of internal marketing activities within literature (Grönroos et al., 2008, p. 374) it has been one of the major objectives to compile such a list for this thesis.

Gamification was first introduced as a term in the digital media industry around 2008 and received a wider reach as an adopted term around the second half of 2010 (Deterding et al., 2011, p. 9). Deterding et al. (2011, p. 1) defines gamification as “the use of game design elements in a non-game context”. It has been known under many different monikers during this time as: “productivity games”, “playful design”, and “behavioral games” among others (Deterding et al., 2011, p. 9-10). Gamification has many different areas of usage in business and organizational contexts. It can be used as a marketing tool, product innovation, employee motivation and changing habits and behavior (Chou, 2016, p. 56-57; Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 20).

Because of its late introduction in digital media in 2008 (Deterding et al., 2011, p. 9) the subject of gamification is also a new discovery when it comes to the world of academia. Therefore, the subject of gamification in academia is relatively unexplored. Gamification has been studied in contexts of education, by Dicheva (2015), and in student motivation by Buckley and Doyle (2016). What we found was that previous research about gamification in an organizational context connected to education and training by Armstrong and Landers (2018), and gamification in a service-marketing context by Huotari and Hamari (2012). Other research about gamification are mostly empirical studies on the subject of gamification itself, by Hamari et al. (2014). But what was missing was literature drawing parallels directly between gamification and the subject of internal marketing activities on a broader spectrum. There have however been some insinuations surrounding this interrelation and some works have studied the possibility of gamification as a tool or a strategy to achieve some of the internal marketing activities (e.g. McKeown et al., 2016) but, as previously stated, not the nature of the interrelation itself. Through our research we have identified the possibility of the use of gamification as a tool to influence employees to engage in internal marketing activities. This is therefore a knowledge gap that we address in this thesis. Furthermore, internal marketing as a subject offers up a challenge due to the many disagreeing arguments and confusion within organizations of where responsibility falls (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993, p. 219). These arguments are clarified in further chapters.

1.4 Research question

How do game elements within an app influence internal marketing activities?

1.5 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate how gamification and more specifically the game elements of an app influence internal marketing activities. By investigating Volvo Group’s application #WeAreVolvoGroup, that was created as a tool for its brand ambassadors’ program, we aim to look closely on the influencing factors and internal marketing activities. We also strive to learn how an organization uses tools in order to achieve internal marketing
objectives. Because the app uses gamification elements, it is possible to investigate how these elements influence the internal marketing activities within Volvo Group. If we look closely at the nature of the game elements within the app it is possible to uncover further factors that play a role in internal marketing at the company. Also, by researching the use of gamification and game elements in an internal marketing context, it could have practical implications for organizations that aim to improve internal marketing activities in their organization.

In order to fulfill the purpose of this study and answer our research question, we have adopted a qualitative approach. This gives us the best possible chance to understand the underlying factors within internal marketing and its activities and how game elements might have an influence. By focusing efforts of data generation from two different perspectives of the #WeAreVolvoGroup application, managers and users, we give ourselves the best chance to complete a thematic analysis. Also, by familiarizing ourselves with as much knowledge from previous research as possible, we set up the best parameters for any conclusive arguments. This also serves as a preparation stage before becoming more familiar with the Volvo Group ambassador app. Therefore, the subjects of internal marketing and gamification are researched extensively to give us the best chance to spot the intricate details about the game elements and internal marketing activities within the app.
2. Scientific Methodology

In this chapter the philosophical stances and research approach is presented. Furthermore, the chosen strategy, our pre-understandings, and literature search are introduced. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the chosen theories and the ethical considerations for this thesis.

2.1 Ontology
In business research, ontology concerns the nature of reality (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 110; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 107) and the nature of social entities and if they are external to social actors or not (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 20). Ontology raises questions if social entities are constructs of the perceptions and actions of social actors, or if they have an objective reality that is objective to external actors (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 20). From ontology, two aspects of the nature of reality has emerged, namely: objectivism and subjectivism (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 20; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 110). Objectivism is the notion that social entities and phenomena are impervious to the influence from outside actors and forces (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 21). Subjectivism implies that social entities and phenomena are continuously revised, shaped, and constructed by social actors. (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 22; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 111).

In this study we take a subjectivist approach as we are investigating the perceptions of social actors within the Volvo Group and their interactions within the system of gamification. Different people develop different experiences through their personal experience and their interrelation with other social actors. We are investigating the behaviors, attitudes, and experiences of social entities within the organization, and are therefore exploring their individual perspective on those factors. Motivation and engagement through gamification manifest itself in different ways for different people, therefore the subjective approach is applied to this study.

2.2 Epistemology
Epistemology is a philosophical stance concerning what is deemed to be acceptable knowledge in a field of study (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 15; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 112; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). The focus in epistemology is whether the social contexts should be studied the same way as the natural sciences, i.e. by the same procedures, principles, and beliefs (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 15). In the philosophy of epistemology, there are two main contrasting views of the nature of knowledge, these are: positivism and interpretivism (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 15-16). The research conducted through a positivist doctrine aims to provide material for the development of laws and to generalize on the data collected (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 15). Saunders et al. (2009, p. 113) describes the positivist view as “adopting the view of the natural scientist” and using techniques common within the natural sciences. The positivist research method is to test hypotheses based on theory to further develop those theories (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 113). However, Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 16) states that social scientists are disagreeing as of how to characterize scientific practice, and that it is a mistake to classify positivism as interchangeable with science and
scientific. The second view is interpretivism which contrasts the view of positivism. There is a fundamental difference between the studies of social sciences and that of natural sciences, and as researchers it is important to understand the importance and role of humans as social actors in a social situation (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 16; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 116). According to Tracy (2013, p. 48) interpretivist research is subjective and co-created with its participants of the study. All humans are different and make different interpretation and give different meaning to social situations and roles, therefore a different logic and research procedure is necessary when studying the natural world (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 16; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 116). An interpretivist researcher studies people’s behavior and must therefore enter the world of the subjects and understand their point of view (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 116).

This study is employing an interpretivist stance, by investigating the different behaviors and attitudes of social actors in the Volvo Group organization. Tracy (2013, p. 48) stresses the focus of interpretivist research as trying to seek understanding and making sense of a phenomena by examining behaviors, intentions and feelings of the participants involved. The different perspectives of employee ambassadors and managers of the Volvo Group is studied in the context of a gamified system. Individuals’ experiences, personality and personal history affect their perceptions of the gamified system; therefore, an interpretivist stance is appropriate due to the emphasis it puts on the difference of individuals and their perception, experience, etc. A positivist view does not fit the situation to describe the subjective views of the employee ambassadors and managers of Volvo Group. Through an interpretivist stance this research gains understanding of the subjective views of the gamified system and its effect on the internal marketing activities of Volvo Group.

2.3 Research approach

The research approach in a study defines the relation between research and theory (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 11). In research methodology, there are three common approaches, namely: deductive, inductive and abductive approach (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 11; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 124).

According to Bryman and Bell (2011) deduction is the most common relationship between research and theory, as it takes knowledge and theories of a certain domain or research area and constructs hypotheses that are empirically tested (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 11; Dubois & Gadde, 2002, p. 559). Deductive research approaches seek to find relationships between variables, through statistical testing (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 125). Deduction is about testing theory and comparing it with the natural reality. Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 11) outlines the process of deduction in six steps: (1) the researcher develops a theoretical framework that is grounded in their research question, (2) a hypothesis is formulated, (3) data collection, (4) findings from the data collection are presented, (5) hypothesis is either confirmed or rejected, (6) theoretical framework is revised depending on the findings.

The second research approach is induction, which is an approach that rather seek to generate theory, instead of testing it like deductive approaches (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 13; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 126). Induction, contrasting deduction, tries to investigate the nature of a situation, and the result would be to create a theory from the data collected (Saunders et al.,
A researcher with an inductive approach would select paradigms more rooted in social sciences, i.e., interpretivism and subjectivism (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 126). This study intends to investigate a phenomenon with the use of existing theory. We are not generating new theories from our findings; therefore, an inductive approach is not used.

Additionally, to deduction and induction, there exists a combination of the two research approaches, abduction (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015, p. 24; Dubois & Gadde, 2002, p. 559). Abductive approaches combine deductive and inductive approaches by using them in difference phases of the study, or by going back and forth between the two approaches (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015, p. 24; Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 24). In abductive studies, the researchers develop a hypothesis which they test, like in the inductive approach, and then tries the hypothesis in another setting, like the deductive approach. (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 24).

This study is employing a deductive research approach. The reasoning behind this choice of research approach is that this study is investigating academic literature about gamification and internal marketing from different research streams. The theories found is applied to the research context of Volvo Group and used to develop a conceptual framework that serves as a guide in this research. The findings of the research are used to revise the model in accordance to the findings, intended to fill an identified research gap within existing literature.

**2.4 Research strategy**

The research strategy is the general plan that is used to answer the research question. The research strategy contains the chosen data collection method, constraints and the ethical considerations of research (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 136-137; Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 26). When it comes to the data collection method, there are two general choices to make; between a **quantitative** or **qualitative** study (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 26). There exists a third option which is a **mixed method study** which employs both methods of data collection.

A quantitative study is a method in which the data collection aims to quantify the results and to test existing theories (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 26-27). Quantitative research measures the relationship between variables, based in theory, and analyses these through statistical testing (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 414). In quantitative research, the researcher separates themselves from the phenomenon that is being studied and attempts to provide generalization from the results of the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 27). The view of reality in quantitative research is that reality is an external and objective phenomenon that is impervious to influence from social actors (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 27).

Contrasting is the qualitative research which intends to develop theory based on the results from the data collection (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 27). Qualitative research usually employs collection methods, such as interviews, that provides the researcher with non-numerical data (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 151). In qualitative data, the researcher is involved with the subjects that are being studied, to see the phenomenon from the perspective of the subjects (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 410). Qualitative research employs a subjectivist view of reality, as they seek to investigate the perceptions of the subjects that are being studied (Bryman & Bell,
Human behavior is not something that can be understood without a connection to their attitudes and meaning, which qualitative research can provide insights into (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 106).

This study is using a qualitative research method, as the study investigates the individual experiences of Volvo Group ambassadors and their experience within the gamification application #WeAreVolvoGroup. Interviews are conducted with managers and employees within the Volvo Group organization, as to get a nuanced narrative regarding the gamification system and its game elements. Through a qualitative research, the data collected are words, and the subjects can reflect freely on the subject, which might give rise to insights of the phenomena that the researchers did not consider or cover in the theories, or the conceptual framework.

Another decision in the research strategy concerns what kind of subsequent strategy to choose after deciding on the type of data collection. The different subsequent strategies to employ are experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography, and archival research (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 141; Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 45). These strategies can be suitable for both quantitative and qualitative. Experiments are rooted in natural sciences and are intended to investigate causal relationships between variables (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 142). Experiment is not suitable for this thesis as the investigation that is intended for this study is to find a connection between game elements and internal marketing activities, instead of investigating how they affect each other in a causal relationship. A survey strategy is useful if the researchers intend to generalize their finding on a larger population (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 144). As surveys are more useful for the collection of data that is to be quantified and analyzed statistically (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 144) they are not suitable for this thesis. Action research is research that is conducted when the researchers are a part of the organization that they are investigating, and thus have a clear involvement in the phenomena that is being investigated (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 147). Another facet of action research is the goal, which is to resolve issues on organizations through action (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 147). This approach is therefore not suitable for this thesis as the purpose of this thesis is to investigate a phenomenon, not resolve or amend a problem within the organization. Grounded theory and ethnography are strategies that are rooted in the inductive approach, i.e. development and building of theory (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 149), and as this thesis is employing a deductive approach, they are not appropriate research strategies to use. Lastly, the archival research is a strategy that uses archival documents and records as primary data source (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 150). As archival research delves into previous documents, the phenomena that is being studied is in the past. The focus of this thesis is to investigate a contemporary phenomenon, which makes archival research irrelevant for this thesis.

Case studies, which is the chosen strategy for this thesis, is when researchers investigate a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, within boundaries that are not clearly defined (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 145-146). A case study can be seen as the opposite of an experiment since experiments occur in a highly controlled environment (Saunders et al., p. 146). According to Yin (2003, p. 2) case studies can be used to investigate complex social phenomena in organizational and managerial environments. Yin (2003, p. 5) proposes three conditions that determines the suitability of a case study, these are: a research questions that
aims to answers “how” and “why” questions, (2) the research investigates a phenomenon, which the researchers have no control over, and (3) the research focuses on an event that is contemporary, not historical. As the current study fulfills these conditions, a case study is the most suitable, and therefore chosen, strategy for this study.

2.5 Pre-understandings

Pre-understandings are one aspect of research that is unavoidable. According to Gilje and Grimen (2007, p. 179) people apply their pre-understandings to everything they read. Pre-understanding are different from person to person as they are grounded in personal experiences (Gilje & Grimen, 2007, p. 183). These pre-understanding can aid the researchers in their choice of subject and in the research itself, so it is something that must be addressed for this study as well. In this study, both of us have worked in retail with a lot of service-focus. Through these experiences we have encountered situations which exemplified a lack in internal communications, and internal marketing, through the organization. These experiences led us to the choice of the internal marketing perspective for this study. Our encounter with internal marketing during our studies at Umeå School of Business, Economics and Statistics guided the search of theories in the subject. When it comes to gamification, we are both well versed in the world of video games. Gamification, as a relatively new concept, is a unique solution for organizational issues. The interest of technological innovations and unique business solutions are something that we both share, and it contributes to our interest in this subject. This combined with the education in business administration provides the two balanced aspects of gamification as a tool for businesses.

According to Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 414) pre-understanding of the setting can be an issue in research. Pre-understanding of the setting refers to the knowledge the researchers have about the phenomena and situation they are investigating. This pertain to the experiences that the author has of the organization or setting. For instance, the history of the situation, jargon in the organization and key events that relate to the study that is being conducted. Experience and insights of the organization can affect the data that is being collected for the study (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 414). In this study, we have no experience within the Volvo Group organization, which allows the research to not be influenced by bias that would arise from previous experience, at the same time as it does not give the benefit of having previous knowledge of how the organization operates. The choice of Volvo Group came through one of our personal contacts, which Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 428) states is an advantage to gain access to the organization and subsequent information about the research area. The contact person at Volvo Group referred us to another person that manages the application #WeAreVolvoGroup, which is one of the interviewees for this study. The contact with Volvo Group has been very valuable to this study, as it has alleviated the collection of data and given us a suitable context to investigate internal marketing and gamification.

2.6 Literature search

The literature search of this thesis is what lays the groundwork for our theoretical framework. The literature search is important as it ensures that the research uses relevant and up-to-date articles and sources from which we build our theory (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 75). The literature is a crucial task, but can be very time-consuming and daunting, therefore it is important to limit your search and to create a strategy for the literature search (Bryman &
The strategy consists of establishing parameters of the search; keywords and search terms; databases and search engines used; and the criteria used to select the most useful and relevant material (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 75). According to Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 108) the use of keywords in the literature search is a way to find specific sources that are relevant to the chosen subjects and to define the research area. The keywords that we have used in the search is a result of the findings in the literature, as the keywords develop over time as new findings present themselves. The keywords of a literature review also help us to see the change in language and descriptions of the subject. Keywords such as: gamification, game elements, gamified system, game design, game mechanics, internal marketing, internal marketing activities, internal market orientation, etc. These keywords have been used in combination to find sources that are relevant for the thesis, and to get broader findings for the literature review.

The literature search for this thesis has consisted of searching through different research streams and electronic databases available through Umeå University. EBSCO Business Source Premier and the search functions through Umeå University Library has been used for articles, books and other online articles. We, the authors have also used Google Scholar to complement the searches on EBSCO and Umeå University Library. We have followed research streams by finding articles and authors that are cited often in literature within the subject. Peer reviewed articles have been used in the literature search of this thesis, to the extent that they were available and relevant to the literature search. The use of peer reviewed articles is to ensure the quality and credibility of the work and theoretical framework developed. In the cases where peer reviewed articles were not available, or relevant, we have investigated sources and authors that are often cited within the subjects.

2.7 Choice of theories

According to Patel and Davidson (2011, p. 43) researchers must make limitations when it comes to the literature review, as there can be tremendous amounts of literature in the chosen subjects. For this reason, we have made limitations where it is suitable, and necessary considering the time constraints of writing a thesis for one semester.

The subject of gamification is relatively unexplored in academia. The emergence of gamification as a subject came around 2010 (Deterding et al., 2011, p. 9), prior to that the study of game design has been the moniker of gamification. As the nature of this study is, partly, to examine the game elements used in the gamified system of Volvo Group, we are using a broad scope to capture many aspects of gamification. The MDA-framework (Hunicke et al., 2004) is used to capture the broad view of gamification in its structure and components. The components (mechanics, dynamics and aesthetics) are defined by numerous authors prevalent in gamification literature, namely; Werbach and Hunter (2012), and Zichermann and Cunningham (2011). Other authors such as: Nicholson (2012; 2015) and Chou (2016) provides another view of gamification that goes beyond the MDA-framework provided by Hunicke et al. (2004). The inclusion of several views of gamification gives us the opportunity to gain a more comprehensive view of the type of gamification that is used in the #WeAreVolvoGroup app.
The study of internal marketing is a broad subject, which we had to narrow down significantly. When looking at gamification to improve an organization’s internal marketing, internal marketing in its entirety cannot be considered, as it is a broad subject with many different definitions. Therefore, the choice of theories in internal marketing had to be something concrete that is easier to investigate in the study’s inquiry. This study has identified seven internal marketing activities that are mentioned in internal marketing literature and supported by a plethora of authors, such as: Grönroos et al. (2008), Rafiq and Ahmed (2000), Bansal et al. (2001), Berry and Parasuraman (1991), Lings and Greenley (2005), Barnes and Morris (2000), to name a few. The internal marketing activities identified in the literature review are used to create the conceptual framework for this study.

2.8 Ethical considerations

When conducting research, collecting data, gaining access to organizations and individuals, ethical issues may arise (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 183). Appropriate behavior must be conducted to respect the persons or organizations that are affected by a study (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 183-184). Bryman and Bell (2011) highlight some general ethical issues when conducting research. These are: privacy of participants, voluntary participation, consent and possible deception, maintenance of confidentiality in the data, behavior and objectivity of the researchers, and effects of the results on the participants (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 185-186). These issues are also brought up by Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 89) that states that ethical concerns within qualitative research revolve around harm, consent, deception, privacy and confidentiality of the data.

The issue of consent is brought up by Saunders et al. (2009, p. 190) as the interviewees’ voluntary participation in the interview along with information about the handling of the data and purpose of the research. When we contacted the participants of the interviews, we expressed that their participation is voluntary along with the purpose of the interview. Their consent was further reinsured before the interviews as we reminded them of the voluntary participation and asked for consent to record the interviews, which all participants obliged to. Privacy in research is when the researchers avoid the intrusion of privacy of the participants (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 136). The privacy of the participants was considered as the interviews were strictly focused on the business context, and not about their personal information and other private matters. The interviews that were conducted face-to-face were held in private rooms as to ensure that the interviewees could talk freely, and that the information shared would not be spread. Anonymity and confidentiality are when the identity of the participants is anonymous and that the research does not reveal their identity in regard to their personal privacy. In research it is important to inform the participants that their participation is not only voluntary, but also confidential (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 74).

Confidentiality and anonymity were addressed in the emails sent out to the interviewees and included as a statement before each interview, that the interviewees would be anonymous. In the transcription and analyzing of the data, we have taken measures to keep the participants anonymous and to leave out responses and data that may compromise their anonymity in this thesis. The interviews were recorded, which the interviewees had the option to consent to as well, and to further protect their privacy and confidentiality, the recordings of the interviews were deleted after the transcription. When we contacted Volvo Group, we offered the option
of their organization being confidential in the thesis as it would be published as a public
document. Volvo Group has allowed us to use their name in the thesis.

The concern of harm to the participants and effects to the participants have also been taken
into consideration. Harm to participants in research can be harm to personal development,
stress, physical harm and harm to future career prospects (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 128). The
interviews were conducted on the interviewees’ terms and according to their schedules and
availability to not create a stressful situation for them. Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 93) states
that the most likely source of harm in research is the reveal of personal and private
information. As the interviewees are anonymous, anything that they say during interviews
are not be traceable to their person, thus it should not bear any negative consequences to
them, whether it be embarrassment, stress or discomfort. In this study, we have taken every
precaution necessary to ensure the privacy of the participants and that the effect of the results
not affect them in any way.
3. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, literature about internal marketing and internal marketing activities are introduced. Along with an introduction of the subject, and theories, of gamification and game elements. These two subjects and respective theories are combined to create a conceptual framework.

3.1 Internal marketing

The concept of internal marketing was first introduced by Berry et al. (1976) in their publication in the Journal of Retailing. Later authors within the field of service marketing followed when George (1977) and then Thompson et al. (1978, p. 243) and then Murray (1979) expanded upon the subject. However, one of the first valid definition of internal marketing was proposed later by Berry (1981, p. 25) where he defined it as “viewing employees as internal customers, viewing jobs as internal products that satisfy the needs and wants of these internal customers while addressing the objectives of the organization”. This is where the idea of viewing the employee as an internal customer to their company came along. The definition also included the idea of treating a job as an internal product that is aimed to satisfy the needs and wants of the company’s “internal customers” (Varey, 1995, p. 41-42; Berry, 1981, p. 25; Sasser & Arbeint, 1976, p. 64-65). The authors Albrecht and Zemke (1990) have been attributed with the idea of the employees being the companies’ first market. This notion came with the impression that managers must convince their employees to think along the same lines in terms of service-offering or they will not be able to convince the customers. The employee's self-image and view on their work position will always have an impact on their customer interactions. The thinking behind internal marketing can be summed up by the following quote “... to have satisfied customers, the firm must also have satisfied employees” (George, 1977, p. 91).

An important contribution to the conceptualization of internal marketing was later added by Grönroos (1985, p. 42) when he revised his own ideas on the subject as “... holding that an organization's internal market of employees can be influenced most effectively and hence motivated to customer-consciousness, market orientation and sales-mindedness by a marketing-like internal approach and by applying marketing-like activities internally”. What the author had added was that organizations should take use of marketing methods and activities when aiming to motivate their employees to be more customer conscious and increase market and sales orientation. This was reflected in the following amended definition of internal marketing.

Rafiq and Ahmed (2000, p. 453) identified five main elements of internal marketing based of both conceptual and empirical literature: (1) employee motivation and satisfaction, (2) customer orientation and customer satisfaction, (3) inter-functional co-ordination and integration, (4) marketing-like approach to the above, and (5) implementation of specific corporate or functional strategies. The definition stated by Grönroos (1985, p. 42) included all but one of the listed elements, inter-functional co-ordination and integration. With the use of Grönroos’ (1985) revised definition as a base along with the five elements, a new and
more detailed definition of internal marketing was created. Rafiq and Ahmed (2000) connected their definition with each of the five elements by adding numbers in brackets that relates to each of the criteria in the listed elements above. The new definition defined internal marketing as “... a planned effort using a marketing-like approach (4) to overcome organizational resistance to change and to align, motivate and interfunctionally co-ordinate and integrate (3) employees towards the effective implementation of corporate and functional strategies (5) in order to deliver customer satisfaction (2) through a process of creating motivated and customer orientated employees (1)” (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000, p. 453). It should be noted that this definition allows for the incorporation of businesses that does not exclusively deal with customer service and is therefore applicable to the Volvo Group Ambassador case. Further references to internal marketing will be associated with this meaning of the term in any context throughout this work.

**Internal markets**

Foreman and Money (1995 p. 757) stated that for a firm to develop an understanding of how to approach marketing internally within the organization it first needs to grasp the concept of the firm as an internal market. Internal markets have been described by Varey and Lewis (2000, p. 6) as meta-structures, or processes, that transcend ordinary structures. The authors continue by stating that unlike fixed hierarchies or centrally coordinated networks, internal markets are *complete internal market economies* intended to create constant, quick structural change, just as external markets do. The number of employees persuaded inside a company, the more relevant the term “market” will become (Flipo, 1986, referred to by Foreman & Money, 1995, p. 757).

Varey and Lewis (2000, p. 7) created a guide for businesses to nurture and develop internal markets called the three principles of internal markets. These suggestions are summarized by the authors as: (1) transform the hierarchy into internal enterprise units rather than departments giving more responsibilities to personnel, (2) create an economic infrastructure to guide decisions, and (3) provide leadership to foster collaborative synergy and inter collaboration between the internal enterprises. By using this guide, it can be possible to determine the influence a gamified system has in its targeted internal market.

**Internal market orientation (IMO)**

The notion of viewing the company as an internal market has encouraged the idea of applying the same models and methods used in approaches to the external market inside organizations (Piercy, 1995, p. 25). Calls from the academic community have been made for managers to implement the same kind of focus they put on their external customers as on their internal customers by putting their employees first (Bansal et al., 2001, p. 62; Rafiq and Ahmed 2000). The concept of implementing the marketing mix internally towards your own employees is an idea that has been around for decades (Lings & Greenley, 2005, p. 290). Piercy and Morgan (1990) together developed the internal marketing mix which was close to identical to the traditional external marketing mix (e.g. product, price, promotion and place). This was done by suggesting that jobs are internal *products* and that the *price* was the cost of fulfilling said job by the employee. *Promotion* was proposed to be the internal communication and finally *places*, and distribution channels, e.g. the meetings where information was distributed (Piercy & Morgan, 1990, p. 5-6). In opposition to this stood the
authors Kohli and Jaworski (1990) who in their article argues that a market orientation is more appropriate for the operationalization of marketing than the internal marketing mix. Based on previous research, where market orientation had proven to stand strong, Ling and Greenley (2005, p. 291) modified the market orientation to the context of employer-employee interactions within the internal market and established the internal market orientation as it is recognized today.

Previous empirical evidence has suggested that there exists a direct relationship between firms’ level of internal marketing adaptation and their financial success (Bansal et al., 2001, p. 61). In fact, Johlke et al. (2000, p. 274) proved that the communication practices of sales managers associate positively with the sales personal’s perceptions of communication quality and in turn increased of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. What this study has come to represent is the illustration of the sales managers influence and role with employee satisfaction and work engagement. This is done through the construction and maintenance of a high-quality communication environment within the organization (Johlke et al., 2000, p. 275).

The emergence of studies proving a relationship between internal communication and financial success has prompted many researchers to clarify internal marketing for managers (e.g. Lings & Greenley, 2005; Bansal et al., 2001; Tansuhaj et al., 1988; Wasmer et al., 1991; Piercy, 1995; Lukas & Maignan, 1996) has resulted in the idea of implementation and nurturing of internal markets as an orientation. Bansal et al. (2001, p. 61-62) stated that organizations that adapts an internal market orientation does not see their employees as costs to be controlled but rather as assets to be invested in. Lings and Greenley (2005, p. 291) conclude that it is possible to modify the traditional market orientation in B2C or B2B to the context of employer to employee. This can be done in the internal market and will lead to the development of an internal market orientation. By adapting a similar orientation that firms have towards the external market inwards leads to similar objectives between the two orientations. For employees to deliver results emphasis have been put on employee satisfaction by firms that adapt an internal market orientation (Bansal et al., 2001, p. 62).

Lukas and Maignan (1996, p. 178) wrote that high quality standards are achieved through the notion that each actor in the chain of production view other employees as internal customers. That way the employee producing work that will go forward to the next employee will be more motivated to strive for quality which will lead to the end customers increased satisfaction. The idea of perfecting employee satisfaction will lead to customer value is central to the idea of internal market orientation. The successful nature of the adoption of internal market orientation practices into the business world was reflected by a statement from the former CEO of Southwest Airlines, Herb Kelleher back in 1996: “It used to be a business conundrum: ‘Who comes first? The employees, customers, or shareholders?’ That’s never been an issue to me. The employees come first. If they’re happy, satisfied, dedicated, and energetic, they’ll take real good care of the customers. When the customers are happy, they come back. And that makes the shareholders happy” (Herb Kelleher as cited in O’Reilly & Pfeffer, 2000, p. 33).
Models of internal marketing

Multiple models of internal marketing have been presented in literature but the most prevalent are those of the two authors Berry (1981) and Grönroos et al. (1981) (Varey & Lewis, 2000, p. 225-230). As with the definition of internal marketing where Rafiq and Ahmed (2000, p. 453) revised the two authors work with a new definition, the same was done by the authors for the model of internal marketing. Previous models in internal marketing has often showed one specific aspect of internal marketing (e.g. Varey, 1995; Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000). The revised model places emphasize on the synergy of the previous models created by Berry (1981) and Grönroos (1981) as they highlight different areas of internal marketing. According to Rafiq and Ahmed their revised model builds on these differences and shows how internal marketing works. The model is however quite extensive while it gives a view on internal marketing and its mechanics (Varey & Lewis, 2000, p. 229) along with different factors that are not important for this research. Studies have also pointed out major disadvantages to previous models such as the one presented by Grönroos (1981). Fuciu and Dumitrescu (2018, p. 61-62) states that the model relies too much on internal communication and does not offer an option for what happens when this activity fails. The same can be said about the older models within internal marketing literature. Because many of them rely on being parallel with external marketing models and methods (Piery, 1995, p. 25) we are not using any of them in our development of our conceptual framework.

3.1.1 Internal marketing objectives and activities

Grönroos (1981 p. 237) presented the objective for internal marketing as the unified goal of achieving an increase in the motivation and customer-consciousness of the staff. Based on previous literature, it is clear the objective of internal marketing is to sell the idea of the company to the employees. This thesis views this as the employees’ conviction of the company’s value offering and culture. Drake et al. (2005, p. 14-16) relates the internal marketing objective to a set of subobjectives which are to engage, enable, empower, and ensure the staff. These objectives are reached through a set of activities that can be translated into an internal marketing program. Since it is commonly agreed within internal marketing literature that the staff is the most important asset to a firm (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991, p. 152; Bansal et al., 2001, p. 68), an internal marketing program’s goal is to develop customer-conscious personnel and to put the employee-development in its focus. Employee development is achieved through a multifaceted focus of internal marketing activities (Tansuhaj et al., 1988, p. 31-32). Bansal et al. (2001, p. 63) states that services marketing, and therefore internal marketing, is fundamentally concerned with attracting and retaining customers. But there are other activities that fall under the category of internal marketing activities. Since there exists no definitive lists of internal marketing activities (Grönroos et al., 2008, p. 374) we have identified seven internal marketing activities that are recurrent in internal marketing literature:


These identified internal marketing activities are expanded upon in the following sections.

**Developing job products**

Sasser and Arbeit (1976, p. 64) wrote about jobs as a product that companies sell to their employees. By stating that transactions, the exchange of values between two parties, are the core concept of marketing the authors were certain that the employer-employee relationship is such a transaction where an employee offers up their time, skill and effort in return for monetary compensation along with added benefits. Normally in the external market the marketing departments task is to achieve specific response through the creation and offering of value. This is exactly what management, according to Sasser and Arbeit (1976, p. 64), should apply internally towards their employees as well.

There are many opinions on how to develop job products for the internal customers within a company (e.g. Lukas & Maignan, 1996; Sasser & Arbeit, 1976). But the end goal of developing job products is also to increase the number of job applicants. This is done by making the company look more attractive as an employer (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000, p. 462; Sasser & Arbeit, 1976, p. 65). “Attracting” is one strategy to create a talented workforce (Kundu & Vora, 2004, p. 40) and based on the definition of internal marketing, Bansal et al., (2001) viewed it as apparent that internal marketing activities include attracting and retaining the most qualified and committed employees for the organization. By developing specific job descriptions, e.g. job products, more qualified applicants are attracted to the company (Tansuhaj et al., 1988). But first, in order to create a talented workforce, managers need to know what attracts more applicants. This is accomplished through the generation of information on the internal market using internal market research, see following section “Internal market research”. The type of information a company chose to collect about its internal market should generally include what benefits employees want from their jobs and what alternative employment the competitors are offering. The knowledge gathered is used to increase the attractiveness of the firm’s jobs in order to compete with competitors on the jobs market (Lings & Greenley, 2005, p. 292; Sasser & Arbeit, 1976, p. 64-65). Responding to the information gathered from the internal market is both the essence of development of job products and one of the dimensions of internal market orientation (Lings & Greenley 2005, p. 292-293). Rafiq and Ahmed (2000, p. 462) develops on this by stating that
“Managers should try to design jobs with features that prospective employees' value, rather than simply concentrating on the task requirements of the job. Such an approach will help to attract and retain the best employees”. This consequentially leads to the achievement of job product development.

**Employee recruitment**

Successful internal marketing begins with the recruitment of the right sort of employees (Grönroos et al., 2008, p. 376). Recruiting the right people is critical for any kind of organization but even more critical to a company that rely on their employees to represent the values of the brand and deliver its promises (Kundu & Vora, 2004, p. 43-44). Since the internal actors, e.g. the employees, are the definite creators of quality within the firm (Lukas & Maignan, 1996, p. 185), firms must place much emphasis on its recruitment processes. Rafiq and Ahmed (2000, p. 462) urges companies to establish a recruitment process that singles out the highly motivated, customer orientated, and sales minded recruits. This is because it is more difficult and costly for a firm to change employees’ already existing attitudes and behaviors than to recruit new people who already possess the desired profile.

According to Berry and Parasuraman (1991, p. 155) “smart internal marketers” ignore the temptation of lowering hiring standards in a competitive jobs market. Instead they challenge their competitors for the best suited people. This is done by developing an ideal candidate profile for each position based on customer expectation of level quality. “Smart internal marketers” then uses these profiles when selecting people for creatively constructed interviews and the most promising prospects are given multiple interviews. Companies should also be creative in their way of finding people and not only use traditional advertisement for the jobs. A few examples of creative recruitment are company sponsored career fairs, tuition assistance for students who work while attending college and employee recruit and employee programs with incentives. Researchers places high emphasis on a diverse recruitment process because the right people can be found in unlikely places (Kundu & Vora, 2004; Berry & Parasuraman, 1991). Morrison (1996, p. 504) argues that the selection process shouldn’t only develop an ideal candidate profile based on the characteristics of the job but also measure the compatibility between the recruits’ personalities and the company values. This will, according to the author, ensure a stronger organizational citizenship behavior, e.g. company culture, see section “3.1.2 company culture”.

**Training and education**

In order to enable employees to deliver the company’s service vision there is a need for companies to design a training program (Kundu & Vora, 2004, p. 49). Training enables employees’ autonomous generation and implementation of innovative ideas for quality improvement (Stauss, 1995, p. 63). Bansal et al. (2001, p. 68) proposed that there exists a positive association between extensive training and with job satisfaction, company loyalty, and trust in management. Firms benefit from delivering training to employees because it reduces the uncertainty surrounding the employee’s job position and helps them to be more effective (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000, p. 462). It is important to note that it is not only necessary for front-line service staff to receive training but also managers and supporting staff so that all demonstrate the values and behaviors of the organization (Kundu & Vora, 2004, p. 44). This idea is supported by Berry and Parasuraman (1991, p. 160) who states that training and
education for managers is truly pivotal. It is important for managers to learn leadership and coaching skills so that they can empower the employees to set higher standards for themselves.

One of the core values of quality management is employee participation and development (Stauss, 1995, p. 63). By supplying continuous training, empowerment, and teamwork the firm will achieve said employee development (Kundu & Vora, 2004, p. 44). Johnston (1989, p. 21) places emphasis on the training of employees when it comes to delivery of quality and hints towards the need of “orientation aids”, e.g. educational tools. Companies that are most effective in training of their employees often use educational tools that come in new forms of digital learning technology such as e-learning (Kundu & Vora, 2004, p. 44). The list of educational tools or learning approaches is extensive. Firms need to be bold and creative when selecting their approaches because individuals learn differently and there exists no “one size fits all” when it comes to training of employees (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991, p. 161). A few examples of approaches to training are either through digital technologies like computer-based training or instructions, web-based training, multimedia learning environments, and e-learning (Brown, 2001, p. 271-272) or classical approaches such as classroom instructions, role playing and self-instructional programming (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991, p. 161).

By using educational tools, a firm can aim to become a “high-learning company” defined by Berry and Parasuraman (1991, p. 161) as a company that makes a strategic commitment to the skill and knowledge development of its employees. A high-learning company develops a reputation for investing in their internal customers with training and education. Within the frameworks and activities of internal marketing, Berry and Parasuraman (1991, p. 161) developed a guide for firms that seek to become high-learning companies. These were listed as: (1) chose what to teach based on data gathered through internal market research, (2) use a mix of creative learning methods based on the learning approaches described above, (3) use role models such as managers from within the company that radiate the qualities that you want to teach, (4) institutionalize learning by making education part of the work plan, and (5) evaluate and fine-tune the process of the learning program by looking at the results.

**Motivation and reward**

In some scenarios, companies expect practical actions from their employees that is not strictly written in the employment agreement. When it comes to the task of carrying out a motive that is not strictly in the contract, Johnston (1989, p. 21-22) states that incentives for the internal customers (e.g. the employees) are few. Other than the financial incentives that are already laid out in the contract, an internal customer will need further persuasion in order to head towards the desired direction. The author draws parallels between external and internal customers stating that peer pressure and social values are some sources of motivation that guides the external and internal customers to fulfill the company’s expectations. Some companies choose to use systems of punishments to elicit proper customer conducts, for example a library fee for the late return of a book. It is a company’s duty to use systems of training, motivation, reward, and even punishment to ensure that both customers and employees does what is expected of them. An employee’s drive can be boosted by implementing motivation strategies. Some examples of strategies are incentive programs,
task forces, staff retreats, team building techniques, task forces, seminars and workshops (Tansuhaj et al., 1988, p. 31-32), or as we hope to show with our research, internal gamification.

Reward systems have a strong impact on attitudes and behaviors of employees (Lukas & Maignan, 1996, p. 184-185). It also has a positive effect on the motivation of the staff (Grönroos et al., 2008, p. 379). According to Lukas and Maignan (1996, p. 184-185) the company should encourage their internal customers, e.g. their employees, to develop a reward system that is aimed to motivate their colleagues that are before them in the chain of production. This view is opposed by Drake et al. (p. 182) who believe it is up to the managers to design such systems. When addressing rewards and recognition, Drake et al. (2005, p. 182) stated that even with good intentions these efforts can fail if the company does not abide by the following basic rules. In the context of recognizing the extra effort put in by the employees by rewarding them, for recognition and rewards to have the biggest effect they need to be sincere and timely. While it is necessary for companies to recognize and reward its employees, Drake et al. (2005, p. 182) urge that firms should not implement reward systems that they cannot maintain as it will threaten the employees’ “expectations vs. results” and will consequentially lead to frustration. Employee recognition programs can also be a frustration for employees if they are unaware of the rules and can therefore result in complete loss of motivation. Since the aim of a recognition program is to motivate employees, it would be a complete failure if a staff member felt cheated. The solution to this is for firms to clearly formulate the program’s fundamental objectives and communicate this in the form of guidelines to the employees before the start of the program (Drake et al., 2005, p. 182-183).

In their reinforcement framework Drake et al. (2005, p. 183-186) outlined a list of decisions in the form of questions that firms need to address regarding the creation of a recognition program. These questions are listed as: (1) Whom are you recognizing? (2) Will you focus on measurable criteria and/or subjective factors? (3) How will you communicate your selection criteria? (4) How will you accept employee submissions? (5) Who will decide the winner? (6) How often will you recognize/reward? In addition to these questions the authors gave their suggestions on how to approach each of them. It is possible to use this framework in order to see if a gamified recognition program provide a satisfying answer to each of these questions. The answers will show how throughout the program is and what influencing factors are in play.

**Internal market research**

It is possible to conduct market research both externally and internally for a company (Grönroos et al., 2008, p. 378). Many researchers have identified the importance of collecting information about the company’s internal market (Briscoe, 1980, p. 79; Berry, 1981 referred to by Lings & Greenley, 2005, p. 292; Cobb et al., 1998, p. 35; Johlke & Duhan, 2000, p. 275; Grönroos et al., 2008, p. 379). Because internal market research can generate information about personnel attitudes and preferences, important data can be gathered surrounding the work climate and tasks, and challenges (Grönroos et al., 2008, p. 379). The focus of previous research has been on what type of information should be collected and how the process should proceed. Lings and Greenley (2005, p. 292) identified three modes of
information generation that are apparent in extant literature. These are listed as: (1) formal written information generation which is the use of written media (e.g. satisfaction surveys and questionnaires), (2) formal face-to-face information generation which consists of direct interactions (e.g., interviews, appraisals, and meetings) and, (3) informal face-to-face information generation which is the close interaction of managers and employees in the day to day operations with and natural communication. This is supported by Grönroos et al. (2008, p. 378-379) who also links internal market research to the use for the employee recruitment activity, employee satisfaction, and staff motivation and stress the importance of segmentation when preparing the data generation process.

**Internal communication**

In interviews with managers, Drake et al. (2005, p. 28) reported them expressing surprise in their competitors’ lack of interest on conducting communication on the internal market while at the same time spending a high percentage of monetary and personnel efforts on reaching the external market. They spend a lot of marketing on their customers but not on their employees. In their definition of internal marketing, Rafiq and Ahmed (2000, p. 462) suggest that managers need to pay close attention to the communication of marketing and strategies to its employees. Still many managers have identified the need for informing their personnel about new strategies and processes, but they don’t always know how to do so. One way is to use software and printed material as a tool to explain and market the new ideas to the employees (Grönroos et al., 2008, p. 376). Good communication leads to an increase in job satisfaction and will lead to better coordination within the company (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000, p. 462). Bansal et al. (2001, p. 69) offered a perception of information sharing within the organization that it will be positively associated with job satisfaction, loyalty to the firm, and trust in management.

By establishing an open information climate, communication marketing managers apply internal marketing concepts to improve interpersonal, interactive communication channels. It is possible to gather feedback from employees through surveys and then implement modifications deemed appropriate. By using mass communication techniques by supplying their employees with external marketing, firms actively conduct internal marketing (Tansuhaj et al., 1988, p. 33-34). Grönroos et al. (2008, p. 377) stresses that it is easy to misidentify the effects that the firm’s external communication has on the firm’s internal market. The employees are in most cases a susceptible audience for the company’s ad campaigns and other forms of external communication. Therefore, Grönroos et al. (2008) suggest that these should be shared internally with the employees before it is marketed externally. An extra step would be to involve the employees in the creation process of the external communication as it would lead to increased engagement within the staff.

**Retention of staff**

Hiring good people is a challenge but retaining them is even more difficult (Kundu & Vora, 2004, p. 46). It is of the utmost importance for a company, not only to recruit the right sort of employees but also to retain them (Grönroos et al., 2008, p. 376; Thompson et al. 1978, p. 263; Sasser & Arbeit, 1976, p. 64). This is because employee turnover and customer satisfaction are directly correlated (Kundu & Vora, 2004, p. 46) and this is especially true for service companies that principally offers their customers labor or human acts of performance.
Companies should therefore develop front-level managers to retain the best employees like in the case of Southwest Airlines who did just that with their own development program (Taylor, 2003).

In order to achieve retention of employees, marketing managers can ensure that salaries are competitive relative to other employment options and that they have bonus programs that are attractive to their staff. Companies can also take use of benefit programs in order to compete for the rights to retain their personnel. Such programs could include flextime and cafeteria-style benefit programs, as well as effective career planning. This would effectively lead to retention of staff (Tansuhaj et al., 1988, p. 34). If a company does not pay attention to their employees and offer development, there will be a higher turnover rate. In order to stifle this rise in turnover rate companies need to pay the same attention to their decisions surrounding their personal and employee satisfaction as important business decisions (Taylor & Stern, 2009, p. 79).

However, in today’s competitive job markets it is not enough for companies to create incentive programs to engage in retention of staff (Taylor, 2002, p. 28). According to the authors Kundu and Vora (2004, p. 47), to achieve retention of staff it is important to understand the motives for leaving. One reason for why talented employees leave is because managers do not pay attention to the psychology of work satisfaction. According to Kundu and Vora (2004, p. 47), the best method of retaining the best employees is to conduct internal market research and then use that data to modify their careers. They also emphasize the importance of good leadership and work culture. This is also the view of Taylor (2002, p. 29-31) who states that there is one factor that is the most important when it comes to retention of staff and that is leadership and resulting work culture. Employees want a leader that knows them, understands them, treats them fairly, and is trustworthy. A successful leader is someone that fulfill these criteria and will therefore as a result contribute to the cultural evolution of the firm. The author contributes with a list of competencies that companies should seek in their managers in order to achieve a high-retention culture (trust builder, esteem builder, communicator, climate builder, flexibility expert, talent developer and coach, high-performance builder, retention expert, retention monitor, and talent finder). Other strategies of achieving this internal marketing activity are: (1) include employees in the company’s vision, (2) treat employees as customers, and (3) reward excellent service performers (Kundu & Vora, 2004, p. 47-48).

In their book, Taylor and Stern (2009, p. 87-90) produced a four-step guide that managers can follow for a company to become an “employee-centered organization”. According to the authors, an organization that puts its employees in the center can cut its employee turnover and retain a much higher percentage of staff. In order to achieve this, managers should: (1) recognize employees for their efforts, (2) avoid micromanagement, (3) see things from the employees’ viewpoint, and (4) specialize in employee relations by focusing on employee satisfaction (Taylor & Stern, 2009, p. 87-90).

Taylor and Stern (2009, p. 95-96) make the connection that in order to reach higher retention of staff, managers must make employees fall in love with their company. Apart from paying people fairly, treating them right, training them, developing employees with high potential, and doing all the small things that makes employees feel valued, firms should foremost know
their employees. This can be achieved through internal market research. The authors emphasize their position by stating that: “Retaining your best employees for a longer term can be a realistic goal if you become an employee-centered organization that encourages your employees to fall in love with the company” (Taylor & Stern, 2009, p. 97).

3.1.2 Company culture

The word “culture” has been redefined in literature throughout the years but commonly includes ideology, collective of beliefs, shared values and understandings (Hofstede, 1980, p. 25). Later literature appears to have agreed upon the definition of the heavily cited expert Hofstede (e.g. Hogg et al., 1998, p. 881). Hofstede (2011, p. 3) define culture as: "... the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others".

It is prevalent in existing marketing literature that it is important for companies to adopt a certain marketing orientation in order to stay competitive (Hogg et al., 1998, p. 879). Market orientation is the gathering of marketing intelligence, internal distribution of the collected information and the organizational response (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Market orientation is also a culture that aims to be as effective and efficient as possible in delivering the best customer value (Narver & Slater, 1990, p. 21). Osborne (1996, p. 41-42) points out that organizations possess a set of strategic values that serves its longevity, focus of the organization’s efficiency, and link it to its environment. These values are tied together with the company culture and therefore it important to know what views of the employees are on the company and its objectives (Narver & Slater, 1990 p. 21-22).

Drake et al. (2005, p. 11) stated that: “Internal marketing communicates a vision of the company culture, strengthens an already powerful brand culture, and gives employees a road map for action”. Hogg et al. (1998, p. 884-885) found that internal marketing can be used in order to affect and change parts of an organization's culture. It is very important for managers to adopts and express the company culture in the manner of how they carry themselves inside and outside of the company’s walls. This is how they prove to the employees that they believe in that employees are the most valuable resource to the company. A misalignment within the company culture can entice resistance to change and prompt active sabotage of new directives (Drake et al., 2005, p. 11-12). Additional arguments are found from Barrow and Mosley (2005, p. 80-81) who stated that “employer brand management can help to deliver greater impact and credibility to internal marketing programs that seek to promote understanding of the brand.”. Not unlike an external customer orientation, a successful internal customer orientation permanently guides the attitudes and behaviors of employees. Therefore, it is also part of the company culture (Lukas & Maignan, 1996, p. 178).

3.1.3 Internal marketing and HRM activity alignment

The question of whether the responsibility of managing internal marketing activities, such as attraction, motivation and education of the staff, belongs to either the marketing department or the HR department has caused confusion historically within organizations. Marketing researchers have suggested that internal marketing has a role in managing employees in order to affect both internal and external situations for the company (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000, p. 219-
Human relation management literature generally agrees that allowing the parallel between the internal marketing and HR objectives can have a beneficial impact on the attitudes and behavior of the employees and the company (Bansal et al., 2001). Still this reveals a ‘fuzzy line’ between HR and internal marketing activities.

Grönroos (1981, p. 237) rationalized the internal marketing objectives by stating that having customer conscious staff is not enough, but that it is crucial to have coordination between the front staff and the background support staff. Meaning that these concepts are important for customer relations within a service-minded organization and that internal marketing is a way to reach these objectives. Therefore, internal marketing objectives are reached through internal marketing activities. Later literature points out that internal marketing activities as described in previous sections (see section 3.1.1 Internal marketing objectives and activities) which, to name a few, involves recruitment and training of personal, internal communications, internal market research, and developing job products, can also be seen as HR activities (Lings & Greenley, 2005, p. 290).

While reviewing internal marketing literature Foster et al., (2010, p. 403) identified that in order to achieve internal marketing orientation it is pivotal to use practices that are traditionally assigned to the HR department, such as training, recruiting, rewarding and retaining employees. This point is also made by Grönroos et al. (2008, p. 376) who states that a firm must use HR management tools along with internal marketing activities to reach internal marketing objectives. When identifying organizations that use internal market orientation, Bansal et al. (2001, p. 62-63) draws parallels between HR and internal marketing activities. When talking about the adoption of internal marketing into organizations, Bansal et al. (2001) argues that HR management researchers and practitioner are the most likely to stress the centrality of employees as a source of sustainable competitive advantage. The authors allude to that the idea of viewing your employees as assets to be invested in is a HR management style and that internal market orientation is the adoption of said management style.

Early in the lifespan of internal marketing Joseph (1996, p. 54) asked the important question of where internal marketing fits in within an organization’s marketing or strategic plan, and who should do it. It was either between the marketing or the human resource department. Joseph (1996, p. 55) continues by building an argument based on his revised definition of internal marketing which states that internal marketing is a cooperation between marketing and HR in order to reach the goals of internal marketing stated in the previous definitions. He continues by stating that marketing has no exclusive claim to customer and employee focus but that “it demands an integrative approach, drawing not just from marketing, but also from organizational behavior, human resources management, and other fields.” (Joseph, 1996, p. 55).

Bansal et al. (2001, p. 63) expands on these ideas saying that in its core, service marketing’s (and therefore internal marketing’s) main goal is to attract and retain customers and that HR management has the answer to “how” this goal can be achieved. Joseph (1996, p. 58) concludes that there should be a divide between where the responsibilities of the HR department ends, and the tasks of the marketing department begins. According to the author, HR should be handling their traditional tasks such as recruitment, career advancement and
motivation while marketing should stand for “other areas”. Internal marketing activities should therefore be split between the departments while the upper management should take on the role as internal marketers by managing both the marketing and the HR departments. In this thesis we adopt the perspective of Joseph (1996) where the ultimate responsibility of internal marketing resides with the upper management and this has been reflected in our approach in constructing our conceptual model.

3.2 Gamification

Gamification has been defined by several authors. Deterding et al. (2011, p. 1) defines gamification as “the use of game design elements in a non-game context”. Chou (2016, p. 8) offers a more human-centered definition of gamification: “Gamification is the craft of deriving all the fun and engaging elements found in games and applying them to real-world or productive activities”. The authors Huotari and Hamari (2012, p. 19) defines gamification from a services marketing perspective as: “a process of enhancing a service with affordances for gameful experiences in order to support user’s overall value creation”. Gamification is essentially about motivating users through an engaging and fun system. This motivation comes from the usage of the “game elements” as mentioned in the definition by Deterding et al. (2011) and Chou (2016), and these elements are the toolkit, or parts, that are used to create a game (Deterding et al., 2011, p. 11). Common game elements used in gamification is point-systems, leaderboards, achievements, competition and rewards (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 70; Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 36). With the evolution of technology and the availability of mobile devices and computers, these game elements are usually taken from games and implemented in a more digital context, such as applications, programs and websites (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 1).

3.2.1 Categories of gamification

Gamification is a versatile tool for any business, partly due to its customizability making it able to solve the desired problem for an organization. For an airline company for instance, it can be used to train pilots with flight simulators, having the airline staff express positive behavior towards customers, and to create loyalty towards the customers (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 20). Authors Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 20) identified three categories of gamification that creates a distinction between three areas of usage for a company. The categories are: internal gamification, external gamification, and behavioral-change gamification.

Internal gamification

Internal gamification is the use of gamification to improve productivity within your organization (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 21). The previously discussed Language Quality Game by Microsoft is a stellar example of internal gamification. According to Figure 1 internal gamification gives a clear organizational benefit by using the employees of said organization. Internal gamification has two distinct characteristics. The first being the participants. In internal gamification the users of the gamified system are part of a clearly defined community, e.g. the employees of the organization (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 20). For the defined community, they share a company culture, desire for advancement, and to achieve a status within the organization (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 21). The second
characteristic of internal gamification regards the motivational rewards in the organization, as the internal gamifications rewards systems must interact with the company’s existing reward systems (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 21). The rewards for the internal gamification must have some innovative motivator that goes beyond the ordinary, such as an employee award or the opportunity to learn (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 21-22).

External gamification

External gamification is driven by marketing objectives and aimed at targeting customers and/or potential customers (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 22). This kind of gamification is used to create: stronger relationships with the customers, stronger loyalty towards the brand, increase customer engagement, and increase the company’s profit (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 22). In Figure 1 we can see that external gamification provides an organizational benefit, in the form of achieving marketing objectives, and the users being individual customers, i.e. not a clearly defined community. One traditional example of gamification are loyalty programs. These programs have been used by companies world-wide and is a simple way to encourage loyalty with the customers by offering them “free stuff” in the form of, e.g. getting your tenth purchase for free (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 5-6). External gamification can however go beyond giving away “free stuff” to ensure loyalty of customers through “gameful design”. In an example presented by Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 23) a daily newspaper in California, the Record Searchlight wanted to turn passive readers into engaged readers that would comment on articles and share them with friends. To accomplish this, they implemented a badge system that awarded users a badge to be displayed in their profile when they accomplished a goal. The result was an increase in the volume of comments on the newspaper and an overall increase in the average time spent on the site by users (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 23). As the users were encouraged to reward good comments,
the editorial costs of the paper decreased as well due to the number of negative comments being flagged (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 23). Gamification as an external marketing tool can be a great tool to stimulate consumer engagement and loyalty through motivational rewards.

**Behavioral-change gamification**

The third and final category of gamification described by Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 23) is behavioral-change gamification. Behavioral-change gamification is used to encourage good habits within the population, such as exercising, eating healthier, improving your finances, and being more productive in your everyday life (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 23; Chou, 2018). Behavioral-change gamification programs are usually funded and run by non-profit organizations and government bodies, although there are examples of private companies and organizations that are utilizing this kind of gamification (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 24). One example of this is the previously mentioned Chore Wars, that motivates the user and other participants to do chores in their house, apartment or office space.

### 3.3 Game elements

A game is an integral experience created with building blocks. These building blocks are called game elements and it is possible to think of them as the “toolkit” for creating a game (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 26). One of the most frequently used frameworks in game design regarding game elements was introduced by Hunicke et al. (2004, p. 1) and is called the MDA framework. MDA stands for **Mechanics**, **Dynamics** and **Aesthetics**. The MDA framework is used in game design as an approach to understand how games are designed, and how the components of games work together (Hunicke et al., 2004, p. 1). It is possible to look at this framework through the lens of gamification. This was what the authors Zichermann and Cunningham (2011, p. 35) did. They used the framework and applied it on a non-game context. In their analysis they described the three factors of the MDA framework (*mechanics, dynamics and aesthetics*) and applied it to a context of gamification.

![Figure 2 - The MDA-framework and the experience of games (Hunicke et al., 2004, p. 2)](figure2.png)

**3.3.1 Mechanics**

Mechanics was described by Zichermann and Cunningham (2011, p. 36) as being what makes up the functioning components of the game because they allow the designer to have definite control over the “levers” of the game, giving the developer the ability to direct the players towards action. *The mechanics of gamification is what allows the user to have a meaningful response to the gamified process* (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 36). *The most common game mechanics in gamification are points, levels, leaderboards, badges,*
challenges, onboarding, and engagement loops (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 36). Other authors have stressed a few of these game mechanics, namely: badges, levels, leaderboards, achievements, and points (Nicholson, 2012, p. 1). Referred by Nicholson (2012, p. 1) as: ‘BLAP gamification’, which stands for badges, leaderboards, achievements, and points. The authors Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 71) refer to a phenomenon they have dubbed the “PBL Triad”, which describes the common usage of points, badges, and leaderboards in gamification. They mention that the PBL-mechanics are a great place to start in gamification and have a practical and very powerful use if they are implemented correctly (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 71). Henceforth, when we refer to PBL-mechanics, it encompasses the definition by Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 71) as points, badges, and leaderboards.

Points

Point systems are a very common mechanic in games, e.g. goals scored in sports, coins collected in Super Mario, and number of kills in a first-person shooter video game such as Call of Duty, to name a few. Points in gamification are crucial as they are a way to keep track of the users’ decisions, movements, and progression and assign a value to those choices (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 36). These points may be only visible to management, or the player as well, but they are imperative as a tool for understanding how users interact with the system.

Point systems have a plethora of uses in gamification. Six uses for point systems were identified by Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 72-73): (1) effectively keeping score, (2) determining the winner of a gamified process, if it has one, (3) creating a connection between progression and extrinsic reward, (4) providing feedback, (5) external display of progress, and (6) providing data for the game designer.

Other than the areas of use for point systems in gamification, there are five different classification of points that are implemented in gamification systems used for different objectives (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 38). These are: (1) experience points, (2) redeemable points, (3) skill points, (4) karma points, and (5) reputation points.

Badges

In gamification badges and achievement are usually synonymous as badges are a visual representation of achievements to display your completed achievements (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 74). Badges can be seen as a “heavier” version of points as they are a way to track progression, but for more significant achievements rather than more simple progression that is common in point systems (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 72, 74). Badges can also be perceived a status symbol, as they are a visual representation of completed achievements (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 55).

Antin and Churchill (2011, cited in Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 75) has identified five motivational characteristics for badge systems within gamification: (1) providing a goal to strive towards for users, (2) provide guidance within the gamified system as to what is possible and what is supposed to be done, (3) badges can be used as a signal as to what the user deems important and what they have performed, (4) status symbol and a statement of
the user’s progression within the gamified system, and (5) badges can create a group identity within the gamified system. Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 76) continues by stating that in internal gamification contexts “… credentialing badges can be a way for your employees to demonstrate certain skills. Every large enterprise has extensive corporate training programs, and employees participate in more training outside the rm. Badge systems are useful in this context”.

Leaderboards
Leaderboards are used to create simple comparisons of progression and to give context of progression where points and badges cannot (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 50; Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 76). In gamification systems where performance is of importance, a leaderboard is a useful mechanic to display performance metrics and compare it to other users (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 76). However, leaderboards can create situations where they have an opposite effect to what they are trying to achieve. In many instances, leaderboards can be a demotivating tool. Leaderboards can reduce a gamified system into a simple battle to be on top of the leaderboard, and if a user can see just how far they are from the top of the leaderboards, it can have powerful demotivational effects on the user (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 76). Although, when used correctly, leaderboards can be useful for players to find the will to perform better and climb further up in the “competition” and best the other users. To make leaderboards more nuanced and more intuitive, they can track different attributes. Managers and developers can choose which attributes they want to emphasize and track those attributes with leaderboards (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 77).

The three mechanics previously listed, the PBL-triad, are the most common mechanics used in organizational gamification. However, as mentioned previously, there are plenty more mechanics that are used in gamification which are discusses further as well. We wanted to highlight these three mechanics as they are referred to by authors as the most common ones. In our research we are investigating the implementation of gamification in an organization, and because we do not know exactly which mechanics that company uses, we are discussing more mechanics to include as many mechanics as possible.

Levels
Levels is one of the most common ways to display progression in video games. For example, in World of Warcraft levels are used to display your character progression from level 1 to 120, and in Super Mario it shows your progression through the game. In gamification levels are used as markers to display the user’s progression within the gamified system and show their experience over time (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 45). Levels in video games usually follow a progression from easy to difficult as levels get progressively more challenging as you progress more in the game. In gamification however, the most important aspect of level design is that the levels are easy to understand, and that the designer of the gamified system can add more levels as they go (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 47). When it comes to level design, progress bars usually go together with levels as a display of progression towards the next level, usually as a percentage (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 48). As mentioned previously in the section regarding points in gamification, one classification of points is experience points. These points are usually used as the currency towards level progression (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 38-39).
Challenges and quests
Challenges and quests are another example of gamification mechanics that are intended to give the player something to do and to provide a direction (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 64). The idea is to have something intriguing and rewarding to accomplish when you use the gamified system. These challenges can be rewarded as another motivator, usually in the form of badges that certify the completion of a challenge or quest (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 75).

Onboarding
Onboarding is the process of getting new users, beginners, into the gamified system (Zichermann & Hunter, 2011, p. 59; Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 80). Onboarding is a very carefully developed process, as there are many pitfalls that can make or break the experience for a new user (Zichermann & Hunter, 2011, 59-63). There are a few common pitfalls, or mistakes, that can be made in the first experience of a game. Firstly, providing too much information. Some games and sites can provide way too much information in the beginning of a game or website, which throws the user in the deep end in the first instance they use it (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 60). In the first experience of a game or website it is more important to let the player experience the system instead of trying to explain it, and instead reveal the complexity of the system as time progresses (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 60, 63). Secondly, making the game too difficult in the beginning. If a game is designed so that the first task is too difficult to accomplish, it creates a negative reinforcement which demotivates the player to continue further (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 61). The first step of a system should be void of any possibilities of failure (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 61), and be simple and provide guidance for the user (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 96). Lastly, asking for registration of personal information. This is a pitfall if it happens in the first experience of a system, as there is nothing to compel the user to register their private information if the user has not had a chance to experience the system properly (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 60). Instead, the first experience should be rewarding and providing the user something of value to create positive reinforcements in the first encounter of the system (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 60, 63).

Social engagement loops
In gamification, the issue of getting people to use the system (onboarding) is one common challenge. Furthermore, there is the challenge of getting people to use it again after they have tried it for the first time. This is called re-engagement, and social engagement loops are one gamification mechanic that creates motivating emotions that brings the user back into the gamified experience (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 67). In a social engagement loop, the creation of a motivating emotion leads to a social call to action, which re-engages the user. Then by rewarding the player’s progress, it leads back to the motivating emotion (Zichermann & Hunter, 2011, p. 67-68).

3.3.2 Dynamics
Dynamics is the second component of the MDA-framework. A few definitions of dynamics are provided by several authors: Zichermann and Cunningham (2011, p. 77) describes
dynamics as: “Mechanics are the tools used to create games, while dynamics are how players interact with game experiences”; Hunicke et al., (2004, p. 2) proposes the following definition: “Dynamics describes the run-time behavior of the mechanics acting on player inputs and each other’s outputs over time”; and Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 78) states that: “Dynamics are the big-picture aspects of the gamified system that you have to manage and consider but which you can never directly enter into a game”. To synthesize, dynamics are created by the users of the gamified system and is a result of their interactions and behaviors with the mechanics of the system. Managers can use a gamified system to reach objectives of large-scale importance to their company, e.g. employee development, management practices and company culture, through carefully designed dynamics in a gamified system (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 78-79).

Authors highlight different dynamics that are of importance. According to Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 78) the most important dynamics of gamified systems are: (1) constraints, which are limitations and forced trade-offs, (2) emotions, competitiveness, curiosity and happiness etc., (3) narrative, a consistent storyline in the gamified system, (4) progression growth and development, and (5) relationships, social interactions, status and belonging. These dynamics are, as mentioned previously, created through the players interactions with the gamified system.

According to Zichermann and Cunningham (2011, p. 94) there are more dynamics that when used properly they can guide specific user behavior and create great user engagement. The dynamics include: (1) pattern recognition, (2) collecting, (3) surprise and unexpected delight, (4) organizing and creating order, (5) gifting, (6) flirtation and romance, (7) recognition for achievement, (8) leading others, (9) fame and getting attention, (10) being the hero, (11) gaining status, and (12) nurturing, growing (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 81-93).

The dynamics of a gamified system can create unique experiences depending on the choice of mechanics. Managers and game designers usually tailor the mechanics to create a desired experience and outcome in their gamified system (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 81). For a manager, it is important to choose the right mechanics depending on their context, and what the desired goal of the gamified system is (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 81).

### 3.3.3 Aesthetics

The final component of the MDA-framework is aesthetics. As shown in Figure 2 aesthetics represents the “fun” in a gamified system. Aesthetics represents the emotional response when a user interacts with the gamified system (Hunicke et al., 2004, p. 2). The mechanics and dynamics of a gamified system, together with the user’s interactions, create an emotional response and feeling with the user (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 36). When it comes to “fun”, authors Hunicke et al., (2004, p. 2) suggest that it implies a greater meaning, as there are many different feelings that can be experienced when using a gamified system or playing a game. They suggest an expanded vocabulary that can better demonstrate what kind of aesthetic a gamified system or game creates: (1) sensation, which is game as sense-pleasure, (2) fantasy, game as make-believe, (3) narrative, game as drama, (4) challenge, game as an obstacle course, (5) fellowship, game as social framework, (6) discovery, game
as uncharted territory, (7) expression, game as self-discovery, and (8) submission, game as pastime (Hunicke et al., 2004, p. 2).

### 3.3.4 MDA-framework conclusion

The MDA-framework was presented by Hunicke et al., (2004) and has its roots in game design. Authors on Gamification such as Werbach and Hunter (2012) and Zichermann & Cunningham (2011) has used this framework and applied it in their gamification literature presented in this section. Zichermann and Cunningham (2011) argues that the MDA-framework is useful in gamification as the use of game design and system thinking teaches about the interrelation of game elements and makes it easier to apply them in a non-game context (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 35). The MDA-framework can be seen from two perspectives, the developer and user (Hunicke et al., 2004, p. 2). From the developer’s perspective, the mechanics of a gamified system gives rise to the dynamics, which in turn leads to an aesthetic experience with the user (Hunicke et al., 2004, p. 2). From the user’s perspective the aesthetics is what is first observable, and it is created through the mechanics and dynamics interaction with the user (Hunicke et al., 2004, p. 2). Usage of a gamified system can give the user greater understanding of the dynamics and mechanics at work.

### 3.4 Meaningful gamification

Many authors that we have discussed previously agree that gamification is a powerful tool for motivating and engaging users. Although some authors are disagreeing about what should constitute gamification. Author Nicholson (2015, p. 1) introduces the term of “meaningful gamification” and it is defined as a deeper use of gamification that does not rely on reward-systems. Meaningful gamification goes beyond the usage of the PBL-mechanics of points, badges, leaderboards and levels to a gamification that is more about designing the game to give the user a more personal connection with the gamified system (Nicholson, 2015, p.1). He argues that gamification has become synonymous with short-term rewards, and for such reward systems, the rewards must keep coming in order to maintain motivation for the user (Nicholson, 2015, p. 1) which creates a reward-loop that must be maintained forever (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 27). Meaningful gamification is also brought up by author Yu-Kai Chou (2016) as he discusses the “PBL-fallacy”. This fallacy is a common misconception that adding game mechanics to a system is instantly a form of gamification (Chou, 2016, p. 18). The author continues by stating: “The truth is, simply incorporating game mechanics and game elements does not make a game fun” (Chou, 2016, p. 19).

Chou (2016, p. 19-20) provides an example of this fallacy as “a trojan horse without Greek soldiers”, merely copying the shell, but not looking into the true design. The implementation of game elements in a gamification system does not necessarily make it motivating, engaging, and fun, as game elements can also be found in unsuccessful and boring examples of gamification (Chou, 2016, p. 19). This view of gamification, that demands a more well-designed system beyond simple game elements, is what we interpret as meaningful gamification. Although it may be a view that disqualifies gamification that uses the simpler use of PBL-mechanics, we are incorporating both views in this study, as gamification is a relatively new concept it may be underdeveloped in certain organizations.
The difference between gamification and meaningful gamification is how the player is rewarded and motivated. In both instances, the rewards can be motivating and engaging enough for the user. The difference lies mostly in the nature of the rewards and how they motivate the user. For gamification (PBL) the reward systems are needed to continue to motivate the user to continue to engage with the system, and rewards need to be maintained forever to ensure that the user is motivated continuously (Nicholson, 2015, p. 1; Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 27). This kind of reward-based system can be useful for short-term goals, but not sustainable for long-term motivation (Nicholson, 2015, p. 1). The sort of motivation that is associated with short-term gratification is referred to as extrinsic motivation by authors Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 55). Extrinsic motivation is when a person does something due to a favorable outcome that might come from it (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 55). In the case of gamification, the favorable outcome is the reward that a person expects from performing an action. In contrast, meaningful gamification intends to create long-term change by avoiding short-term gratification in the form of reward systems, and instead use elements intended to create a personal connection and stronger engagement with the user (Nicholson, 2015, p. 1). Intrinsic motivation is the counterpart to extrinsic motivation and is the motivation that comes from a genuine interest and a sense of enjoyment when performing a task (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 55). Nicholson (2015, p. 4) introduces six concepts, or elements, of meaningful gamification that creates a gameful and playful experience that will create a stronger personal connection with the user without relying on instant gratification through reward-systems. These are: play, exposition, choice, information, engagement and reflection (Nicholson, 2015, p. 4).

Play

Play as a concept in meaningful gamification is defined by Nicholson (2015, p. 4) as: "facilitating the freedom to explore and fail within the boundaries". There is a difference between game and play. Many definitions have emerged through the years. Maroney (2001, cited by Nicholson, 2015, p. 5) defines games as: "a game is a form of play with goals and structure". In this definition play is an element of games. If we go back to the definition of gamification by Deterding et al. (2011, p. 1): "the use of game elements in a non-game context", then play can and should be considered an element to gamification, therefore play-gamification is a viable approach (Nicholson, 2015, p. 4). Another key concept of play and games is provided by Caillois (2001, p. 9-10), where play is defined as free, separate, voluntary, unproductive and make-believe, while games is characterized by competition, goal-orientation and confined within a set of rules. Play as an element of meaningful gamification can create a playful system that uses "playfulness" and "fun" as the reward instead of a tangible reward (Nicholson, 2015, p. 5-6). Users would not engage with the system because of an expected outcome, but instead because the system is playful and fun to interact with.

Exposition

Nicholson (2015, p. 4) defines exposition as "creating stories for participants that are integrated with the real-world setting and allowing them to create their own". The use of a narrative in gamification is to be able to connect the user to the real-world context outside of the gamified system (Nicholson, 2015, p. 6). In narratives the use of analogies can be used in order to create a connection to the real-world context that may not be direct but can provide
a richness of the narrative that is not possible otherwise (Nicholson, 2015, p. 6). Another aspect of exposition through narratives is the opportunity for users to create their own stories by creating their own characters, set their own goals and share their experiences and achievements within the system (Nicholson, 2015, p. 6). This approach helps players create meaning and to have positive experiences through the gamified system (Nicholson, 2015, p. 6).

**Choice**

In gamification, the concept of choice is about putting the power of deciding how to engage with the system in the hands of the user (Nicholson, 2015, p. 4, 7). By granting autonomy to the user, it will earn the player a sense of positive self-being and control (Nicholson, 2015, p. 7). This choice includes if and how the player interacts with the system, this means that if the concept of Play, which is defined as “voluntary” by Caillois (2001, p. 9-10), is also used the player will have the choice not to engage in the system at all (Nicholson, 2015, p. 7). Choices in gamification should allow the user to decide from several tasks or assignments to accomplish, depending on their ambition the user can choose tasks that are worth more points or are more prestigious (Nicholson, 2015, p. 7). In meaningful gamification, the concept of choice is intended to empower the user and the “reward” will come from this empowerment, feeling in control and achieving on their own terms (Nicholson, 2015, p. 7-8).

**Information**

The concept of information is about giving the user an opportunity to learn more about the real-world context and the gamification system itself (Nicholson, 2015, p. 8). Giving information about the system in this concept is more about learning the “why” and “how” instead of just learning “what”. In gamification with reward-system, the user is rewarded for specific behavior. This teaches the user what kind of behavior will grant them a reward but by providing more information to the user, they can learn why that specific behavior is good and how it connects to the real-world context (Nicholson, 2015, p. 8). In game design, there are numerous ways of providing this information to the character, e.g. user interfaces that displays information, narratives tied in through Exposition, and through the mechanics of the game itself (Nicholson, 2015, p. 9). A challenge in providing information is to provide relevant information, as users are different in their existing knowledge, backgrounds and valuation of relevant knowledge the information provided must be carefully chosen by the designer of the gamified system (Nicholson, 2015, p. 9).

**Engagement**

Engagement in gamification have different meanings. Nicholson (2015, p. 9) presents two views of engagement when it comes to meaningful gamification, which are: social engagement and engaging experiences. Social engagement is a concept we are familiar with as it was introduced in a previous section by Zichermann and Cunningham (2011, p. 67) and the mechanics of social engagement loops. Social engagement in meaningful gamification is about creating the opportunity to create meaningful experience with others that are using the system (Nicholson, 2015, p. 9). Gamification systems are usually single-player experiences that are focused on the user’s own journey and progression in the system, but by creating connections with other users and other people in the real-world context it can create a sense of relatedness and belonging for the user (Nicholson, 2015, p. 9-10). The other view of
engagement is about creating an engaging game experience, that continues to challenge the player as they progress through the gamified system (Nicholson, 2015, p. 10). If the system is not continuously challenging the user, it becomes boring after a while. The idea is that the difficulty must increase at a pace that is similar to the user’s progression (Nicholson, 2015, p. 10; Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 96). Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 96) presents the idea of escalating difficulty as a flight of stairs, where the first step of the stair is when the player is new to the system (onboarding). Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 96) suggest that increasing difficulty should also be followed by a period of ease to give the user a chance to breathe and give them a feeling of mastery after overcoming a period of difficulty. The feeling of mastery gives the user a positive feeling that cannot be replicated in reward-systems.

**Reflection**

The concept of reflection is about assisting users to create connections between the gamified experiences and the applications in the real-world context in order to deepen understanding and engagement (Nicholson, 2015, p. 11). Reflection after performing an action, in a gamified system, is crucial in order to find the meaning behind the actions themselves (Nicholson, 2015, p. 11). Nicholson (2015, p. 11) presents three components to reflection, which are: *description*, *analysis* and *application*. The reflection starts with *description* where the user goes back and thinks about what he/she has done while engaged in the system and how they have changed and developed over time (Nicholson, 2015, p. 12). *Description* then leads to *analysis*, where the user thinks about what they have done and how it connects to the real-life context (Nicholson, 2015, p. 12). *Analysis* then finally leads to *application*, where the user will take their reflections about what they have done and how it applies to the real-world context, and act to form future behavior which leads to long-term development (Nicholson, 2015, p. 12). When the user reflects on the experience with a gamified system it can give meaning to the user even after the experience is over.

### 3.5 Octalysis framework

The author Yu-Kai Chou (2016, p. 23) has studied gamification and developed a framework intended to show gamification “*beyond points, badges and leaderboards*”. The framework developed is called the Octalysis framework, which consists of eight concepts of gamification and motivation. The framework was developed through analysis of game systems and how they utilize different motivational drives, such as inspiration, empowerment, manipulation and obsession (Chou, 2016, p. 23-24). The framework consists of eight “*core drives*” that influence motivation in gamification. These core drives are named: (1) Epic Meaning and Calling, (2) Development and Accomplishment, (3) Empowerment of Creativity and Feedback, (4) Ownership and Possession, (5) Social Influence and Relatedness, (6) Scarcity and Impatience, (7) Unpredictability and Curiosity, and (8) Loss and Avoidance (Chou, 2016, p. 25-28).

**Core drive 1: Epic Meaning and Calling**

The first core drive of the Octalysis framework is Epic Meaning and Calling, and it motivates people because they feel that they are engaged in something that has a higher meaning and is bigger than themselves (Chou, 2016, p. 66). Epic Meaning and Calling underlines the purpose of the activity and its importance. In an organizational context, when an employee
believes in the company’s mission it can enable them to work with great passion, even though other companies are offering greater monetary compensation (Chou, 2016, p. 88).

One common design element used to create meaning is a thoughtful narrative. Meaning though narrative is commonly utilized in games where the player is introduced to an apocalyptic scenario where they are the only one qualified to save the world. Narrative is a powerful tool in games and gamification, because it gives a context and shows “why” the player/user should engage in the system (Chou, 2016, p. 82). The importance was also highlighted by Nicholson (2015, p. 6) in the form of exposition in meaningful gamification, discussed in the earlier section. However, the narrative must be well presented and thought out, as it can backfire if the narrative is not believable to the user (Chou, 2016, p. 88).

Core drive 2: Development and Accomplishment
The second core drive, Development and Accomplishment, is the core drive that engages us to learn a new skill, exercise and sets us on a career path. This drive focuses on personal development and growth, where the motivation comes from our desire to accomplish a targeted goal (Chou, 2016, p. 92). Development, accomplishment and progress in gamification is usually demonstrated with points, badges, levels and leaderboards where people can track and show their progression (Chou, 2016, p. 92). Challenges are a vital part of gamification, as it is what we must overcome to feel a sense of accomplishment. Without any challenges, the gamified system does not become engaging for the user (Chou, 2016, p. 92-93). Challenges is one of the commonly used mechanics in gamification to utilize this core drive when motivating users, as it also is the easiest one to implement (Chou, 2016, p. 92, 122). Organizations that use internal gamification usually relies solely on this core drive, as development and achievement are things that almost comes naturally when implementing a gamification system (Chou, 2016, p. 122).

Core drive 3: Empowerment of Creativity and Feedback
The third core drive, Empowerment of Creativity and Feedback, draws from our desire to express our creativity and to create (Chou, 2016, p. 158). This core drive is most accurately displayed in building with Legos. When building Legos, you can use your creativity to create something unique, and you get to see instant results (feedback) on your creation. In gamification, this core drive is asserted when users engage in gamified systems in which they can express creativity through figuring out new and different solutions to a problem (Chou, 2016, p. 26). The feedback aspect of this core drive is in effect when the user sees results of their ideas, and gets feedback from their peers (Chou, 2016, p. 26).

Core drive 4: Ownership and Possession
The fourth core drive, Ownership and Possession, is where the user is motivated through the feeling of being in control of something (Chou, 2016, p. 26). This is a particularly effective motivator in gamification given the prevalence of virtual currencies, such as points and badges, it gives the user motivation through the accumulation of wealth within the gamified system (Chou, 2016, p. 26). Along with the desire to have ownership of something comes the desire to improve upon it, protect it, and accumulate more of it (Chou, 2016, p. 161). When it comes to virtual currencies, such as points, the user will desire to obtain more of it,
as in many gamification systems, these points are redeemable, so the user can purchase rewards for the accumulated points (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 39).

Core drive 5: Social Influence and Relatedness
The fifth core drive, Social Influence and Relatedness, is where the user finds motivation in the social elements of the gamified system (Chou, 2016, p. 27). These social elements include; mentorship, social acceptance, social feedback, social interaction, status, companionship, cooperation and competition (Chou, 2016, p. 27; Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 78). This core drive is based in people’s desire to connect with people and to compare ourselves with others (Chou, 2016, p. 198). In gamification, the use of leaderboards is one mechanic that enables connection, comparison and competition with other users of the system.

Core drive 6: Scarcity and Impatience
The sixth core drive, Scarcity and Impatience, creates motivation through the users’ desire to obtain something that is rare, exclusive or immediately unattainable (Chou, 2016, p. 26). Scarcity through exclusivity is a business practice in which a product is not available for all people, creating a desire to have the product simply because it is unavailable to many people (Chou, 2016, p. 234). One example brought up by Chou (2016) is Facebook. In the beginning Facebook was exclusively for Harvard students, then it opened to more prestigious collages, then eventually for all colleges. When it was opened for everyone, a lot of users joined since it had previously been unavailable to them. In gamification however, mechanics used to motivate with this core drive are for instance, scarcity of time, such as a challenge that is only available for some time, and rare and difficult achievements (Chou, 2016, p. 258, 233).

Core drive 7: Unpredictability and Curiosity
Unpredictability and Curiosity is the core drive that engages the user through the constant uncertainty of what is about to happen next, it is the main motivational driver in experiences that involves chance, such as gambling and lotteries (Chou, 2016, p. 27, 273). The element of uncertainty and chance is commonly used in game design. A game that is predictable in the outcomes of every scenario becomes boring, but a game that keeps the user on their toes becomes more fun and engaging (Chou, 2016, p. 274). Game design elements as random rewards, mystery boxes, easter-eggs or sudden rewards are connected to this core drive and through these, the gamified system can create almost addictive experiences for the user (Chou, 2016, p. 308).

Core drive 8: Loss and Avoidance
The last core drive is the drive of Loss and Avoidance. This core drives motivates users through a fear of losing something or missing out on an experience (Chou, 2016, p. 311). A common theme in games is to stay alive in order to advance to the next level, with a chance of losing your progress if you fail (Chou, 2016, p. 311-312), whereas in the real world this core drive can manifest itself in effort to preserve our ego and not waste our time and efforts on a project. A user becomes engaged in the system to avoid a negative outcome for themselves (Chou, 2016, p. 313). In gamified systems, this core drive is designed around elements such as limited opportunities, fear of missing out (FOMO), or trapping the user in
a sunk cost “prison” (Chou, 2016, p. 340). This core drive engages the user through a sense of urgency and can create an obsessive relation to the gamified system, however, it is a very powerful motivator (Chou, 2016, p. 340).

3.6 Conceptual framework

It is apparent that gamification is going to be relevant for marketing departments that need to encourage consumer engagement with a product or to human resources teams that hope to motivate and engage employees. But it also applies in human resources management and in government and in social impact settings. Motivation is a magic ingredient in all these cases (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 13). We have identified the prospect of using gamification as a method to engage in internal marketing activities and it is displayed in Figure 3.

Gamification is a tool that can be used in a plethora of areas. This is because the designer of the gamified system can encourage beneficial behavior and punish for example unproductive behavior (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 78-79). In short, how gamification is utilized is up to the designer. It is our assumption that gamification can be used as an internal marketing tool and this is what we have projected through our model. Our conceptual model shows gamification as an internal marketing tool that encourages users of the gamified system to engage in the internal marketing activities, see Figure 3. Consequently, the achievement of internal marketing activities will help the organization in reaching their internal marketing objectives.

When it comes to the relation between gamification and internal marketing, we have applied theories from game design about the elements of gamification, the building blocks that engage users. Each arrow indicates the nature and existence of an influential effect that game elements, in our opinion, should have on the internal marketing activities. By constructing a conceptual model, see Figure 3, we can base our investigation on the combination of gamification and internal marketing. However, our model serves not only as a foundation but also as a guideline to our research as we study the influence of game elements have on each of the internal marketing activities listed in the model.

In conclusion, Figure 3 presents all seven of the internal marketing activities. Our assumption is that these activities can be influenced by a gamified system. This figure is a product of extensive research of previous literature but that does not mean that there is not anything that we have failed to consider. It is for this reason that we set out to study through our qualitative research of Volvo Group’s ambassador app #WeAreVolvoGroup.
Figure 3 - Conceptual model
4. Practical methodology

In this chapter, the chosen method of data collection and sampling technique are presented and explained. The interview guides and the conduction of the interviews are also explained, along with the transcription and chosen method of analysis.

4.1 Data collection method

In research, a study can draw upon two different sets of data, primary and secondary (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 313). Primary data is data that is collected by the researchers themselves from original sources through observation (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 288). Observations are made through systemic observation, recording, description, analysis and interpretation of a phenomena, people’s behavior etc. (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 288). Through the collection of primary data, the researchers can collect complex data that is relevant to the research that is being conducted, additionally it produces data that the researcher can familiarize easily with (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 320-322). Primary data in this study is collected through in-depth interviews with managers and users of the #WeAreVolvoGroup app to gain a deeper understanding of the apps functionalities and how the users interact with the app.

The alternative to primary data collection is to collect secondary data through secondary sources (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 313). According to Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 313-320) there are numerous advantages to secondary data analysis: collecting data from secondary sources can provide data of high quality depending on the databases that are used; cost and time-constraints of collecting primary data are eliminated; opportunity to conduct a longitudinal analysis; more time for analysis of data; and lastly, a reanalysis of data can give ways to new interpretations. However, due to the purpose this thesis secondary data collection is not viable as the main source of data. Mainly because this thesis aims to investigate how users of the #WeAreVolvoGroup-app interact with a gamified system and how it can affect internal marketing activities. To the best of our knowledge, there is not any database that can contribute with such information. Some secondary data is collected through the app itself, which Volvo Group granted us access. The access to the app allows us to learn about how the app’s functions and to identify potential game elements that are investigated in the interviews with the managers and users.

Interviews can be highly structured and formalized, or they can be conducted as informal and unstructured conversations (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 320). Interviews are a great way for mutual discovery and reflection through a process that is very organic, as it can be very unstructured and natural (Tracy, 2013, p. 132). A structured interview uses standardized questions, usually with predetermined or pre-coded answers, and are conducted in a very controlled manner as to not indicate any bias in the questioning (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 320; Tracy, 2013, p. 139). Structured interviews are usually conducted to acquire quantifiable data (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 320), and as they do not leave much room for the interviewers to explore different themes or topics, it is not a suitable choice for this study. In semi-structured interviews, which is the chosen structure of the interviews for this thesis, the questions are usually designed in accordance to themes, and the interview itself is less
structured in terms of order of questions, which questions that are suitable, and the tone of the interview (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 320; Tracy, 2013, p. 139). Interviews with less structure are commonly used in qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 466). In semi-structured interviews, the interviewers may choose to omit questions that are not suitable for the context (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 320). In this study, we have elected the semi-structured interview to be best suited, as during the interviews, questions might become irrelevant and other questioning might need more emphasis. This point is yet again stressed by Saunders et al. (2009, p. 324) that states that open-ended questions and questions that may need to be varied in logic or order are most suitable for semi-structured interviewing.

4.2 Interview guide
In semi-structured interviews, the researchers create an interview guide which outlines general themes or areas that are being covered in the interview (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 473). In semi-structured interviewing, the researchers can allow some flexibility in the questions in which they draw from in their interview guide to allow themselves to adapt the interview to the situation and participant (Tracy, 2013, p. 143). We have designed an interview guide with a list of questions, connected to themes, that are being investigated (see Appendix 1). Some of the questions in the interview-guide act as follow-up questions to a more general question, and in such cases if the general question does not evoke an answer that allowed for the second question, we have skipped the follow-up questions. This flexibility allows us to not ask redundant questions and to irritate the interviewee with further questions about a subject.

The interview guide is designed with four different question types, as described by Tracy (2013, p. 146-147), and they are opening questions, generative questions, directive questions and closing questions. The opening questions are used to build trust and rapport with the interviewee, also to set the tone for the interview. The opening section of the interview also included informed consent for both participation and recording of the interview. Questions regarding the participants themselves and their experience were also included in this section. Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 475) suggests that questions regarding the participants and their experience can contextualize the setting for the interview and can be important for the analysis process. The generative questions are questions that are non-directive, non-threatening and aims to generate frameworks and further questions (Tracy, 2013, p. 147). This part of the interview was used to investigate general questions about the participants' opinions and experiences with the app. The directive questions are where the questions are more specifically directed towards the theory and concepts that are being investigated (Tracy, 2013, p. 149). In this section the questions were directly related to internal marketing activities and gamification. Lastly, the closing questions, where the questions are designed to capture larger themes and tie up loose ends (Tracy, 2013, p. 151). In this section, we used catch-all questions to find out if there were anything else that the participants wanted to bring up or if there were anything that they felt that we missed, or failed to address. This kind of question can give rise to other themes or issues that the interviewers did not think about previously (Tracy, 2013, p. 151). In all these sections, we have used mostly open-ended questions and probing questions. The open-ended questions allow a participant to answer freely and evaluate about a situation or experience (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 337). Open-ended questions are usually worded to begin with “what, why or how”, as to allow the
interviewee to answer freely (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 337). Probing questions are questions that are worded similarly to open-ended questions but seek to explore responses that are of significance to the research itself (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 338). When designing the research questions, we made efforts to not produce any questions that might lead the participant. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 338) stresses the importance of avoiding leading question to avoid any bias in the questioning. The questions are designed to concern a specific topic, but they are also designed to not allude towards any desired answer.

The interview guides were sent in advance to the participants, so they would get a chance to review the questions beforehand. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 328) argues that by supplying the participant with relevant information beforehand can increase the credibility of the research. In this case, the interview guides were sent to the participants along with a glossary with explanations of terms, themes and concepts that are being examined in the study (see Appendix 2). This was done in order to avoid misunderstandings and/or explanations of concepts during the interviews.

4.3 Sampling method
In business research, there are two different kinds of sampling techniques: probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 213). Probability sampling is used to make statistical generalizations of a population, therefore every person in a population has the same chance of being selected (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 214; Tracy, 2013, p. 134; Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 179). These techniques are commonly used in quantitative research and as this study is a qualitative study that does not intend to make generalization based on the findings, a probability sampling is not suitable.

Non-probability sampling allows the researcher to choose the sample based on their subjective judgement (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 233). Non-probability sampling techniques include: quota, convenience, snowball and purposeful sampling (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 190; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 236). Quota sampling is used to produce a sample that represents the population relative to its diversity with factors such as gender, ethnicity, age groups and socio-economic status being considered (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 193). For this study, we do not need a sample that reflects the population at Volvo Group, therefore we elected not to use a quota sampling technique. Convenience sampling is a sample that is chosen based on its availability and accessibility to the researcher (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 190; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 241). The researcher might administer a survey haphazardly, but it is hard to determine what population the sample represents (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 190; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 241). A convenience sample has the advantage of being cost- and time-efficient (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 190), although, as this study aims to investigate a specific population of app users at Volvo it is not a suitable sampling technique for this study. A snowball sample is a sort of convenience sample in which the researcher contacts one member of a desired population, and then ask them for additional members of the population to contact (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 240). In this study, we have used a sort of snowball sampling technique, as we initiated contact with one person at Volvo Group, which referred us to additional people to contact. However, from those people we were careful in determining their suitability of the study. The last sampling technique, purposeful sampling is a technique in which the researchers determine the sample based on their suitability for the
study (Tracy, 2013, p. 134; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 237). Tracy (2013, p. 138) and Lapan (2003, p. 242) argues that, in qualitative research, the research and purpose is what determines the best suitable sample for the study, and where to find the appropriate data for the research. The chosen sampling technique for this study is purposeful sampling as the sample is chosen based on the purpose and research question of the research, and we have been careful in choosing the suitability of the participants for the study. The chosen participants were chosen to fit the parameters of the research question, goals and purpose, as stressed by Tracy (2013, p. 134). Our access to the app allowed us to view the leaderboards and see if any of the people on the leaderboards could be of interest for the interviews.

It is suggested by Lapan et al. (2012, p. 83) that the populations in qualitative research can have several study populations to investigate different perspectives of a situation or phenomenon. In this study, we are investigating a situation in which the views of two sample groups is necessary to understand the phenomenon, namely: managers of the app and users of the app. The managers of the app have an overarching perspective of how the app functions and what it can and cannot do. This allows us to get insights of the internal marketing activities in the app and the game elements. The users of the app are crucial as they can provide insights of their experiences of the app and its game elements. Tracy (2013, p. 138) suggests that criteria set upon the interviewees can be used to determine their relevance for the study. Criteria set for managers are: (1) managerial position at Volvo Group (includes all Volvo Group brands), and (2) affiliation or work related to the app. For the users the criteria are: (1) currently working at Volvo Group (includes all Volvo Group brands), and (2) uses the app #WeAreVolvoGroup. The last criterion for users, that they use the app, applies somewhat to managers as well, but it is not of utmost importance. The current study is investigating the relationship between internal marketing and gamification through two perspectives, managers and users. For the managers, the interviews are designed to find out about which specific internal marketing activities that the app enables. The managers involved with the app would have the insight that allows these questions to be answered. The other sample group, the users of the app, are asked about how the game elements in the app engages them in the internal marketing activities that are enabled in the app. Both sample groups are asked questions regarding the game elements in the app, how they are used and how they influence users.

The sample size in qualitative research is often ambiguous and without any set rules for how large the sample must be, unlike probability sampling (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 233). In qualitative research the emphasis usually lies on quality rather than quantity, what is useful, richness of the data, and what is possible with the available resources (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 234; Tracy, 2013, p. 138). As qualitative research does not aim to generalize about a population, but rather about theory (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 233) the researchers must decide how large of a sample is suitable for their research. When deciding this, it is crucial to consider time constraint, financial constraint and the saturation of the data that is being collected (Tracy, 2013, p. 138). Too few interviews can produce shallow data, but too many can be overwhelming when it comes to conducting interviews and transcribing (Tracy, 2013, p. 138). In this study, there were five interviews conducted. Two were managers and three were users of the app. When we were looking for interviewees, one of the managers provided several additional possible participants that we contacted. Although, due to scheduling issues and non-response from these possible participants, we were not able to recruit more
participants for the interviews. Tracy (2013, p. 138) suggests that a sample size of 5-8 participants are valuable for qualitative research. The interviews were fulfilling and provided rich data for the study, furthermore they reached some saturation as we recognized patterns in responses from the participants.

4.4 Conducting the interviews

Interviews are conversations where two people exchange ideas, views and thoughts about a theme of mutual interest (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 2). Interviews are different from regular conversations however, because interviews usually have a purpose and structure (Tracy, 2013, p. 131). The implication of a purpose and structure of an interview, it can be difficult to make the interviews to feel natural and casual. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 364) the role of the interviewer is to be neutral, to never inject opinions in the questioning, and to be both friendly and directive at the same time. This is a difficult task, but during the interviews that were conducted, we tried to make the interview setting feel as relaxed as possible by discussing the interview beforehand and engaging in casual conversation. One reason that the interviewer must be directive during an interview is to guide the interview along its intended schedule and timeframe (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 364). The interviews that were conducted were scheduled for one hour, although the interviews themselves did not require the whole hour. The participants themselves could choose the time themselves when they were available for an interview, as the interviewers had a very flexible schedule.

Interviews can be conducted by either face-to-face, telephone or by internet-mediated means (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 206). In business research, face-to-face interviews are more common than telephone interviews, as they are more representative and can provide more rich information (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 206). Two of the interviews were conducted face-to-face where we traveled to Gothenburg. Face-to-face interviews have the advantage of allowing the interviewers to build rapport and to collect both verbal and non-verbal data (Tracy, 2013, p. 160). When conducting a face-to-face interview, it is important to consider the location in which you are conducting the interview. Tracy (2013, p. 160) characterizes a ‘good’ location for an interview as a quiet place without a lot of distractions, adequate privacy, comfortable and availability of electricity for lap-tops or audio recorders. The first interview was conducted at the Headquarters of Volvo Group in Gothenburg in a conference room. This place allowed for all the criteria to be fulfilled. The second interview was conducted at Gothenburg City Library in a study room. All the criteria were fulfilled in this interview as well. Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 476) mentions the importance of using a good device for recording, as it greatly facilitates the transcribing process. For the face-to-face interviews, they were recorded with a high-quality microphone along with two mobile phones, to have a back-up recording in case something would go wrong with the recording. The remaining interviews were conducted via Skype. Telephone or internet-mediated interviews offers an advantage when it comes to access and cost in interviewing, as it gives easier access to participants without having to meet in person to conduct a face-to-face interview as well as eliminates the costs associated with traveling (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 349; Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 206). The interviews with the users were conducted over Skype, due to the financial costs and time constraints. Telephone interviews have some limitations such as: the sound quality can be lacking; inability to interpret non-verbal
communication; telephone interviews are not sustained for as long as face-to-face interviews; the inability to establish rapport (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 206-209). The telephone interviews were recorded through Skype-software as well as with a mobile phone as a back-up.

A good interview relies not only on the data that is collected but relies largely on how the interviewer conducts themselves during the interview (Tracy, 2013, p. 161). A good interviewer, according to Tracy (2013, p. 161) must be knowledgeable, attentive, trustworthy, open-minded and gentle. The concern of being knowledgeable refers to the interviewer having some understanding about the subject and situation that is being discussed. In this study, we have amassed knowledge from literature about gamification and internal marketing, as well as the context in which this is being investigated, the app #WeAreVolvoGroup. Prior to the creation of the interview guide, we got access to the app and were able to investigate how it works and identify different game elements that were to be inquired about during the interviews. The criteria of being trustworthy is essential to an interview, as it is hard to gain and hard to maintain (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 367). Before the interviews, the interviewers explained to the participants about the nature of the research and is being investigated in this thesis. This was an effort to establish trust between the interviewers and interviewees, also to consider the ethical criterion of deception. During the interviews, the interviewers allowed the participants to first answer a question before intervening with either a follow-up question or comments, to make sure they were allowed to bring up everything that they wanted to bring up during that particular question.

Table 1 shows the duration of each interview along with how the interviews were conducted.

Table 1 - Table of interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Conducted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager 1</td>
<td>35.03 min</td>
<td>Face-to-face in Gothenburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager 2</td>
<td>37.35 min</td>
<td>Face-to-face in Gothenburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User 1</td>
<td>26.59 min</td>
<td>Telephone/Internet mediated (Skype)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User 2</td>
<td>16.47 min</td>
<td>Telephone/Internet mediated (Skype)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User 3</td>
<td>30.46 min</td>
<td>Telephone/Internet mediated (Skype)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5 Transcribing

Transcribing is the process of transforming a recorded interview into usable data (Tracy, 2013, p. 177). Transcription is a very time-consuming task in qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 482; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 485) however it is not time-wasting (Tracy, 2013, p. 177). As mentioned previously, the interviews in this study were audio-recorded with the expressed consent from the interviewee. By audio-recording interviews, the researcher can not only listen to what people are saying, but also how they say it. This kind of data can be valuable in qualitative research as it gives a complete account of the interview (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 482). In this research, the interviewers have made reflections of how people express themselves in their answers, as is discussed in the analysis. In the face-to-face interviews, both researchers were focused on the interview guide and the participants, therefore not taking notes during the interviews. This was done to create a more attentive
environment and to not be distracted by writing during the interviews. Although, after the interviews, the interviewers discussed how they felt about the interview, the interviewee, and their responses.

The use of a high-quality microphone during these interviews facilitated the transcribing process as it produced high-quality audio, this led to the transcription process being easier to manage and not as time-consuming as anticipated.

4.6 Analysis method
Analysis in qualitative research is usually not so straightforward and sometimes difficult, as the data collected from interviews does not have a specific rule as to how it should be analyzed (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 571). As qualitative data is usually characterized by the richness of the data, it can be troublesome to analyze the data through that richness (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 571). For this study, we analyze the data through a thematic analysis, which is a very common approach in qualitative analysis. Elements of thematic analysis is prevalent in other analysis approaches such as grounded theory, critical discourse analysis, qualitative content analysis and narrative analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 571-572). Thematic analysis is an accessible and flexible approach to analyzing qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 77), that seeks to identifying patterns (themes) within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79).

The process of conducting a thematic analysis is outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87) in six steps:

1. **Getting familiar with the data:** This step includes transcribing the data, reading and re-reading the data that is collected (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). Reading and re-reading is important in this step as immersing with the data allows the researcher to fully understand the data and discover patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). In this study, both the researchers were present during the face-to-face interviews, however the telephone interviews were conducted separately. Therefore, this step is important for this research as both of us are not familiar with all the data, which requires us to read and re-read the data thoroughly.

2. **Generating codes:** In this step, the researchers create systematic codes for the data set that is related to patterns and ideas that are detected (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). The codes are used to identify interesting or useful features of the data set that may be of a meaningful use for the phenomenon that is being studied (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88). The codes are useful for organizing the data and to prepare for the identification of themes for the analysis. The difference between the codes and themes are that the codes are usually broader and used to prepare for the interpretative analysis of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88).

3. **Searching for themes:** After the data set has been coded it is time to sort the different codes into potential themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 89). Some of the codes may form main themes and some codes become sub-themes, while some codes may be discarded altogether (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 90). During this step, the themes start to emerge, and their
significance can be evident, and it can be helpful to present them in a visual way, such as a thematic map.

(4) Reviewing themes: When step 3 is completed, the researcher should have a set of candidate themes from which to conduct their analysis, but first they must be revised (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91). Themes may be discarded, revised or broken down into separate themes. This can be due to lack of significance or not enough data to support a theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91). After this step, it should be clear what the themes are and how they are interrelated with each other.

(5) Defining and naming themes: When the themes have been identified, the researcher should start to analyze them and to figure out what lies in the core of each of the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92). In this study, all the questions were stated with a specific theme or concept in mind, therefore the essence of the themes are named according to the concepts and themes identified prior to the data collection. The exception being emerging themes that we did not consider.

(6) Producing the report: The final step involves producing a coherent and logical account of the themes and how the researchers relate the data collected to those themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 93). As in all research, it is important to present the findings in a way the reader can follow the underlying logical arguments of the findings and analysis. Each theme and connection made by us must be accompanied by compelling arguments that demonstrates the reasoning for the connections.

When conducting the analysis, we have followed this process when analyzing the data. After transcription and familiarizing ourselves with the data, we developed codes to find patterns in the data (see Appendix 3). The themes developed from the data were three main themes with subsequent sub-themes:

1. Internal marketing activities
   1.1. Job product development
   1.2. Employee recruitment
   1.3. Training and education
   1.4. Motivation and reward
   1.5. Internal market research
   1.6. Internal communication
   1.7. Retention of staff

2. Gamification and game elements
   2.1. PBL-elements
   2.2. Meaningful gamification
   2.3. Categories of gamification

3. Additional findings
   3.1. Personal branding
   3.2. Company culture

These themes and sub-themes are discussed further in chapter 6.
5. Results

In this chapter, the collected data is presented in accordance to the identified themes for the thematic network analysis. After interviews with two managers and three users of the app, we have gathered the following data presented in this chapter.

5.1 Nature of the app
When conducting our interviews, we uncovered additional specific data surrounding the usage and function of the Volvo Group ambassador app “#WeAreVolvoGroup”. Our understanding of the app, prior to the interviews, was gathered from the app’s description in the Google Play store, conversation with the creator of the app, and through us getting access to the app. In the question guide sent out to the managers and users, they were asked generative questions about how the interviewees both used the app and their opinions surrounding it.

Most of the data gathered surrounding the purpose and usage of the app was gathered from the managers, and especially Manager 1 who had the most insight about the app. The data gathered unveiled that the purpose behind the app is to accomplish two external marketing objectives which are increasing Volvo Group’s new media reach and increase the trust tied into the messages. This is accomplished through their ambassador program which through this app allows any user of the app, and employed within Volvo Group, to become a brand ambassador and to distribute and interact with quality marketing content. By accessing the employees’ personal network through their social media accounts, the company ensures that their messages have increased reach. By letting the users choose what content to share among the company branded content it ensures that the messages are imbued with trust because it puts a human face, the user, alongside the marketed messages.

“So, when we say something, it's of course in our own interest, but if we would get our own employees to say something, that's more trusted. So, the APP is built on that and that's employee advocacy.” – Manager 1

According to manager 1, the fact that Volvo Group is noted on the stock market means that employees does not have the right to distribute news about the company externally. This has led to what Manager 1 describes the company culture before the app as an environment that did not allow for employees to talk about their workplace outside the company. Stating that “… the culture may have been that it's easier to be quiet than to say something because you don't know what you are allowed to say [...] and if you say something or you say the wrong things then you will get a reminder, or you can get fired.”. Effectively this app provides the users with content that is already approved for distribution outside the company solving this problem.

The purpose of #WeAreVolvoGroup app is to be an external marketing tool but it does have internal marketing applications. When asked about what influence the app has on internal
marketing at Volvo Group, Manager 2 stated that the app does not play a big role in internal marketing at the moment because of the other intranet service the company is using called “Violin”. But Manager 2 also states that an advantage of using the app is that employees become “stronger together”. Manager 1 said that the app is a compliment to the company’s intranet and is not meant to replace it in any way. However, the app aims to reach the deskless workers who does not have access to the intranet, and it will offer a good view of how the company is working. User 3 supports this by stating that the app has a lot of impact on the internal marketing at Volvo Group. The information that the app provides gives great source of knowledge on what’s going on in the different brands and makes it easier to connect to their workers.

Another interesting theme that arose from the interviews was the existence of a competition between the intranet Violin and other apps and services concerned with internal communications on Volvo Group’s internal market. Manager 2 has identified this problem and stated “… we don’t look at the competition we have internally with Violin and also Jammer and also the new One drive”.

“I think that all employees should get this [app] by default on their mobile phone when they enter Volvo, which is something that they do not get.” – User 3

5.2 Internal marketing activities

In the interview guides for the managers, we asked specific questions about the internal market activities and if the app can engage users in this activity. The managers, who had the most insight in the app, were asked this to identify which activities would be relevant for future interviews. The activities that were identified as present in the app by the managers were then also included in the interview guides for the users. The activities that were not present in the app were excluded for the user interviews as they would be irrelevant to ask about.

Developing job products

The development of job products was part of the initial questioning for managers about the internal market activities. The development of job products was explained in the glossary sent out to the participants as: “the idea that businesses develop jobs and positions as a product that they market and sell to potential and current employees” (Sasser & Arbeit, 1976, p. 64). In the interviews, Manager 1 and 2 both mentioned that the development of job products is not present in the app. Manager 1 says that this activity is something that could be used further in the app in the future, but as of right now, it is not used for this specific activity. Manager 1 elaborates and mentions that the app has a lot of potential in this area, that it can be used to market open positions and jobs internally and externally, this also would allow for employees to market job openings to their personal networks on LinkedIn and other social media. To conclude, the app does not currently develop job products, although it could. This is a recurring theme in some of the internal marketing activities that we present in the following sections.
**Employee recruitment**

Employee recruitment is an activity that touches on the subject that was discussed with Manager 1 and 2 regarding the development of job products. Employee recruitment is another internal market activity that both managers concluded were not currently used in the app. The explanation for employee recruitment provided to the interviewees was: “*The process of recruiting with the intention of attaining the best personnel*” (Grönroos, et al., 2008, p. 376; Kundu & Vora, 2004). The explained definitions for developing of job products and employee recruitment were very similar, which led to a similar answer for both activities. This activity is not present in the app, although the managers discussed the possibility of this feature being developed in the future.

**Training and education**

The third internal marketing activity, training and education, was explained in the glossary of the interview guide as: “*The company’s efforts in developing their employees to become better at their work*” (Stauss, 1995, p. 63). This was another internal marketing activity that the Managers says is not an activity that the app enables. Much like the previous internal marketing activities, it could be a potential feature in the future. Manager 1 brings up the possibility of integrating Volvo Group University to promote courses that are taught within the organization. Manager 1 discussed potential ways of integrating these training programs or courses in the app with leaderboards that track employees’ participation in such programs and courses. One thing that became evident during the interviews was that the app was still in the early stages of development and did not include functions that we identified as internal marketing activities. Even though this activity was removed from the user interview guide there was some evidence of learning through the app based on the interviews with the users. When User 2 was asked how the app influenced them, the answer was that they learn more about what is new.

“If you share, you also try to learn something more.” – User 2

When User 3 was asked about the potential of internal communication one part of their answer was a wish for an internal tool that allows one to learn more about Volvo Group or work tasks.

“If there was some kind of game that also rendered me to learn more about the Volvo Group or internal information that windows 10 upgrade or whatever it might be, or the migration from one system to another and I get points for it and some kind of reward at the end.”

– User 3

**Motivation and reward**

Motivation was explained in the interview guide as: “*The company’s efforts to engage employees to behave in a productive manner that benefits the business*” (Johnston, 1989, p. 21-22) When asked about the influence that the app had on the users’ motivation, most of the interviewees were confused. However, a theme arose among the interviewees that connected to their motivational drive for using the app which came in the form of its promised value proposition. Users of the app gains access to quality content that is approved for distributions on their respective social media platforms. This leads to the fact that the users engage
themselves in the content and allows them to be part of an environment that offers them a different perspective of the company. Manager 1 and User 3 both state that the app has a positive effect on employee motivation as it provides a good look into the company that motivates people. However, Manager 2 said that this effect was not present at Volvo Group’s headquarters in Gothenburg but might be present in other offices around the world, such as in India. Continuing by stating that these employees, who use the app, might feel excitement about being a part of the bigger organization. When asked about motivational factors that encourage them keep using the app all users responded that it was the content and messages.

Another motivational factor that was brought up by the majority of interviewees was the prospect of earning prizes by participating in the gamification of the app. User 1 and 2 bring up the suggestion of prizes that includes tickets to lectures or seminars and visits to work sites. The same users also speak about recognition within your own team is a motivational factor when using the app and this can trigger discussion within their respective teams. User 3 states that the biggest motivator for using the app is to gain insights about the respective brands in order to be more educated about what’s going on around the workplaces they visit and start up discussions about those topics.

“I now remember when I used this in the first time. I sort of had the goal to be in the top lead amongst my colleagues.” – User 1

“I think, points give some kind of a motivation for people to share more and then it creates some kind of a competition with the people.” – User 2

**Internal market research**

Internal market research is one activity within internal marketing that the app enables. In the interview guide we explained internal market research as: “The generation of data inside the company relating to the employees through surveys, interviews and other methods” (Grönroos et al., 2008, p. 379). Volvo Group is still experimenting with surveys in the app, so they have not sent out many so far. Manager 1 states that they have sent out surveys in the app, which got a roughly 10% response rate. The surveys that are sent out in the app are intended for the users to provide feedback on the app itself, which can help improve the apps development. In the future however, surveys in the app can entail questions about other subjects, such as employee satisfaction or general questions about the organization that are of value for Volvo Group. As internal market research is prevalent in the app, as discussed by the managers, this internal marketing activity was included in the interview guides for the users.

“... it's possible to send out questionnaires and surveys and ask what they think. So right now, we're researching that and trying to improve the app based on what the users say.”

– Manager 1

As of now, the surveys do not reward the users with any points or other rewards, according to Manager 1. The users were asked about what would encourage them to participate in surveys that are published in the app. User 1 mentioned that some sort of tangible reward, such as an interesting seminar, would be needed to encourage them. User 2 and 3 mentions
that their interest in participating in a survey would rely on the subject that is being surveyed. They say that an interesting topic is more important than points or rewards. However, User 3 mentions that people on his team would be interested in participating in surveys if it offered points.

"I know that gamification would most likely trigger additional people, especially people within my team. So, if there are points, so if there's something to gain, of course they will participate more in surveys. But personally, I'm more into the topic and if it adds value or make sense." – User 3

Internal communication

Internal communication was explained in the interview guide as: “The communication of the company’s marketing and other strategies to its employees” (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000, p. 462). This activity was one of the primary activities that had been identified prior to the interviews. The interviews with the Managers confirmed this activity’s presence in the app. Manager 1 and 2 states that the app is a complement to Volvo Groups intranet, where most of the internal communication takes place, however the app shares news and posts about the organization internally through the app. In this regard, the app is used to communicate what is going on within the different brands of Volvo Group. Manager 1 says that the app gives a broad view of what is going on inside the company.

“The app is a one stop shop in order to get a lot of information in one place.” – Manager 1

Users 1, 2 and 3 all discussed this aspect of the app as a beneficial aspect. Users 1 and 3 mentions that if they see interesting news on the app it is something that they can discuss with their colleagues. The news spread contributes to the internal discussions among them.

Internal communication in the app is done by the different brands in Volvo Group publishing approved content for the app. The users then get the option to share, like and comment on the content and news in exchange for points that contribute to their leaderboard position. By sharing content, the published content gets external reach outside the company though the users social media accounts, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc. With the reward of points for interacting with the published content, it stimulates the spread of news externally and internally. According to Manager 1, this was one of the fundamental ideas behind the app.

Retention of staff

Retention of staff is an internal market activity that in the interview guide was explained as: “The activity of keeping the most valuable staff and making sure that they stay at your company” (Grönroos et al., 2008, p. 376). In the interviews with the managers, they provided different answers about this activity. Due to this, we decided to include it in the interviews with the users to get insights as to if the app contributes to their desire to stay with the organization. In a way, this is a follow-up activity to the activity of employee recruitment, as an organization first must recruit people, then make efforts to retain those employees.
“I think it would be valuable to have it because it shows that we're in the forefront of development” – Manager 1

“No, I would say. It's not, and if the app were to be removed, it would, it would not make a difference. I would say.” – Manager 2

Manager 1 mentions that the app can build trust with the employees using the app and communicate the development of Volvo Group. These are factors that Manager 1 implies can be something that affect the retention of staff. However, the app is only for the white-collar workers at Volvo Group now. If the blue-collar workers could be reached with the app, then it could have a more significant effect on the retention of staff, according to Manager 1.

“... the factory workers, they don’t have computers, they don't have email, they don't have logins. So, they're dependent on their, their manager or team leader, and also ordinary bulletin boards, and maybe digital screens and the papers. So of course, this would be a way for them to get more of an understanding and to get more information about the company. It would probably be beneficial for the blue collars to have that and to get feeds and to be part of something bigger.” – Manager 1

User 3 mentions that the app communicates the behavior of the company, the news and posts show the developments that are made within the company. This is, according to User 3, a factor that influence them when evaluating a company as suitable to work at.

“I think it comes down to the proudness of the brand. Being proud of being part of a company that is doing all these kinds of good things and going well [...] I think this makes me consider when looking at another company and if I should go somewhere else, you know, do they have the same kind of brand image and what are they proud about and so on, because after so many years in the marketplace, I would say that I was actually looking, when I shifted it to Volvo, I was actually looking at the brand and the behavior of the company, not only the money. Far from the money.” – User 3

Manager 2, Users 2 and 3 says that the app does not contribute to the retention of staff in their opinion. As there is a difference of opinion between the interviewees about this activity, it is possible that this boils down to what affects people to stay with a company. We did not find any connection between this activity and the game elements in the app that contributes to this activity. However, users reported that their feelings about their relationship to the company brand had been influenced by using the #WeAreVolvoGroup app. When asked how the app had changed their relationship to the brand and the company User 2 responded that his social network had given him feedback on his relationship to the Volvo Group brand. When User 3 answered the same question, their response was that the app had enhanced it a lot.

“People started telling me that I'm getting too emotionally close to the brand.” – User 2

“It has improved it and I am far more aware of the number of brands that we have in Volvo because Volvo Group is a lot of brands.” – User 3
5.3 Game elements

The questions concerning gamification and game elements in the interview were primarily focused on the game elements that was identified prior to the interviews, i.e. points and leaderboards. Game elements in the conceptual model were linked to each internal market activity to investigate the relationship between the elements and the activity. Questions were developed to investigate points and leaderboards specifically and to investigate about other potential game elements that are not explicitly evident in the app.

When discussing the effect, or influence, of the points and leaderboards the interviewees had varying opinions about these mechanics. User 1 mentioned that the points were of great significance in the early stages of the app, and it influenced the user to use the app, as it gave them some recognition for the activities performed in the app. User 2, which had a top position on the leaderboard, said that the accumulated points and position on leaderboard gave them a sense of pride. “I feel it’s a motivational factor and when I say I’m top [high position] I feel proud.” – User 2. However, these elements were of lesser significance as time passed and the usage of the app got another focus. Manager 2 and User 3, shared opinions about the execution of the gamification aspects of the app. User 3 mentions that some users strive to accumulate points by creating their own content to an extent that “pollutes the environment” in the app.

“There are a lot of users that use the app to an extent that it doesn’t create value for the brand.” – Manager 2

All the interviewees, except for Manager 1, shared the opinion that the points and leaderboards were influencing their behavior to some extent, but it was not the reason for using the app for them. User 2 and User 3 expressed their reason for using it was to spread the content that is being published on the app to their other social media networks. They shared an affinity with the brand that they felt that the app contributed to. They share and interact with posts that they feel are good for the brand, and it conveys their pride of working for a brand like Volvo.

“I like sharing good content about Volvo. It makes me proud of my workplace.” – User 3

One common theme that became evident during the interviews was something that all the interviewees brought up, which was that the app is a good idea and has a lot of potential, although there were areas to be improved. This in terms of gamification meant that the points and leaderboard systems were not effectively utilized in the app. As mentioned by User 1 and 2, the points had some importance when they started to use the app, although it was not the primary reason for people using the application now. User 1 mentions that during the early stages of the app it was fun to compete with colleagues about who could be on top of the leaderboard among them. “In the beginning it was fun... but then it was a few people who was always on the top leaderboard, which, brought down the excitement from that perspective” – User 1. User 2 used the app during the pilot stages, when points and leaderboards were not implemented, and enjoyed using it regardless. The competition aspect of the app was brought up about the point systems, although it was not specifically asked. Competition is one important dynamic of gamification as competition can influence people
to engage in the gamified system. The points and leaderboards are the facilitators of the competition as the accumulated points determine the position on the leaderboards. When it comes to the points in the app, Volvo Group has experimented with the implementation of redeemable rewards and prizes for the points that the users earn. The rewards and prizes in this experiment were mostly Volvo merchandise. User 1 gives a suggestion of rewards that would entice them to participate, which was interesting seminars or something in the same vein.

One hypothetical question that the we brought up in the interviews was a scenario in which the game elements, points and leaderboards, were removed from the app, and if people would still interact with the app in the absence of these features. Manager 1 said that the users that tend to “spam” content to gain points as one thing that might be influenced. As these users were mentioned by Manager 2 as not adding any further value to the brand by oversharing content to gain points. Manager 1 mentions that: “...maybe in removing the points and leaderboards we would lose users but gain something else.” – Manager 1, such as people that genuinely want to share the content on the app. User 2 and 3 both mentioned “the content and the messages” as a primary reason for sharing content, not for the sake of points. It is impossible to know what would happen if the game elements were to be removed, but the interviews hint towards that some users would still share content, while some might not share as much or at all.

The game elements identified are further discussed in the analysis, where the we discuss their relevance in this study and connection to the theoretical framework and literature.

5.4 Additional findings

During the interviews, there were some themes that arose that the we had not included in the conceptual model. Some of these themes were inquired by the us as they were of interest, and they have a connection to gamification and internal marketing. Another theme emerged that was not expected. In this section these findings are presented.

Personal branding

As the app allows the users to spread news about Volvo Group on their social media and LinkedIn, it is showed on their profiles to their followers. This creates a connection between the brand and the person communicating these news as they are sharing them. In a sense, sharing content from the app can have an influence in a user’s personal branding. This use of personal branding can also have an effect internally as posts shared by users are seen publicly by both external people and Volvo Group employees.

“With this app they can share approved content externally which can strengthen their personal brand.” – Manager 1.

“When you share articles like this, you usually start to get some feedback, [...] that is external feedback but also internal [from Volvo Group Employees] because everyone looks at LinkedIn.” – User 3
Manager 1 and Users 1, 2 and 3 mentions that the app helps in the development of their personal brand. As the app only allows approved content about Volvo Group, the users share that content on their social media platforms. When users share the content about Volvo Group it shows that they are part of that organization, and the development that takes place at Volvo Group, according to User 3. Depending on the content that is shared it can also portray affiliation to the specific branch or competence about that content. User 3 mentions that by sharing content about their branch of Volvo Group it ties in more specifically about their field of work.

“I’m able to share the latest news about Volvo and that I’m a part of that. Enhances my brand and shows that I’m part of manufacturing and that I know IT.” – User 3

User 2 brings up the fact that it not only can market their personal brands externally, as brought up by User 3, but the app also markets their personal brands internally within the organization as well. User 2 has enjoyed a top position on the leaderboards, and therefore they can be recognized based on their high position in the leaderboards by their coworkers and therefore being associated with their good performance in the apps gamified system.

“People get to know more about me through the leaderboards and markets me internally. It also markets me externally as well” – User 2

**Company culture**

Company culture is another thing that the app enabled, without it being an intended or prominent feature of the app. Company culture is one internal marketing aspect that we were curious about, therefore included in our questioning to investigate if the app, and gamification, can have some influence on the company culture of Volvo Group. We defined company culture in the interview guide as: “The collective values and behaviors of the organization that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of a business” (Drake et al., 2005).

One common theme brought up by the interviewees was that the app makes them feel part of something larger. User 3 mentions that the app itself does not influence change in the company culture, although it helps to strengthen the company culture among its users. Manager 1, 2 mentions that the app contributes to the feeling of being part of the company. Users 1, 2 and 3 mentions that the app contributes to a feeling of belonging and it gives them an emotional connection to Volvo Group and its other brands.

“I think it's not the app itself, it's what people do with the app that can influence the company culture because you spread the company’s messages. [...] So, it's an enabler or strengthening the company pride.” – User 1

“... I'm not sure if it really influences the company culture, it's more of a strengthener.”
– User 3

"It’s a big company so by using the app you feel part of ‘one team’ wherever you are.”
– Manager 2
Manager 1 states the avoidance to share news about the company has been a part of the company, due to the risk of the new being confidential. As the app is a platform for approved content only, the app enables the employees to share content about the company without the risk of sharing confidential information. As sharing content is a primary function of the app, which award users with points, it has a clear link to the game elements influence.

**Cultural influence**

One aspect of the app that was brought up by Manager 2 and User 3 is a cultural factor that might influence the users’ behavior on the app. They both state that one common thing in the leaderboards is the prevalence of Indian users at the top of the leaderboards. “...there’s a lot of Indian users that have been active, but they are acting all over the place.” – Manager 1. This was one thing that the we noticed when they were granted access to the app and were able to look at the leaderboards. This finding might hint at some underlying cultural factors that influence how the users interact with the app. However, as this study is not focused on the cultural or sociological factors that influence the users, it is not of any significance for this study, but merely a peculiar finding that might be of value for future research.

**User generated content**

In interviews with Manager 1 it became apparent that one activity that is awarded with points within the app is the creation of content generated by the users themselves. According to User 3 this has led to a polluted environment on the app, especially in the month of December when a contest for prizes was introduced. However, User 3 admitted to that this has now been stabilized and hoped that there were new features in the app that was more effective in awarding the right kind of user generated content. Though User 3 admits to still mistrusting any kind of content created by users. When posting user generated content, users can submit a post which may be reviewed by a community manager prior to being published. Once submitted, edits to the posts are not possible.

“I think the content providers need to be valid. I only go with content providers nowadays that I can see it’s actually Volvo Trucks or someone that is truly trusted.” – User 3
6. Analysis and discussion

In this chapter, we present the themes and sub-themes, drawn from the collected data, which are internal marketing activities, gamification, and additional findings. The findings are analyzed and discussed considering existing research and then presented in a revised conceptual model.

6.1 Internal marketing activities

Here we present the analysis of the first theme, internal marketing activities, and the subsequent sub-themes of seven specific internal marketing activities. Each activity is expanded upon with connection to the findings and theory-based discussion.

Job product development

Job product development was the first out of the seven internal marketing activities sub-themes that we inquired about. Based on the data presented in the results both Manager 1 and 2 does not supply any evidence for the influence on job product development within the app. What was said proved to be more centered around the potential to influence this activity. It makes sense for the Volvo Group managers to aspire for this activity and that might be one of the reasons why they answer our inquiries about the existence of this internal marketing activity by reflecting on the app’s potential.

The end goal of job product development is to increase the number of job applicants by the means of making the company look more attractive as an employer (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000, p. 462; Sasser & Arbeit, 1976, p. 65), it can be combined with the #WeAreVolvoGroup app’s value proposition and core function to increase “reach” and “trust” of their new media marketing content. This would mean that this internal marketing activity can be partially achieved by the increase of reach. To add to this, since there is evidence that the app supports the use of internal market research there exists additional potential for the app’s contribution to the development of job products. Lings and Greenley (2005, p. 292), and Sasser and Arbeit (1976, p. 64-65) shows that a company can gather data about its internal market, such as what benefits employees want from their jobs, and that this knowledge can be used to increase attractiveness of the job and therefore lead to successful job product development. However, because the data gathered surrounding this topic was met with negative results from both Manager 1 and 2 surrounding job product development’s relation to the app, it was deemed inconclusive and it is not possible to relate this to game elements within the app in the final version of the conceptual model.

Employee recruitment

The inclusive nature of the result relating to this internal marketing activity has led to the removal of employee recruitment from the conceptual model. When it comes to the potential applicability of this app to this activity, Manager 1 showed interest in this prospect. By using the app to achieve employee recruitment they would follow the advice put forward by Berry and Parasuraman (1991, p. 155) who state that companies should be creative in their way of finding people and not only use traditional advertisements for the jobs. Here again there is
potential but no conclusive evidence to support the existence of this activity being influenced by the app.

**Training and education**

The results collected surrounding the app’s contribution to training and education at Volvo Group was negative based on interviews with Manager 1 and Manager 2. When Manager 1 talks about the potential of marketing Volvo University’s courses internally it cannot be related to training and education as an internal marketing activity but more of internal communication. Since the goal of training staff is to achieve employee development (Kundu & Vora, 2004, p. 44) there is no direct influence that this app has on this internal marketing activity.

However, previous studies allow for the existence of a creative solutions to training and education (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991, p. 161) such as e-learning (Brown, 2001; Kundu & Vora, 2004, p. 44), it is not accurate to dismiss the idea of the potential of this app to serve this internal marketing activity. Furthermore, the first step of the guide for organizations that strive to become high-learning companies, developed by Berry and Parasuraman (1991, p. 161), involves the activity of internal market research. Because this is a possibility within the app there does exist potential for the app to serve as not only a communication tool to support Volvo University but also to aid in its goal to achieve employee development. The third step of this guide, which is to use role models such as managers from within the company that radiate the qualities that you want to teach, can be connected to the leaderboards of the app. Therefore, it is possible to see a potential link to the app and its contribution to training and education at Volvo Group.

Through the interviews with the users the concept of “learning about the company” through interaction with the content was noted. If users’ active participation leads to some sort of employee development, then one of the core values of quality management would be achieved (Stauss, 1995, p. 63). Since employee development is reached by supplying continuous training, empowerment and teamwork (Kundu & Vora, 2004, p. 44) it is hard to say if the app has a direct connection to this activity and it is therefore inconclusive and is not present in the final conceptual model.

**Motivation and reward**

Based on the results, it is apparent that motivation is an internal marketing activity that can be achieved through many methods and has many implications. By applying Johnston’s (1989) notion of encouraging the employees to fulfill tasks that are not strictly written in the employment agreement by implementing a reward system it is possible to relate this to the PBL system within the app. The same author also wrote about peer pressure as a motivational factor, this is a factor that is present within the app. Since, reward systems have a strong impact on attitudes and behaviors of employees (Lukas & Maignan, 1996, p. 184-185) and a positive effect on the motivation of the staff (Grönroos et al., 2008, p. 379) this is an activity that Volvo Group’s app should aim to achieve.

What is possible to see within the app’s function of user created content is that it aligns with the ideas of Lukas and Maignan (1996, p. 184-185) that the company should encourage their
internal customers e.g. their employees to develop a reward system that is aimed to motivate their colleagues that are before them in the chain of production. It is possible to link this to the user generated content available as a feature within the #WeAreVolvoGroup app since each post created by a specific user has their name on the post and can be seen by other users of the app resulting in recognition. In the result, User 3 admits to only trusting specific users that create content on the app.

When addressing the effects of the leaderboards on the users it can be viewed in the context that it aims to reward the users that has put in the extra effort by recognizing their positive behavior. Therefore, the app’s leaderboards qualify as an employee recognition program, brought up by Drake et al. (2005, p. 182-183). Because it is a proven fact that employee recognition programs can be a frustration for employees if they are unaware of the rules, it can result in complete loss of motivation. If combined with the comments made from Manager 2 about the “hard to follow” and not intuitive nature of the app, this becomes a problem as then the nature of the app, as it stands today, can have a negative effect on user motivation. Since the goal of a recognition program is to motivate employees this would mean it is a failure. When addressing rewards and recognition, Drake et al. (2005, p. 182) stated that even with good intentions these efforts can fail if the company does not follow the following basic rules. So, then the question is, what basic rules does the app follow and what rules does it not? To answer this, it is possible to apply the reinforcement framework produced by Drake et al. (2005, p. 183-186) and see if the app has an answer to each decision regarding the creation of a recognition program. By listing each question and providing an answer related to the result section we can see where the app falls short in its method of recognizing good behavior. These questions are listed as: (1) Whom are you recognizing? Answer: the ones with the most points. (2) Will you focus on measurable criteria and/or subjective factors? Answer: the measurable criteria of the point system. (3) How will you communicate your selection criteria? Answer: through two different leaderboards. The first being a global all-time leaderboard and the second a monthly leaderboard. (4) How will you accept employee submissions? Answer: when it comes to shares it will be automatic and through an algorithm and when it comes to user generated content submissions will await the approval of a manager of the app. (5) Who will decide the winner? Answer: this is done through the point system once again. (6) How often will you recognize/reward? Answer: continuously through the all-time global leaderboard but also each month through the monthly leaderboard.

By providing answers to each of these questions it is easier to see the two factors that have the biggest impact on how the app functions as an employee recognition program, the global leaderboards and the system of gathering points. Combine these answers from the reinforcement framework with the existence of a motivational drive that encourage users to use the app, even with the absence of points and leaderboards, the influence that the Volvo Group app has on employee motivation is observable. Because the app can be considered a recognition program and that users responded positively to the existence of PBL within the app, it is possible to draw a connection between motivation and game elements. Therefore, this internal marketing activity is included in the final version of the conceptual framework.

Internal market research
Our findings show that the use of internal market research is identifiable as an internal marketing activity that this app can achieve. Based on the interviews with Manager 1 the use of this activity was proven to have a presence within the app. By applying Lings and Greenley’s (2005, p. 292) three modes of information generation it is apparent that the app uses the first mode. This mode is called formal written information generation which is the use of written media (e.g. satisfaction surveys and questionnaires). Grönroos et al. (2008, p. 378-379) stress the importance of segmentation when preparing the data generation process and based on the results this is not being implemented. Furthermore, the evidence presented in the results suggest that users do not earn points by answering surveys, as of yet. However, the link between game elements and this internal marketing activity can be found. The results suggest that users can be triggered to engage in surveys sent out within the app when gamification is implemented. Another argument about the drive to use the app is influenced by the PBL system present within the app. Consequently, it can be concluded that there exists evidence for game elements influence over this internal marketing activity and therefore it is included in the final conceptual model.

**Internal communication**

Our findings confirm the existence of internal communication within the app. This was evident within the data from all our interviews. The results also showed a more comprehensive level of influence than initially estimated. When reviewing literature, it becomes clearer as to why this is the case. According to Rafiq and Ahmed (2000, p. 462) managers need to pay close attention to the communication of marketing and strategies to its employees. A method of accomplishing this, presented by Grönroos et al. (2008, p. 376), is to use software as a tool to explain and market the new ideas to the employees. It can be argued that the app #WeAreVolvoGroup is such a tool and that Volvo Group uses it in a way to convey the company’s marketing to its employees. Based on interviews with Manager 1 and 2 it is evident that the app is used as a complementary internal communication platform to the Volvo Group intranet. Because the app serves as “a one stop shop” for employees to take part and share news and marketing content about the company the apps involvement in this internal marketing activity is evident.

Grönroos et al. (2008, p. 377) also identified the effects that the firm’s external communication has on the firm’s internal market. This he did by stating that the employees are in most cases a susceptible audience for the company’s ad campaign and other forms of external communication. The suggestion of Grönroos et al. (2008) followed that these should be shared internally with the employees before it is marketed externally. This suggestion is followed in part by the rules of this app. However, content within the app is already approved for external communication and therefore employees take part of the content as it is being communicated.

By applying Tansuhaj et al. (1988, p. 33-34) it is easy to see that Volvo Group has established an open information climate. Therefore, their communication marketing managers have used internal marketing concepts that could improve interpersonal, interactive communication channels. Also based on the same authors, because the company use mass communication techniques by supplying their employees with external marketing, it is true to say that Volvo Group actively conduct internal marketing.
Grönroos et al. (2008, p. 377) adds an extra step to his suggestion urging companies to involve their employees in the creation process of the external communication as it would lead to increased engagement within the staff. According to additional findings this internal communication suggestion is present within the app in the form of user generated content. In aggregate these findings add up to an acceptable if not good internal communications platform and since good communication leads to an increase in job satisfaction it will lead to better coordination within the company (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000, p. 462). The same goes for Bansal et al. (2001, p. 69) and their perception of information sharing within the organization. According to them it will be positively associated with job satisfaction, loyalty to the firm, and trust in management. This could be reflected in overall motivation as an internal marketing activity.

**Retention of staff**

According to Manager 1 in our result chapter, a substantial amount of the workforce are blue-collar or deskless workers. They depend on their managers, team-leaders, bulletin boards along with other sources in order to share in the company’s communication. Because effective leadership is the single most important factor when it comes to retention (Taylor, 2002, p. 29) we should investigate if the app has an influence on employees’ perspective of leadership. Since there was no conclusive data gathered on this subject it is impossible to draw any parallels to the existence of any influence on leadership. However, according to Taylor (2002, p. 29-31) additionally to effective leadership being the most important factor in achieving retention of staff is also the resulting work culture. This work culture is a product of good leadership which is possible to link to Taylor and Stern’s (2009, p. 87-90) four-step guide for managers to follow in order to become an “employee-centered organization”. By putting the data presented in the result chapter of this thesis into the framework of the four-step guide it is possible to understand if the app contributes to leadership and resulting work culture. By following the four-step guide and put the employees in the center, according to the authors, the organization can cut its turnover and retain a much higher percentage of staff.

Does the app and managers: (1) recognize employees for their efforts? Yes, the app awards users with points for completed valuable contribution that leads to recognition on leaderboards and the managers awards the ones on the leaderboards with prizes. (2) Avoid micromanagement? Answer: The data is inconclusive. (3) See things from the employees’ viewpoint? Answer: The data is inconclusive, but this can be achieved potentially with the use of internal market research that is an identified and possible function within the app. (4) specialize in employee relations by focusing on employee satisfaction? Answer: The data is inconclusive, but the app has potential to gather valuable data through its internal market research function. Overall, based on the evidence based on the results that the app aids Volvo becoming an “employee-centered organization” are inconclusive.

When it comes to other strategies of achieving this internal marketing activity Kundu and Vora (2004, p. 47-48) lists other steps that managers can follow which is to: (1) include employees in the company’s vision. Based on data gathered in the theme of internal communication and the theme of user generated content surrounding the app there are evidence that support this first step. It can be argued based on the results gathered from both
the managers and the users that the app serves as a platform that allows users to take part in and develop the company’s vision. This is done when users interact with approved quality content about the company’s brands by sharing, liking and commenting. The same goes for user generated content which gives the employees the possibility to be part of the creation phase of the company’s vision. The next two steps, which are (2) treat employees as customers, and (3) reward excellent service performers, is harder to combine with the data in the results. Therefore, these next steps are inconclusive.

According to the authors Kundu and Vora (2004, p. 47) to achieve retention of staff it is important to understand motives for leaving. The authors identified one reason for why talented employees leave as being a result of managers not paying attention to the psychology of work satisfaction. According to the authors the best method of retaining the best employees is to conduct internal market research and then use that data to modify their careers. What has been observed in this research is the existence of internal market research but the evidence that suggest that it is being used to gather data to aid in this internal marketing activity is inconclusive. However, it is a possibility and therefore it is not easy to rule out of the formation of the final conceptual model.

Taylor and Stern (2009, p. 95-96) suggested that in order to reach higher retention of staff managers must make employees fall in love with their company. This is something that is evident in the result. There is evidence that supports the existence of a connection between the app and the users’ perception of the Volvo Group brand and its connected brands. When asked the question about if the app influenced retention of staff at the company, User 3 said they did. The other users disagreed when asked this question but when asked about how the app has affected their connection to the brand, they all agreed that the app has had a positively influence on their perception of the brand. Therefore, based on the authors suggestion, it is possible to assume that the #WeAreVolvoGroup app has some sort of influence on the retention of staff.

The last assumption to test in relation to the app is if it can be used as a benefit program for employees that would lead to retention of staff. Tansuhaj et al. (1988, p. 34) stated that these can be implemented in order to compete with competitors for personnel. There exists no evidence that the app does not give employees benefits directly. Rather the app helps them with supplying quality content that can aid in the users’ development of their own personal brands. It is therefore not reasonable to compare the app to an employee benefit program.

To summarize this extensive analysis: (1) the data gathered on the apps influence on leadership is inconclusive, (2) therefore the data that supports the app’s contribution to a good work culture is inconclusive, (3) there exists potential for the use of internal market research, but it is not done as of yet, (4) the app has a positive influence on employees perception of the company’s brand, and (5) the app cannot be compared with a benefit program. The nature of the connections found when comparing the data with existing internal marketing theories surrounding retention of staff are few. This is, however, not surprising because retention of staff is a difficult internal marketing activity to achieve (Kundu & Vora, 2004, p. 46). Based on this analysis it is appropriate to assume that the existence of activities relating to the retention of staff within the #WeAreVolvoGroup app is inconclusive. There
do however exist an indirect effect on this internal marketing activity, but it is not included in the final version of the conceptual model.

6.2 Gamification and game elements
Gamification is a complex subject, as gamification can be executed in many ways, shapes and forms. Prior to the interviews we identified two elements of gamification, points and leaderboards. Gamification and game elements is one of the main themes identified through the thematic analysis, with three sub-themes: PBL-elements, Meaningful Gamification and Categories of Gamification. These themes and sub-themes are discussed in connection to the functions of #WeAreVolvoGroup and internal marketing activities.

PBL-elements in #WeAreVolvoGroup
PBL-elements of gamification are basic mechanics that are commonly used in gamification, as mentioned previously in Chapter 3, PBL stands for “Points, Leaderboards and Badges”. These game elements/mechanics are considered rudimentary aspects of gamification that are used by many different examples of gamification. In the Volvo Group app, they employ the use of points and leaderboards as explicit game elements. According to Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 71) the PBL-mechanics are a great place to start for a gamification and can have a practical and motivational use in a gamified system. As #WeAreVolvoGroup is a relatively recently developed app, it has only been used for a little over a year, and it makes the points and leaderboards very appropriate for this gamified system.

Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 72-73), and Zichermann and Cunningham (2011, p. 38). outlines several uses for points in a gamified system. Based on our findings, the points in #WeAreVolvoGroup app uses points for scorekeeping, and essentially reputation points. The points only function is to determine the positions of the leaderboards which can be used as a status symbol in the app. As of now, the points are not redeemable, they do not display progression, and they do not determine a “winner” in the gamified system. This rudimentary use for point systems can be common in basic forms of gamification, but to achieve more engagement, the point system can be developed to create more incentives for engagement for the users.

The usage of the points and leaderboards in the app also enables one important dynamic to gamified systems: competition. Dynamics are a consequence, or result, of the implemented mechanics in a gamified system (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 78) as they are how players interact with the dynamics in place in a gamified system (Hunicke et al., 2004, p. 2). Dynamics can create unique experiences in a gamified environment and the way people interact with the system also affects how well the gamified system achieves its purpose. In the case of #WeAreVolvoGroup, the competition in the app is rooted in the points and leaderboards, where users are competing to top the leaderboards. Leaderboards are a mechanic that, when used right, can be a powerful motivational tool (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 77), but it can also have an opposite effect on motivation (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 76). Users of the app mentioned during the interviews that some users who are at the top of the leaderboards with such high amount of points that they are almost unreachable. This can be a factor that creates an opposite effect than intended by the leaderboards where people can see just how far they are from the top of the leaderboards.
Meaningful gamification

Author Nicholson (2015) and Chou (2016) are two authors that criticize the usage of PBL-mechanics in gamification. According to Nicholson (2015, p. 1) the gamified systems that only use PBL-mechanics rely too much on short-term gratification, as these systems are generally dependent of rewards, and this can create a “reward-loop” that must be maintained in perpetuity to maintain the users’ motivation. In the Volvo Group application, participants mentioned the significance of point systems in the initial period of using the app, but that significance has subsided, and points and leaderboard position are not elements that they are very much concerned with anymore. Although, the participants say that they are still using the app, even though points and leaderboards are not the main reason why. Rewards is something that the app has only experimented with, so that cannot be the reason behind it either. Some users mentioned that they enjoy sharing content that pertains to Volvo Group and its brands, that they like to share content that they are proud of as it shows that they are part of something larger than themselves. Nicholson (2015) and Chou (2016) are authors that discuss the concept of meaningful gamification. Meaningful gamification is defined as a deeper use of gamification that does not rely on reward-systems (Nicholson, 2015, p. 1).

We have discovered elements of meaningful gamification during the interviews. Chou (2016) introduces us to the Octalysis framework that consists of “core drives” that use other motivational drivers than reward-systems. One of these core drives that was identified in this study is the first core drive of the Octalysis framework, namely: Epic Meaning and Calling. This core drive is an example of meaningful gamification that motivates or engages users through a larger purpose, or meaning (Chou, 2016, p. 66). This is emphasized by Nicholson (2015, p. 6) through exposition, as it provides the user with a greater meaning in the gamified system. In an organizational context, this implies that the users that are motivated with this core drive are highly invested in the company’s mission and the work that is being performed at the organization (Chou, 2016, p. 88). During the interviews, there were users that mentioned that they share content on the app because they are proud of what the company does, and they want to share the news and show that they are part of Volvo Group. This finding implies that the Volvo Group app utilizes the Epic Meaning and Calling core drive in their gamified system. Although it may not be intentionally designed, and this core drive is enabled because Volvo Group is a well-known and respected brand, it is still an element of meaningful gamification that is present in the app.

The second core drive identified in the findings is, coincidentally also the second core drive of the Octalysis framework, Development and Accomplishment. This framework is focused on personal development and growth of the user, and their desire to engage with the gamified system because of these factors (Chou, 2016, p. 92). In a gamified system, points, leaderboards, levels, badges and achievement are usually used to track the development of the user (Chou, 2016, p. 92). However, in the case of the gamified system at Volvo Group, the development is not trackable as it pertains to the development of the users’ personal brand. In the interviews, users mentioned that the app helps develop their personal brand. As the previous section brings up users that are willing to share content due to the proudness of the brand, by sharing content affiliated to Volvo Group they are essentially connecting themselves to the brand through their social media networks. One of the users also mentions that the content shared can communicate their competences, depending on the content that is
being shared, which can strengthen their personal brand, and professional profile strength on LinkedIn. According to one interviewee, it can also strengthen the users’ personal brand internally, as the leaderboards are visible for all the users of the app it can communicate their accomplishments and performance in the app for all the employees that are using it. Much like the previous core drive discussed, this is an element that is not explicitly implemented in the app, but a result, or consequence, of the nature of the app and what it does.

In addition to the core drives by Chou (2016), another concept of meaningful gamification that we identified in the findings is the concept of choice, as presented by Nicholson (2015, p. 7). Choice establishes the voluntary participation in a gamified system, and how the users choose to engage in the system by presenting several tasks or assignments to do (Nicholson, 2015, p. 7). The #WeAreVolvoGroup app is intended for the thousands of employees at Volvo Group, although it is not mandatory to use it. User 3 mentions that the app should be something that employees get as a “default” to enable more users to spread content. At Volvo Group, the employees get the choice if they want to engage in the system at all. For the users that are on the app, they are presented with different choices on how they want to engage with the app. They can like, comment, share or produce their own content in the app. The different tasks award a varied number of points, which depends on their level of ambition. This aspect of choice is emphasized by Nicholson (2015, p. 7). Some users might not want to share, or “clutter”, their social media feeds with news, but the important aspect is that the app enables them to make that choice.

**Category of gamification - internal and external**

Authors Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 20) identified three categories of gamification, that distinguishes how the system is used and who uses it. The three categories are: internal, external and behavioral-change gamification. In the #WeAreVolvoGroup app, we have identified components of internal and external gamification. Internal gamification is used by the employees of an organization and the purpose is to achieve some organizational benefit. In the case of the app at Volvo Group, the employees are the users, and the purpose of the app is mainly to reach people external to the company with people sharing the content in the app. This is a clear organizational benefit, as it also contributes to organizational benefits internally in some of the internal marketing activities identified.

**PBL-fallacy - mechanics, dynamics, and aesthetics**

The PBL-fallacy is a critique of the use of PBL-mechanics such as points and leaderboards by author Chou (2016, p. 18). The PBL-fallacy is essentially a misconception by people that states that simply adding game mechanics and game elements does not constitute gamification. The PBL-fallacy states that game elements do not automatically make the gamified system motivating and engaging, which is somewhat true for the #WeAreVolvoGroup app, as several users mentions that they do not use the app because of the points and leaderboards in the app. Manager 2 mentioned in the interview that the gamification is not optimally implemented in the app, and suggests that it would be a better alternative to build the gamified system first and then implement the apps activities around the game elements. There is an absence of Badges as a mechanic in the app, which could provide further incentive for users to engage, as badges is a powerful tool in gamification. Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 74) mentions that can be used as a “heavier”
version of points that carry a higher status than points, and they can be used to communicate greater achievement.

The concluding reflections about the gamification elements in the app is that it is somewhat underdeveloped. According to Deterding et al. (2011, p. 9) the definition of gamification is “the use of game elements and game design in a non-game context”. If this definition is to be the definitive decider of what constitutes gamification, then the app #WeAreVolvoGroup is an example of gamification. Although, the PBL-fallacy states that gamification is more than just implementing game elements and mechanics, which the app also does. However, due to the findings of elements of meaningful gamification in the two core drives by Chou (2016), then it is also an example of meaningful gamification. The app can improve on the mechanics that are implemented, but the app is definitely a good example of gamification, regardless of the suboptimal use of the elements and mechanics.

Gamification and internal marketing activities

In this thesis, we set out to investigate the connection between gamification and internal marketing. Through game elements and internal marketing activities we have investigated the Volvo Group app to find a relationship between these concepts, where gamification is used to influence these activities. The findings have led us to a list of internal marketing activities that are present in the app, and elements of gamification that are used, although we have yet to discuss the relationship between these.

The game mechanics in the app, points and leaderboards, are used to engage people to interact with the app. The users are awarded points for certain activities in the app, and these activities have links to internal marketing which would hint towards a relationship between these concepts. By sharing, liking and commenting on content in the app, the users are awarded points. In internal communication, the game elements have a clear link to gamification, as the users are awarded points by sharing and creating content in the app, which is a contributor to this activity. Elements of meaningful gamification is also a key contributor to this activity as users also stated that they do share content due to the higher meaning and to develop their personal brands. The app has experimented with the use of surveys in the app and is yet to implement points as a reward for participating in these surveys, which makes for a non-existing link to the game mechanic of points. Although the users discussed that points would not be the main factor for them to participate in surveys, but the purpose of the surveys which leads us to connect this internal marketing activity to the element of meaningful gamification, meaning and calling. One user mentioned that the implementation of a reward-system for participation in internal market research would enable them to participate. This provides us with a clear link to gamification for the internal marketing research activity.

6.3 Additional findings

Additional findings are the third main theme identified in this study. It contains sub-themes of personal branding and company culture, which were some of the additional findings identified. They are discussed in connection to gamification and internal marketing activities in #WeAreVolvoGroup.
**Personal branding**

Personal branding is one of the findings that have a two-sided meaning in this study. First off, the implications in gamification. As discussed previously, the personal branding can have a motivational influence on the users of the app, as it allows them to improve their personal brand internally and externally through the usage of the app. This is one this that we have identified as a game element of meaningful gamification (Chou, 2016, p. 92). Secondly, personal branding can also be an objective or goal that the app helps the users achieve. This study identified seven internal marketing activities that when achieved improves the internal marketing of the organization. Although a few of them were deemed irrelevant due to the findings, personal branding is another metric that the app contributes to. For this reason, we have included this finding as an element of meaningful gamification, but also something that the game elements can contribute to is therefore added to the revised conceptual model.

**Company culture**

It is prevalent in literature that internal marketing is used to guide the employees towards a more favored company culture (Drake et al., 2005, p. 11; Lukas & Maignan, 1996, p. 178; Hogg et al., 1998). Just as work culture is a product of good leadership (Taylor & Stern, 2009, p. 87-90) so too is the managers’ effect on company culture (Hogg et al., 1998, p. 884). It is a fact that a misalignment within a company’s culture can entice resistance to change and prompt active sabotage of new directives (Drake et al., 2005, p. 11-12). Therefore, it is important for Volvo Group to use all available tools in order to achieve a favored company culture and to avoid such misalignment. One method is through its leadership. It is important for managers to adopts and express the company culture in the manner of how they carry themselves inside and outside of the company’s walls (Hogg et al., 1998, p. 884-885). It can be argued that managers are enabled by the app to both adopt and express the company’s culture through their personal social media presence. Effectively linking the managers’ own personal brand development with a positive influence on the company’s culture. This can be observed when User 3 talks about how sharing posts is seen by people outside the company but also by Volvo Group employees.

In the result chapter about additional findings, the users disagree with the apps direct influence on the company culture but that it works as an enabler or strengthener to the company culture. However, they phrase it differently by stating that the app has an enabling or strengthening effect on the company culture by letting users promote Volvo Group’s messages. This then gets response internally from the company which in effect has an influence. Drake et al. (2005, p. 11) sees internal marketing as a strengthener to an already powerful brand culture and as a communicato of the vision of the company’s culture. Based on the results it is possible to connect the app’s strengthening effect and the communication of company vision with the app’s internal marketing activities.

In short, by combining the app’s role in the development of managers’ personal brand and the strengthening effect the app has as an internal marketing tool, it can be argued that the app has an influence on Volvo Group’s company culture. The users’ active participation is motivated by the game elements present within the Volvo Group app. It is therefore possible to draw the line between the game elements and its influence on company culture. This is a
reason for it to be included in the final version of the conceptual model presented at the end of this chapter.

6.4 Revised conceptual model

The revised conceptual model consists of the internal marketing activities that we identified in the app that are influenced by using game elements in the gamified system plus the additional findings. These are company culture and personal branding which are also influenced by the game elements in the Volvo Group app. The core of the conceptual model is game elements, as it is the driving influencer of the app. In the game elements, the concept of meaningful gamification has been added as it is one aspect of gamification that were discovered in the result.

A way to explain this model (see Figure 4) is to summarize the analysis by explaining the significance of each arrow. Because this model is meant to answer the question of how gamification influences internal marketing activities from the perspective of the Volvo Group app, some activities were removed. This was because the result showed little evidence of these internal marketing activities being influenced by the app. The removed activities consists of job product development, employee recruitment, training and education, and retention of staff. The activities that were kept are internal market research, motivation and reward, and internal communication. Through qualitative research we have uncovered two additional findings that is related to internal marketing, company culture and personal branding. By going through and explaining the game elements influence on each of these findings, it paints a clear picture of how gamification is used by Volvo Group to achieve internal marketing objectives.

Internal market research was found to be an existing feature within the app and can be influenced by game elements as a trigger for people to engage in this activity. Also, the extent of the influence gamification plays on this internal marketing activity stretches to the fact that it draws in people to the app and motivates them to continue using it. It is also a valuable tool for management to gather knowledge about their employees and implement changes based on these findings in order to improve the internal marketing of the company.

Internal communication is an activity present within the app as result of the sharing and engagement of Volvo Group’s marketed messages. It is influenced by game elements through the points and leaderboards as it encourages users to take part in this activity. It was found that the #WeAreVolvoGroup app is an internal marketing tool based on its function of conveying external marketing messages internally toward the employees. As employees also can interact, comment and share selected content it adds a layer of employee involvement to the process. This employee involvement also leads into the author’s, Tansuhaj et al. (1988, p. 33-34), idea of an open information climate that is needed in a company that conducts internal marketing. User generated content also plays a role in internal communication as Grönroos et al. (2008, p. 377) suggested employee involvement in the creation process of the external communication. This would lead to additional engagement within the staff. This serves as an example of good internal communication which according to Rafiq and Ahmed (2000, p. 462) leads to an increase in job satisfaction and better coordination within the company which Bansal et al. (2001, p. 69) supported but added effects of increases in loyalty
to the firm and trust in management. It was suggested by us that this could be reflected in overall motivation as an internal marketing activity.

Motivation and reward is another internal marketing activity that we found was influenced by game elements within the app. The app was found to fall under the category of a recognition program by answering the framework presented by Drake et al. (2005, p. 183-186). Both positive and negative effects were noticed during the analysis of our results but there is no doubt about the existence of a significant influence between it and gamification. By applying the PBL-fallacy (Chou, 2016, p. 18) and looking at other motivational factors within the app we found traces of meaningful gamification playing a role within this activity. User generated content was also connected to this internal marketing activity by following the ideas of Lukas and Maignan (1996, p. 184-185) that the company should encourage employees to develop a reward system that is aimed to motivate their colleagues that are before them in the chain of production.

Company culture was found to be influenced by game elements through a sequence of steps starting with leadership and managers’ personal branding. By engaging and sharing content, managers at Volvo Group app and express the company culture (Hogg et al., 1998, p. 884-885). There was also evidence of internal effects from shared content while also the app serving as an enabler or a strengthener of the company’s culture. Personal branding was found to have a significant role within the app as it serves as a motivator for people to engage in the app’s activities for personal gain instead of PBL. Personal branding was found to be influenced by the game elements within the app since its motivational factor indicates the presence of meaningful gamification (Chou, 2016, p. 92).
Game Elements:
PBL + Meaningful gamification

Figure 4 - The revised conceptual model
7. Conclusions

In this chapter, the general conclusions will be presented along with us answering the research question. The chapter also includes the theoretical contributions, practical contributions, societal implications as well as limitations and recommendations for future research for the study. Lastly, the quality and value of the study are evaluated through several truth criteria for qualitative research.

7.1 General conclusions

The purpose of this thesis has been to investigate how gamification and the game elements of an app influence internal marketing activities within Volvo Group, specifically through the app #WeAreVolvoGroup. A qualitative study with in-depth interviews have been conducted with managers and users of the #WeAreVolvoGroup app, to answer the following research question:

How do game elements within an app influence internal marketing activities?

To answer the research question, theories of internal marketing and internal marketing activities (e.g. Grönroos et al., 2008; Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000; Bansal et al., 2001; Berry & Parasuraman, 1991; Lings & Greenley, 2005; Barnes & Morris, 2000) along with game theory and gamification literature (e.g. Deterding et al., 2011; Werbach & Hunter, 2012; Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011; Nicholson, 2015; Chou, 2016) were combined to create a conceptual framework that shows the relation and influence of gamification on internal marketing activities. The study investigated the prevalence of the identified internal marketing activities in the app and the game elements that influence these activities.

A thematic analysis of the collected data was conducted, which revealed that some internal marketing activities, job product development, employee recruitment, training and education and, retention of staff, were not supported and thus were excluded from the conceptual framework. The internal marketing activities that we identified in the app, internal communication, internal market research and, motivation and reward, are included in the revised conceptual framework, and they are activities that are present in the app and influenced by the game elements, indirectly or directly. Additional findings of company culture and personal development were found in the interviews as they are factors that the app influences through the use of game elements.

Our findings are presented in our final version of the conceptual model where we argue for how game elements influence internal marketing activities. The additional findings added to the model plays a role in internal marketing by influencing the other internal marketing activities. For example, the development of one own’s personal brand serving both as a motivator and an enabler for leadership to influence company culture. Also, how internal
market research serves as a contributor to every other internal marketing activity because of the surveying power it gives management.

These findings within our research can lead to the #WeAreVolvoGroup app’s further development of its use of game elements and possibly branching out to include other internal marketing activities. It should be stated that internal marketing is an ongoing activity and Volvo Group should not only limit these activities to their intranet “Violin” but also expand upon these into a possibly gamified system that encourages users to engage in the internal marketing activities in order for the company to reach internal objectives.

7.2 Theoretical contribution
The theoretical contributions of this thesis are mostly focused on the field of internal marketing. The combination of internal marketing activities and gamification shows that gamification is applicable in organizations that seek to improve the internal marketing by engaging in internal marketing activities. The use of gamification enables the employees to engage in these activities that can lead to an overall improvement on the organizations internal marketing.

Gamification has been studied in many different contexts. It has been studied in educational purposes by Dicheva et al. (2015), as a tool for student motivation by Buckley and Doyle (2016), in service-marketing context by Huotari and Hamari (2012). A study by Armstrong and Landers (2018) has a focus on one internal marketing activity, namely: education and training, but this study contributes to a broader view of how gamification is useful in internal marketing. Therefore, this thesis has provided theoretical contributions in both the subjects of internal marketing and gamification, and it shows that game elements can influence internal marketing activities of an organization.

When it comes to contributions to the subject of internal marketing, the summary of theories in our theoretical framework serve as an approach of understanding the subject. An outcome of this thesis is the list of the seven internal marketing activities which are not evident in its completion in previous research but constructed by us based on previous research. Furthermore, the findings presented in our analysis shows a relation between internal marketing activities and gamification as a tool. It is therefore possible to use a gamified system in order to achieve internal marketing activities.

7.3 Practical contributions
The practical contributions for this study encompass the theoretical model, to help managers understand how gamification, as a tool, can affect an organizations’ internal marketing activities. The revised theoretical model includes the internal marketing activities that were found in the Volvo Group app, and additional findings such as personal branding and company culture. The activities and additional findings included in the theoretical model are specific to Volvo Group’s organization, as this is the context which we examined. However, the study contributes with insights about the uses of gamification for managers in organizations that want to improve their internal marketing, or other aspects of their organization as gamification is a tool that can be created for other intents and purposes.
The study includes an analysis of the game elements that were implemented, which can lead to the improvement of how Volvo Group chooses to use gamification in their #WeAreVolvoGroup application. It also gives an understanding of how the users engage with the system and what components of the app that makes them interact with it.

When managers approach internal marketing, it will be possible for them to contemplate the possibility of using a gamified system to achieve internal marketing activities. By motivating employees to engage with these activities the company will be able to reach any internal marketing objectives they set out to accomplish. By using the #WeAreVolvoGroup app as an example it is possible for managers to avoid these classical mistakes of motivational hinders and implement factors that produce beneficial results for the company. These motivational hinders that #WeAreVolvoGroup should diminish are leaderboards that highlights unattainable goals for new users and the steep learning curve when a new user joins the app. Further improvements should also be made so that the app rewards users that does not “pollute” their own social media presence in the race for the number one spot on the leaderboards. A way to accomplish this would be to embrace the idea of gamification and make it the foundation of the app by finetuning the game elements while keeping a close eye on user engagement through internal market research, e.g. surveys within the app.

Organizations that want to implement gamification systems for internal marketing purposes must carefully design these systems. This is because the method of how the game elements are implemented affects the effectiveness of it all. In the case of #WeAreVolvoGroup, the game elements are not implemented as a feature core of the app, merely another feature. The points and leaderboards are not important to some users, which defeats the purpose of the game elements. This is relevant information for not only Volvo Group, but other organizations that are using gamification as well. Therefore, an app which is built on a foundation of gamification principles is preferable and a requirement for any company that wants to achieve internal marketing with this method.

The practical implications for Volvo Group are that this app, through gamification, can improve on internal marketing activities, and consequently internal marketing overall in their organization. As the app influences some internal marketing activities, despite it not being the intended purpose for the app, we see a lot of potential for further development. If the app would enable more internal marketing activities and more functions, we believe that it could provide further improvements to the internal marketing at Volvo Group. As mentioned, the game elements and mechanics are not optimally developed. Therefore, by adjusting the points and leaderboard-systems and adding additional game mechanics such as redeemable points and badges or achievements, the app could more efficiently contribute to its true purpose, external marketing, and additionally internal marketing activities.

7.4 Societal implications
This study shows that the use of gamification is viable in a situation when an organization seeks to improve their internal marketing. As internal marketing is the managerial philosophy of viewing employees as “internal customers” and satisfying their needs in their job environment, this study shows that an organization can use gamification in order to satisfy their employees. Improved internal marketing activities can better the working environment
for employees, that would subsequently reflect positively on the organization as well. What is evident is that when the employees are happy, then the customers are satisfied which leads to organizational profit (O’Reilly & Pfeffer, 2000, p. 33). We mentioned that our choice of subject came from our shared experience as employees where there were lacking efforts in internal marketing. We believe that this study can contribute to a possible solution for situations where the employee becomes the “victim” of poor internal communication, and internal marketing within an organization.

7.5 Limitations and future research

One limitation of the current study is the fact that the context which was investigated is one isolated example of gamification. Gamification is a versatile tool that can be implemented in many different ways, for many different intents and purposes. The conceptual framework that has been developed is therefore specific to the gamification system of Volvo Group and would most likely not look the same if another example of gamification would have been investigated. This limitation opens possibilities of future research, as internal marketing could be investigated across a different example of gamification, and maybe even across several gamified systems to investigate similarities between gamified systems. Another reason to investigate another gamified system would be to investigate a more nuanced example that is more developed than the #WeAreVolvoGroup app as it has only been in use for over one year.

During the data collection process, we had issues with getting in touch with participants for the qualitative interviews. Volvo Group provided us with contact information for users of the app that would be suitable for the study, but due to scheduling issues and possible users declining to participate, the study could only perform five qualitative interviews. The findings of the study are nevertheless rich and valuable for the study, but with the addition of more interviews we would possibly get other perspectives of the #WeAreVolvoGroup app and how they interact with the system. For future research, we suggest involving a larger sample size to achieve even richer data, that might lead to richer data and greater insight into the two sample groups’ perspectives.

As mentioned in this thesis, gamification is a versatile tool for organizations that can be implemented with a plethora of purposes. Gamification is a motivational tool, and one thing that we suggest for future research is to investigate how different kinds of motivational theories apply to gamification in an organizational context. In the literature search we encountered motivational theories of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, they were mentioned in chapter 3, but not included in the final framework due to fear of the study being too broad and thus becoming difficult to carry through. This could be included in future research to investigate exactly how people are motivated through gamification in an organizational context.

In internal marketing we have compiled a list of internal marketing activities, as mentioned in section 7.2. Future researchers can take use of this list and expand upon it to deliver a more complete list of what internal marketing is meant to accomplish within organizations that deals not only with service but with employees.
One thing that the findings presented were a potential cultural influence of the usage of the app. Managers 1 and 2, brought up that Indian users were very active on the app, which could hint towards some cultural aspects to the use of gamification, which is something that could be explored in future research.

7.6 Truth Criteria

In qualitative research, the quality and value of the research conducted relies on the ability by the authors to demonstrate the reliability and validity of the research (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p. 31; Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 394). The quality and value of this research are evaluated with criteria developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Two main criteria proposed by them are: trustworthiness and authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; cited by Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 395). The criterion of trustworthiness in qualitative research consists of four sub-criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 395).

The criterion of credibility refers to how believable the results of the study are, and that the research is conducted through good practice (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 396). Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 396) argue that to ensure the credibility of the findings, the researchers should present the findings to the interviewees to confirm that the findings accurately represent the social context that is being investigated. Due to time constraint, we have not been able to engage in participant validation. Although, we have read the transcripts carefully to ensure that we get a deep understanding of the social context that the interviewees presented during the interviews. Through this process we argue that the data presented is accurately represented of the social reality of the research context. As this thesis will be published publicly, the participants in the interviews will get access to the findings, which can affect the credibility of the study, as much positively as negatively. To further ensure the credibility of the study, we have adhered to suitable research methods throughout the research process and continuously consulted literature in our process. Hence, it can be argued that this thesis work has been conducted in good research practice.

Transferability refers to whether the findings of the research are applicable in different context (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). Due to the nature of qualitative research, the findings in the research are highly contextual as it investigates individual perceptions in a specific context. It is hard to argue for the transferable findings of this study as the context of #WeAreVolvoGroup is very specific, therefore we have attempted to construct rich descriptions of the context and the application investigated to allow others to make judgements regarding the transferability of the study, as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985; cited by Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). The model developed by us is revised based on the findings of the specific context, therefore the revised model is most likely not transferable to other context, although the initial model is more appropriate to be used when investigating gamified systems that are intended for internal marketing purposes.

Dependability refers to the degree to which a study can be replicated (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 395). To ensure that a qualitative study fulfills the dependability criteria, it is crucial that the researchers keep detailed records of the research process, including the data transcripts, notes, problem formulation, data analysis and selection of participants (Bryman & Bell, 2011,
In this study, we have kept records of our previous drafts, research process and the development of our research questions and purpose. Data transcripts are saved and e-mail correspondents with the participants are also saved. It is also recommended by researchers to consult peers of the choices made during the research process (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). During the research process, we have consulted with our fellow student colleagues about the thesis work, as well as consulting with the thesis’ supervisor to ensure the quality of the choices made for the study. The choices made are outlined in detail in chapters 2 and 4, where the theoretical and practical methodological choices are explained.

The criterion of confirmability is concerned with if the researchers have not allowed personal values to influence the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). Although, it is impossible to remain completely objective in qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398), we have made efforts to ensure that the findings are illustrated fairly, without letting personal bias influence it. During the interviews, open questions were asked to avoid leading the participants towards a certain answer.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose additional criterion to trustworthiness to ensure the quality and value of qualitative research, this criterion is of the authenticity of the research (cited by Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). Authenticity in qualitative research refers to issues that concern the wider political impact of research conducted (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). Authenticity consists of five sub-criteria, which are: fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity and tactical authenticity (Lincoln & Guba; cited by Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398).

*Fairness* is the concern whether the research presents different viewpoints of the phenomenon among the participants in the study (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). In this thesis, the results show both different and similar viewpoints regarding the game elements and the apps functionality regarding internal marketing activities. The data collected also consists of viewpoints from managers and users of the app, arguably making it a fair representation of different opinions from different perspectives. *Ontological authenticity* refers to whether the research contributes to the participants understanding of their social world (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 399). After the interviews, many of the interviewees expressed that the topic of gamification is interesting, as it were quite new to some of them. Through the interviews, we believe that the interviewees have been given a better understanding of gamification and how it works in the context of Volvo Group’s app. *Educative authenticity* refers to if the participants in the study get a better understanding of the perspectives of others through the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 399). In this study, the educative authenticity mostly concerns the managers of the app, as the research presents opinions about the app and shows the perceptions about the effectiveness of the game elements in the app. This knowledge might lead to improvements in the gamified system that can further improve the purpose of it. *Catalytic authenticity* is whether if the researchers has acted as a catalyst that enables the participants to change their behavior regarding the scenario that is being investigated (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 399). In this criterion, we believe that the research is not so much influencing the behaviors of the participants, but more the scenario itself, as discussed under the educative authenticity criteria. The study has investigated how users interact with the gamified system, although it allowed for some reflection it may not be enough to change their behaviors. It is an uncertainty whether it will change their behavior,
although if the gamified system is improved upon, the users may interact with it differently, so therefore the current study may have a role as a catalyst to change behavior indirectly. 

*Tactical authenticity* refers to if the research allows member to take the necessary actions to improve (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 399). This research has investigated the gamification elements and their connection to internal marketing activities, and along with that provided Volvo Group with an evaluation and recommendation on how to improve the gamification in the app. The findings and analysis outline some steps that Volvo Group might take in the future to improve their situation.
8. References


# Appendix 1

## Interview guide for the managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Link to theory and themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opening questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s your name?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long have you been working at Volvo Group?</td>
<td>Gamification, game elements (4) Motivation and Drake et al. (2005, p. 183-186) recognition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generative questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you personally use the app? How do you use it? What opinion do you have about this app? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which activities are awarded with points in the app?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are the points used in the system? Are they redeemable for rewards?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did Volvo Group decide to implement the app?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What advantages does the app have for Volvo Group?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What disadvantages does the app have for Volvo Group?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What role does the app play in internal marketing at Volvo Group?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the app influence employees at Volvo Group?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the benefits of using the app for employees? What are the downsides of not using it for employees?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Directive questions about internal marketing activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the app influence the development of job products (for example, marketing open positions internally)?</td>
<td>Job product development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do the points and leaderboards contribute to this activity?</td>
<td>Job product development + gamification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the app influence employee recruitment?</td>
<td>Employee recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do the points and leaderboards contribute to his activity?</td>
<td>Employee recruitment + gamification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What role does the app have in employee training and education?</td>
<td>Training and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do the points and leaderboards contribute to this activity?</td>
<td>Training and education + gamification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the app influence employee motivation?</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would happen if points and leaderboards etc. were removed? Would the app still influence employee motivation?</td>
<td>Motivation without gamification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What role does the app have in market research?</td>
<td>Internal market research Lings &amp; Greenley (2005, p. 292) three modes of information generation: formal written information generation which is the use of written media (e.g. satisfaction surveys and questionnaires).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do the points and leaderboards contribute to this activity?</td>
<td>Internal market research + gamification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What role does the app have in internal communication?</td>
<td>Internal communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do the points and leaderboards contribute to this activity?</td>
<td>Internal communication + gamification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the app influence the retention of staff?</td>
<td>Retention of staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do the points and leaderboards contribute to this activity?</td>
<td>Retention of staff + gamification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything else that the app does, or could do considering internal marketing that we addressed?</td>
<td>Catch-all question</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interview guide for the users**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Question</strong></th>
<th><strong>Link to theory and themes</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opening questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s your name?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long have you been working at Volvo Group?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your position and area of responsibility at Volvo Group?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generative questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you use the app? How do you use it?</td>
<td>General question about the app</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What opinion do you have about this app? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which activities are awarded with points in the app?</td>
<td>Gamification, game elements, motivation and recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many points do you have? Do you feel it is important to gather points? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel about the points and leaderboards within the app?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What makes you keep using the app?</td>
<td>Motivational theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on your experience, how does the app influence you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What influence does the app have on internal marketing at Volvo Group?</td>
<td>Internal marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the benefits of using the app for employees?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the downsides of not using it for employees?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Directive questions about IM Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the app influence your overall motivation?</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would happen if points and leaderboards etc. were removed?</td>
<td>Motivation without gamification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there something other than the points and leaderboards that encourage you to use the app?</td>
<td>Motivational theory without game elements + meaningful gamification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you interact with surveys sent out in the app?</td>
<td>Internal market research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would make you participate in a survey?</td>
<td>Internal market research + gamification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the app influence your participation in internal communication?</td>
<td>Internal communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do the points and leaderboards contribute to this activity?</td>
<td>Internal communication + gamification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the app influence the retention of staff?</td>
<td>Retention of staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does it influence you to stay with Volvo Group?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do the points and leaderboards contribute to this activity?</td>
<td>Retention of staff + gamification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel that the usage of the app contributes to the development of your personal brand?</td>
<td>Personal development in terms of personal branding, meaningful gamification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How has the app changed your relationship to the brand and the company, both to your department and the company group?</td>
<td>Company culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the app influence the company culture?</td>
<td>Company culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you think that the points and leaderboards could be used more efficiently?</td>
<td>Catch-all question</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Considering internal marketing, are there any things that the app does that we haven’t addressed? | Catch-all question }
Appendix 2

Glossary included in the interview guides

**Gamification** - The use of game elements in non-game contexts (Deterding et al., 2011, p. 1). Non-game context is broad, but some examples are apps, loyalty programs and business processes.

**Game elements** – Game elements are individual parts of a game that make up the game as a whole (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 26). Examples of game elements are point system, leaderboards, levels, achievements, social interaction, competition.

**Internal marketing** – The management philosophy that views the employees as the firm’s most vital resource and aims to attract, develop and retain the best personnel in order to gain a competitive edge over its competitors (Berry, 1981, p. 25).

**Job product development** - The idea that businesses develop jobs and positions as a product that they market and sell to potential and current employees (Sasser & Arbeit, 1976, p. 64).

**Employee recruitment** - The process of recruiting with the intention of attaining the best personnel (Grönroos, 2008, p. 376; Kundu & Vora, 2004).

**Training and education** - The company’s efforts in developing their employees to become better at their work (Stauss, 1995, p. 63).

**Motivation and reward** – The company’s efforts to engage employees to behave in a productive manner that benefits the business (Johnston, 1989, p. 21-22).

**Internal market research** - The generation of data inside the company relating to the employees through surveys, interviews and other methods (Grönroos, 2008, p. 379).

**Internal communication** - The communication of the company’s marketing and other strategies to its employees (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000, p. 462).

**Retention of staff** - The activity of keeping the most valuable staff and making sure that they stay at your company (Grönroos, 2008, p. 376).

**Company culture** - The collective values and behaviors of the organization that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of a business (Drake et al., 2005).
# Appendix 3

**Clarification of codes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Clarification of code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMA1</td>
<td>Internal Marketing Activity 1 - Job Product Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMA2</td>
<td>Internal Marketing Activity 2 - Employee Recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMA3</td>
<td>Internal Marketing Activity 3 - Training and Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMA4</td>
<td>Internal Marketing Activity 4 - Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMA5</td>
<td>Internal Marketing Activity 5 - Internal Market Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMA6</td>
<td>Internal Marketing Activity 6 - Internal Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMA7</td>
<td>Internal Marketing Activity 7 - Retention of Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE(MG)</td>
<td>Game Elements of Meaningful Gamification that are present in the app</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE(PBL)</td>
<td>Game Elements. “PBL”, Points, Badges, Leaderboards, Mechanics present in the app</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE(D)</td>
<td>Game Elements, Dynamics that are present in the app</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COG</td>
<td>Categories of Gamification. Internal, external and behavioral change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Company culture, does the app influence this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPA</td>
<td>Opinions about the App</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POA</td>
<td>Potential for the App</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUA</td>
<td>Functions of the App</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>