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Agile Media Management Approach – An analysis

Zwinne podejście do zarządzania mediami - analiza

Introduction

A new approach to media management is presented, along with possible research results and further attempts suggested to expand the empirical research. The main topic of this paper is an agile approach– a relatively new methodology that could be implemented in other industries than Information Technology (IT)¹. Taking into consideration some similarities between media management² and an agile approach, there is a strong possibility for the latter one to become an effective, reliable and innovative methodology used to organize and manage any media house³. The approach in the chosen topic aims to create an interest among other media specialists and managers to develop the approach in the future and what is more, apply it in their media outlet⁴.

1. Media definitions and characteristics

„Media” is an ambiguous concept which has diverse meanings and definitions across literature. Whether it is based on factors such as: activity of the government, political instability or an economic crisis/boom, media itself takes on a variety of contexts. Media refers to multifunctional technologies that can reach a vast amount of public via communication channels. Such communication takes place throughout various media outlets. Media is considered to be one of the biggest sources of information which can influence society to a large extent. Moreover, media is the sum of different forms of mediums and channels of an effective communication, which can take form of a printed magazine or a digital website. Media can symbolize a section of the news, educational content, or other forms of communication, such as social media. Digital media play a paramount/key role in today's world, influencing all generations of the public. It has become, modern way of communi-

¹ P. Paterek, A. Kozarkiewicz, *Zwinne zarządzanie zespołami projektowymi. Praktyki zwinne w tworzeniu wartości dla interesariuszy projektów wytwarzania oprogramowania*, Kraków 2020, s. 16-18.

² H. Mintzberg, *Mintzberg on Management*, Alaska 2007, s. 60-77.

³ M. Pawlak, *Zarządzanie projektami*, Warszawa 2022, s. 4-10.

⁴ M. Chrapko, *Scrum. O zwinnym zarządzaniu projektami*, Gliwice 2013, s. 29.



cation transmitted by various digital platforms, computer networks (virtual) or a fiber optic cable (physical)⁵.

The various types of media and their basic forms are: 1) Broadcasting (television and radio)⁶, 2) Print Media 3) Movies 4) Internet or 5) Games. These are the most popular mass media (press, radio, television, Internet)⁷.

When describing media, resulting from the definitions mentioned above, are for example: „a one way communication”. The major characteristic is the fact that movement goes in only one way (from the source of the information to the audience)⁸. The public can listen or read, but cannot give an immediate response because it is separated by time and space. Other characteristics include the fact that communication is only one way, the main public/audience has a variety of product choices and also can be reached at-large, can influence society and simultaneously be under its influence⁹. J. Thompson pointed out a few characteristics of the media, the first one being communication, which includes some methods of producing and distributing – as based on the history of media, each product is prepared and directed to the wide audience and is consumed commercially. Commercial radio stations are dependent on the quantity of advertisements sold, as is the TV, news websites and newspapers. Only commercial radio as state sponsored assets are not reliant on advertising revenue. The second characteristic is based on different contexts and interpretation of the media content during the two processes that include: production and distribution. The third is the way in which the information is distributed, which is also a one-way communication. Then the products are divided and fundamentally „disseminated to a great quantity of audiences”¹⁰. This makes mass media so influential, nevertheless controlled to a certain extent.

2. Media management characteristics

This part presents a brief description of the traditional body of knowledge, and different approaches to media management. As George Sylvie mentioned: „Media are an increasingly important global industry [...] and managing a global media enterprise eventually offers unique opportunities and special challenges”¹¹. Some of the challenges arise due to society’s demanding nature, thus all companies that are operating on a global scale should serve the public’s plethora of demands. Media management represents a type of business with a high dose of discipline and regime. It is due to information that flows 24/7, that has a starting point in one place and then transfers via media platforms around the world. The information is

⁵ <https://www.techopedia.com/definition/1098/media> (dostęp: 12.08.2020 r.).

⁶ <http://www.aalep.eu/news-agencies-eu-member-states> (dostęp: 15.10.2020 r.).

⁷ <https://sjp.pwn.pl/sjp/mass-media;2567152.html> (dostęp: 12.08.2020 r.).

⁸ <https://www.virtuallkollage.com> (dostęp: 12.08.2020).

⁹ <https://ecoursesonline.iasri.res.in/mod/page/view.php?id=117353> (dostęp: 12.08.2020 r.).

¹⁰ J. B. Thompson, *The Media and Modernity*, Stanford 1995, p. 26-28.

¹¹ G. Sylvie, *Media Management*, New York 2008, p. 79.



reproduced by Information Agencies, such as: Polish Information Agency¹², Agence France Presse (AFP) based in Paris or Reuters based originally in London, Antara (Lembaga Kantorberita Nasional Antara) from Indonesia, as well as many others. Due to the immense amount of pressure from three resources, which are: the stakeholders, media houses or even audience, managers struggle with their leadership within those areas. To describe their „strategic and operational phenomena”, business leaders tend to use one form/system at work which results in management only. That might be one consequence of not looking at the individual project as a part of a bigger vision of the media house. Projects are relying on leadership, hence this form of managing the media houses is not yet explored thoroughly. Leadership is constantly demanding: better communication with people, teamwork and advanced soft skills in management. The implementation of such skills is currently on the track to lead to developments in the leadership area.

The area of media management encompasses establishing a strategy of the outlets, planning, production, servicing, organizing along with marketing, public relations and investor relations¹³. That is why media management is such a broad discipline. A universal definition has not been yet created, nor has it been clearly defined¹⁴. Media management contains a lot of characteristics that are specific for a business administration due to functional understanding of managing a media enterprise. Alongside another definition, media management consists of „the ability to supervise and motivate employees”¹⁵ coupled with the ability to operate all of the channels in a financially effective manner.

Nevertheless, media management covers all of the task-oriented activities which are respectively: planning, organization and controlled content creation, distribution process, along with marketing strategy which contains information mixed with entertainment (Infotainment¹⁶) delivered to the public¹⁷. All in all, it can be stated that certain approaches to media management emphasize determinants like: „human factor, stakeholders' involvement, decision making”¹⁸ and investor relations, with the most crucial factors being: communication, leadership and organization.

¹² PIA – Polish Information Agency was founded in 1991.

¹³ G. Sylvie, *Media Management*, New York 2008, p. 79.

¹⁴ L. Küng, *Strategic Management in the Media: Theory to Practice*, Los Angeles 2008, p. 4-12.

¹⁵ B. Sherman, *Telecommunications Management. Broadcasting, Cable and the New Technologies*, New York 1995, p. 5-15.

¹⁶ Infotainment refers mainly to all the media channels that have two advantages at the same time which is entertaining the audience together with informing them about the latest events, [w:] Collins Dictionary, Infotainment, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/infotainment> (dostęp: 29.09. 2020 r.).

¹⁷ W. B. Wirtz, *Media and Internet Management*, Wiesbaden 2011, p. 8-30.

¹⁸ J. Betta, A. Owczarzak-Skomra, *Agile Crisis Management*, „Scientific Journal of the Military University of Land Forces” 2019, vol. 51, Number 2 (192), p. 310-320.



3. Characteristics of Media Project Management

Project management turned into individual discipline due to the high volume of interest by many specialists in the field of management. In a view of current trends, project developers put an immense focus on a customer's needs, justifying the in-depth analysis of the project before it starts. That is why more and more organizations want to gain an understanding and implement the project management techniques for the company to be able to adapt to the constantly changing environment¹⁹, and make work more effective with the customer-driven approach. When talking about project management in general terms, it is crucial to first define the word „project” itself. A project is a package of required actions that are limited in time and operate in order to achieve an exceptional result whilst „restricting the resources that are assigned to the project in a meanwhile”²⁰. Seeing that, project management²¹ is a blend of various actions on different levels that include five main stages, which are planning, organizing, leading, motivating, and controlling project resources, in order to achieve the goal that is set by the project's initiator. When dividing projects based on their field of expertise, media projects can be highlighted, which are the main interest of the authors of this article.

During the process of creating the strategy within a company, there is a point where the media budget is ready to be set. In the process of negotiations and what is more, investor relations, the need of a proper plan of future goals is essential. The project owner needs to ask themselves a question regarding which financial goals need to be achieved first, and whether it is via public relations, advertising, promotion, or by private investors. As G. Ferrell-Lowe pinpoints, media management can be seen as „unstable relations between conflicting interests promoting self-serving ends in ongoing deliberation”²². Having said that, it is worth to mention that the media industry is very dynamic and the relations between the project owners and a public's demand need to be fluent and based on a variety of interactions that will support the communication in general. Media outlets also contain abundant information about „audience size, interactiveness, synchrony, ease of use, and interface symmetry”, which can therefore help to target advertisements and how to reach audiences at-large²³.

¹⁹ M. Wirkus, *Zarządzanie projektami i procesami*, Warszawa 2013, s. 140.

²⁰ PMI, *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide)*, the 5th Edition, Course, Warszawa 2013, p. 10-22.

²¹ P. Rwakatiwana, D. Adjei, *Application of Traditional and Agile Project Management in Consulting Firms. A Case Study of Pricewaterhouse Coopers*, Sweden 2009, p. 4-6; M. Ward, *Pięćdziesiąt najważniejszych problemów zarządzania*, Kraków 1997, s. 6-86.

²² G. Ferrell-Lowe, Ch. Brown, *Managing Media Firms and Industries. What's so Special About Media Management?*, Switzerland 2016, p. 115.

²³ <http://evolutionarymedia.com/mediumAsProcess/medchars.htm> (dostęp: 12.08.2020).



3.1. Agile Project Management

Project management is characterized by two main visions: a classical approach that includes three bodies as M. Wirkus, E. Dostatni, W. Gierulski, H. Roszkowski mention: PMBOK®Guide, PRINCE2, and ICB methods, and agile methods, which include Scrum, EX and Crystal²⁴. All of the traditional approaches to project management are based on the realization of orders in which the planning stage of the product is defined at the beginning. The rest of the modifications are not possible later, so it is inevitable to plan it in advance. It is also believed that the project itself is based on stability, thus all the operations including plans and schedules are carefully planned and actions that are conscientiously designed. Agile Project Management is mainly based on four values of agile software development, which are the individuals and interactions that are more important than all of the processes or tools. The „working software” is more valuable than any other documentation. The impact is put on customer service rather than on long negotiations. The follow up of the plan is not necessary, as long as the long-term response to change and the focus is put on adaptability²⁵. The development model in traditional management of the project is oriented on simple approach but in agile it is iterative. Controlling is one of the characteristics but in agile approach people are in the centre. Delivery phases characterizes in a traditional model in customer involvement, whereas in agile it is constantly involving. In the traditional approach all developers are divided into teams, but in agile, they work as team-members and partners, making work more effective. When it comes to technology, traditionalists are different to agile specialists because the latter are mainly „object oriented”²⁶. When it comes to product features, „the most important comes first” in agile approach, but in traditional, they are all „included”. The methodology used in both approaches varies. In the first one, it happens in the final stages of the developing cycle, however in the second approach, practitioners do it during the iterative process. Whilst the documentation is done thoroughly (in traditional approach), in agile it is done only when needed, making it less exhausting. The fundamental rules for the Agile approach are commonly known as the Agile Manifesto²⁷, which is built on two main ideas²⁸. Hence, the manifesto helps to finalise the whole process, meanwhile all of the requirements should be met whilst the software development is being created²⁹.

²⁴ E. Dostatni, W. Gierulski, H. Roszkowski, M. Wirkus, *Zarządzanie projektem*, Warszawa 2014, s. 6-12.; A. Owczarzak-Skomra, J. Betta, *Agile Crisis Management*, „Scientific Journal of the Military University of Land Forces” 2019, vol. 51, nr 2 (192), p. 310-320.

²⁵ <https://searchcio.techtarget.com/definition/Agile-Manifesto> (dostęp: 13.08.2020 r.)

²⁶ <https://www.visualparadigm.com/scrum/classical-vs-agile-project-management/> (dostęp: 14.08.2020 r.).

²⁷ Agile Manifesto is more known as Agile Manifesto for Software Development.

²⁸ J. Betta, A. Owczarzak-Skomra, *Agile Crisis Management*, „Scientific Journal of the Military University of Land Forces” 2019, vol. 51, nr 2 (192), s. 310-320.

²⁹ <http://agilemanifesto.org/> (dostęp: 13.08.2020 r.).



The agile approach can be characterised with a team that can self-organise, a wide array of freedom and independence, high volume of motivation, and minimum amount of paperwork. The traditional approach on the other hand is led by a solid plan where thorough documentation is required. Agile emphasizes the collaboration-partnership attitude in the project when negotiating the contracts. It is also more flexible, with an immense amount of adaptability which is not very often compatible with the original plan. A direct execution of the plan „above all other factors”³⁰ is very popular for the traditionalist. As a starting point, traditionalists select a thoroughly prepared plan and hinge on a vast amount of documentation³¹.

4. Proposal of media management – framework outline

Media management as a specialization is defined as „one that is comparatively young and has flourished in the past two decades”³². Media handling is vital in creating the channel between the disciplines that have roots in management and media. The characteristics of the media industry are very specific, which is why all media business leaders tend to face challenges and pressure due to the constant changes of the environment. Therefore, strong commercial skills are inevitable whilst working on projects in such an industry. Media management itself tackles some of the most fundamental topics, such as the current „mood of the society” which includes public opinion, political factors, the economic status, to name a few. The increasing role of media audiences is constantly changing and becoming more influential³³.

Due to the fact that all of the generations, such as Generation X (people born between 1976-1985 years), Y (Millennials born between 1981-1991) or even Z (born after 1995 year), can be, and oftentimes are, media content creators, media platforms need to be monitored all the time. The situation on the market is very dynamic and constantly changing, which is why regular media monitoring is crucial. Moreover, the media market has become very competitive due to immense amount of financial resources. All of the media creators or media houses are creating content reaching the same competitive platforms, so all the advertisements need to be eye-catching, easily remembered, and recognized by potential investors and the wider audiences.

According to the Media Library Tools, a few of them are crucial for a better day-to-day media management, including: a better, easy-to-use interface and its impact on the audience which makes an immense difference, whilst first experi-

³⁰ Ch. G. Cobb, *Zrozumieć Agile Project Management. Równowaga kontroli i elastyczności*, Warszawa 2012, p. 48-48.

³¹ P. Paterek, A. Kozarkiewicz, *Zwinne zarządzanie zespołami projektowymi. Praktyki zwinne w tworzeniu wartości dla interesariuszy projektów wytwarzania oprogramowania*, Kraków 2020, s. 26-34.

³² Ferrell-Lowe G., Brown Ch., *Managing Media Firms and Industries. What's so Special About Media Management?*, Switzerland 2016, p. 8.

³³ Tamże.



encing the virtual space of the company. The interface should be intuitive and navigable”³⁴, and have an easy access in case of any obstacles in the communication stages.

While managing various content, it should be as simple as possible and definitely based on easy access formula. Media storage, their access, post-formula discussion and forecasting are important features in managing the media house. Currently, all of the content should be prepared on the international level that includes multilingual personnel, whilst also captivating memorable content that is hard to forget. The multi-use of media makes the media industry even more demanding and unpredictable, especially with all of the new media platforms like YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. In regard to the easy access, we notably need to focus on the media manager that holds the content in his hands, who needs to be facilitated with customizable digital metadata systems, as well as advanced search options and tools. The control of the media content by their user might be challenging, but having the transparent file stores, developed folder systems and databases should be helpful and ready to use whenever needed. Creating a quality digital media storage space can result in total control of the files that can be easily searched by type, tag, user and project³⁵.

The communication flow should exist in every media house, especially when it is a central point of the company, where all other departments within the company stem from. One helpful solution is to have a crisis team in place, along with planned out procedures and actions. Delegating tasks is crucial when a crisis arises in order to have prepared solutions to challenges that emanate. The crisis team should be able to respond quickly via any platform, which might be an email, phone, press conference or face to face contact with the spokesperson of the company. A high degree of security is a necessity, so IT specialists should be in place, constantly monitoring the digital sphere of the media outlet. A media house can easily respond to any crisis, hence it has the tools and sources ready to operate on a local and global scale. The digital media management system should be highly protected with passwords that are encrypted and stored on the most resilient server. A person in charge should be a trusted, qualified and comprehensive individual, who is highly analytical and detail-oriented³⁶.

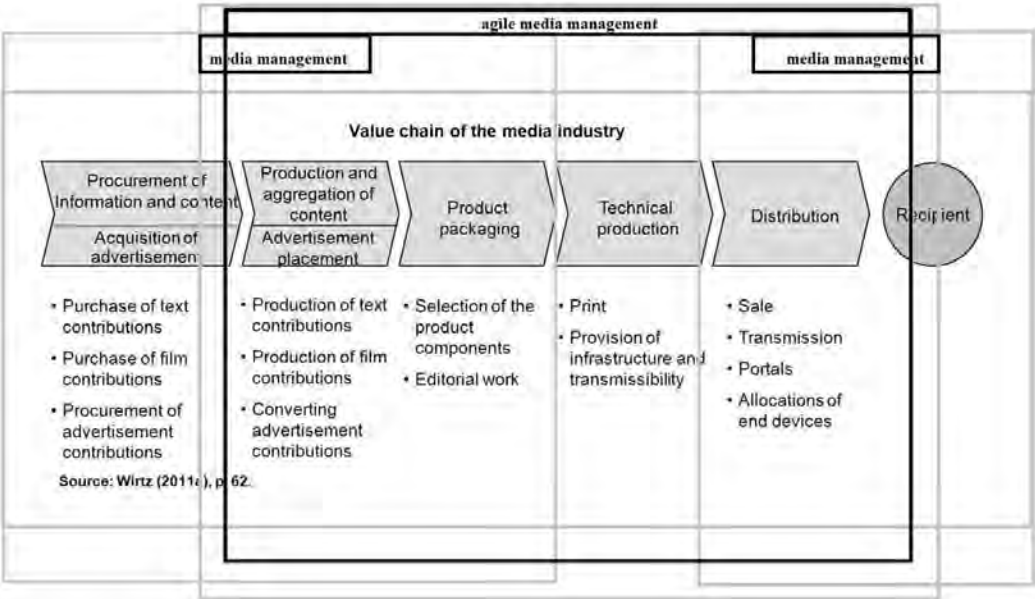
³⁴ <https://www.thirdlight.com/articles/top-features-for-better-media-management> (dostęp: 12.08.2020 r.).

³⁵ Tamże.

³⁶ Ferrell-Lowe G., Brown Ch., *Managing Media Firms and Industries. What's so Special About Media Management?*, Switzerland 2016, p. 8.



Table 1. The agile media management placement



Source: W. B. Wirtz, Media and Internet Management, Wiesbaden 2011.

4.1. The proposal of an agile approach to media management

There were many approaches to media management in the past, nevertheless it is now more clear than ever how important it is to create an adaptive, usual, and complex approach that will be mainly focused on media industry. This is vital due to the advanced technologies; new media including social media, that rapidly transfer information to the wider public. This configuration needs to be completed, roles of the media managers should be more narrowed, while the tools need to drastically change as well³⁷.

To point out the main media features drawing from the agile approach, further explanation has been done in the scheme below. An analysis of the main features characteristics has been created, resulting from definitions mentioned in section 1.2 an its management in section 1.3. In three columns of Table 2, we find respectively: the main features of media/media management, the items of agile approach, and necessary explanation.

³⁷ G. Ferrell-Lowe, Ch. Brown, *Managing Media Firms and Industries. What's so Special About Media Management?*, Switzerland 2016, p. 8.

Table 2. Media vs. Agile Approach – an analysis

Media aspects	Agile Approach	Explanation
Project management	Collaboration with clients	Constant collaboration during the process of project management
Interactivity	Interactivity over contract processes	Flexible interactivity during the processes lead to an effective work scheme
Global network	Variety of team members in agile methods	A variety of team members to choose for the project that represent a „can-do” approach towards projects
Virtuality	Visual project management over traditional	The visual presentation of a project enables the client to have a better understanding of the final product
Simulation	Simulation after every sprint	Helps to simulate the product for the client and adjust changes
Flexibility	Flexibility is a respond to change	Flexibility helps to adapt in the project environment
Adaptability	Adaptive approach creates the work more effective in the long-run	Having an adaptive approach makes the collaboration with the client more effective
Digitization	Digitization over traditional media	Digitization influences the customer's vision and technologically advanced projects
Surveillance	A Team Leader Surveillance over many leaders adding their ideas at every process	A team leader's surveillance is crucial in effective collaboration between the team and their leader
Correlation	The correlation between traditional and agile approach over one, chosen approach	A traditional and agile approach mixed together give an effective outcome
Cultural transmission	An agile approach towards transmission of cultural items	Cultural transmission of the languages, traditions and habits over setting up one, main path
Changes	Adaptation to changes when needed	Changes are vital whilst building an innovative project
Challenges	Following the plan and treating challenges as a source of growth	Challenges emphasize the importance of the adaptation within the project



Crisis	Agile approach over traditional approach	Detection of the early signs of the crisis during the project
Time	Sprints in agile are the heart of the Agile approach	Lack of time along with lack of information lead to crisis or/and failure
Consequences of lack of decision-making	The self-organizing team is based on high volume of decision-making	In crisis, decision-making is one of the key factors. Its lack might lead to catastrophic consequences
Communication	Communication developed my various interactive platforms which makes it more agile	Effective communication leads to better results and a happier workplace
Balance	Balance kept within both approach (traditional & agile)	Balance kept and in case of its loss, adaptation with the usage of agile and traditional approach
Teamwork	The self-organizing team over autocratic team management	Teamwork based on the self-organizing team entails the higher responsibility within the team
Resourcing	A team based resources in agile methods	A team-based resources help to teach the responsibility within the team
Possibilities	Never-ending possibilities due to a typical agile approach	A typical agile approach works well within a changing environment
Threats	Too much flexibility in agile methods might lead to not meet deadlines	Finding a right balance in agile methods is challenging due to set deadlines
Leadership	Crucial leadership of every team leader in the agile approach	A suitable leadership creates an effective team atmosphere and creating projects on time
Information	Information via interactive platforms such as: skype over paper documentation	Information shared with each one team member
„Infotainment”	Agile approach towards „infotainment” which is catching the most important information, filtrating them and releasing to futher audience with a dose of entertainment	„Infotainment” as the information mixed with entertainment sometimes leads to misinformation



Interpretation	An agile interpretation of the mass media news	Agile interpretation of the mass media news's interpretation leads to faster filtrating of the information needed and shared with the public opinion
Bonding	Bonding inside the teams in agile methods	Bonding within the teams creates a better understanding of the work, process and increases the level of team-building
Diversity	Diversity of team members in agile methods	Diversity leads to better creativity

Source: A scheme based on J. Betta, A. Owczarzak-Skomra³⁸.

When implementing an agile approach to media management, we should ask ourselves: how different are media from other industries and why it is necessary to implement a different set of methodologies and regulations to this industry?³⁹. The main responsibility of today's managers and business leaders is, mainly, the adaptation of the increasingly changing environment, which characterizes the twenty-first century. Having said that, leaders of the media industry need to take into consideration various aspects of the surrounding circumstances: from politics, cultural changes, diversity, social expectations and generation's demands. There is still a lack of publications regarding the media's role in creating and developing all of the connections. Particularly, using different types, forms, systems, and methodologies within the media industry.

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³⁸ J. Betta, A. Owczarzak-Skomra, *Agile Crisis Management*, „Scientific Journal of the Military University of Land Forces” 2019, vol. 51, n 2 (192), p. 310-320.

³⁹ G. Ferrell-Lowe, Ch. Brown, *Managing Media Firms and Industries. What's so Special About Media Management?*, Switzerland 2016, p. 8.



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Summary

An attempt has been made to propose a new approach to media management. Its starting point is the similarity of the main media and its management features, with some elements of agile methodologies. The approach mentioned in the article would eradicate all of the documentation, and make media management as genuine and effective as possible. The proposal within the article is not yet created as a methodology because the aim of this publication was to show the current possibilities in creating such foundations for the future possible methodology implemented



inside the media management scheme. The invitation of all specialists in the field of project management, Agile, and traditional project management approaches would be greatly appreciated. The need of an in-depth analysis of how an agile approach can be applied in such a relatively young industry is still plausible. In sum, there are numerous agile tools that can be adopted in media management. The first proposal of media management has been already published by independent researchers, yet this work should be done primarily in the form of more detail-focused and thorough analysis.

Streszczenie

Artykuł dotyczy zarządzania mediami, dlatego odpowiednio zaprezentowano próbę możliwego podejścia opartego na zwinnych metodologiach zarządzania projektami. Artykuł przedstawia kolejno media i zarządzanie nimi (przegląd literatury), charakterystykę projektów medialnych, zwinne zarządzanie projektami, analizę zwinnego podejścia i zarządzania mediami wraz z propozycją nowego pomysłu, jakim jest zwinne zarządzanie mediami (Agile Media Management) oraz wnioski. Poniższe wyniki podkreślają istotną potrzebę przyjrzenia się tej idei w ramach ważnego badania empirycznego oraz dalszego kierunku badań.

Key words: media project, media, management, enterprise, Agile, Scrum

Słowa kluczowe: projekt mediowy, media, zarządzanie, przedsiębiorstwo mediowe, Agile, Scrum