

**Positioning AI Consulting in the Netherlands Financial Sector: A Strategic Assessment for
Agility Startup**



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Preface

Writing this thesis has been one of the most challenging yet rewarding parts of my journey as a double degree student at Saxion University of Applied Sciences. It is not just the final requirement for graduation it is also a reflection of everything I have learned, experienced, and felt throughout this time.

I feel incredibly lucky to have done my graduation project with Agility Startup. A huge thank you to Mr. Bruno Fon, co-founder and Scrum Master, for trusting me with this opportunity. Without it, I honestly don't know how I would have completed my final year. Thank you for your guidance, your time, and for always making space for my questions and ideas.

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On a more personal note, I want to thank my amazing dormmates from 106 especially Ameng, Lia, Sendry, and Reva. Thank you for being such fun playmates, caring sisters, and true friends during almost a year of living together. I am grateful for all the laughter and for always reminding me to breathe, even on the most stressful days

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Executive Summary

This research project explores how Agility Startup can strengthen its market position in the Dutch financial sector by offering Artificial Intelligence (AI) consulting services tailored to regulatory, operational, and strategic challenges faced by banks. As AI adoption becomes a critical priority in finance, regulatory compliance, ethical implementation, and digital transformation are now central to institutional decision making.

The study used internal and external analyses, including a SWOT framework, to identify Agility's potential and limitations. Internally, Agility Startup demonstrates flexibility in service design and a strong internal alignment with AI applications in the financial sector, particularly in areas such as compliance automation, risk management, and customer experience, reflecting its current consulting programs as outlined in the internal analysis.

However, limited visibility, lack of standardized compliance modules, and restricted delivery capacity pose growth constraints. Externally, the market presents high demand for AI alignment with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the AI Act, opportunities for micro consulting, and a shift in client preferences toward trust-based partnerships. At the same time, the firm faces pressure from larger consultancies, AI as a Service platforms, and in house AI initiatives by banks.

To address these challenges, the study recommends three strategic directions: (1) enhancing Agility's credibility by developing modular tools such as an AI Compliance Readiness Module and Digital Maturity Assessment (2) launching low risk micro consulting formats to target smaller financial institutions and (3) adopting a cost efficient marketing strategy that is supported by internship-led content creation and thought leadership initiatives aimed at enhancing Agility's Startup visibility and credibility in the AI consulting space.

These steps will help Agility move from an emerging player to a recognized, value driven advisor in the AI finance consulting landscape.

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Chapter I – Introduction

This chapter introduces the context of the research by outlining the background of Agility Startup, the challenges it currently faces, and the goals it aims to achieve. It also presents the problem definition, research objective, main research question, and sub questions that form the foundation for the rest of the report.

1.1 Company Description

Agility Startup is a Netherlands based IT services and consulting firm headquartered in The Hague. As a small company consisting of three consultants, it focuses on delivering AI-driven solutions to the financial sector. Its current offerings include the Agile Transformation Program, AI Adoption Framework, and the Growth Accelerator for Financial Services, which combine consulting, coaching, and technical implementation tailored to client needs (Bruno Fon, personal communication, 2025).

While Agility currently provides customized, client specific solutions such as fraud detection models, AI integration for regulatory compliance, and chatbot automation for customer service. The company recognizes the need to continuously adapt its offerings to better align with evolving market demands, particularly in how financial institutions approach AI integration, compliance, and scalability. To support this goal, Agility is undertaking a research project that explores AI adoption trends, key challenges faced by financial institutions, and the conditions necessary for successful AI implementation.

The insights gained from this study are expected to guide the strategic refinement of Agility's consulting portfolio by identifying which services are most aligned with client needs, pinpointing areas that require further development, and providing direction on how to better articulate both the business and compliance value of its AI driven solutions.

By doing so, the research provides a strategic foundation for Agility to move closer to its long term objectives. It ensures that the company's service innovation is aligned with market demands and regulatory developments, supporting a more targeted path toward sustainable growth.

Ultimately, the research will support Agility's efforts to create service packages that are easier to scale, improve how Agility presents itself in the market, and help the company stay strong and competitive in the growing Dutch financial sector. Agility's long term mission is to become an AI research and consulting firm in the Netherlands, offering data driven and compliance

oriented solutions that enhance operational efficiency, security, and regulatory readiness within the financial industry (Bruno Fon, Agility Startup, 2025).

1.2 Problem Definition & Research Objective

Agility Startup currently faces significant challenges in establishing a competitive position within the AI consulting market for the financial sector in the Netherlands. Despite the rapid growth of AI adoption across the country particularly within financial services the company has yet to capitalize on these developments effectively. According to CBS (2025), 37.4% of financial services companies utilized at least one AI technology in 2024, up from 27.4% in 2023. Additionally, a KPMG survey (2024) revealed that 46% of Dutch companies have already adopted generative AI in financial reporting and auditing, with 67% planning to do so within the next three years (CBS, 2025; KPMG, 2024). This accelerated adoption trend signals a growing demand for AI solutions but also introduces competitive pressure for firms like Agility, as clients increasingly explore internal solutions or work with larger, more established providers.

Agility struggles to define a clear product and service portfolio and lacks a strong market positioning strategy. These limitation has made it difficult for the company to compete with more established consulting firms such as BearingPoint, Sia Partners, Zühlke, and GFT Technologies, which are already trusted by banks and other financial institutions (Consultancy.eu, 2025; Zühlke, 2025).

At the same time, the financial sector itself is experiencing a transformative shift. AI is reshaping key functions such as fraud detection, risk assessment, customer service automation, and algorithmic trading. However, this transformation is not without friction. Many financial institutions remain hesitant due to regulatory uncertainty, complex integration with legacy systems, data privacy concerns, and a lack of internal AI expertise. Furthermore, issues related to transparency and ethical use of AI have created scepticism among both regulators and end users (Global Legal Group, 2025).

These challenges within the industry have a direct impact on Agility's ability to grow. Without a well defined identity and value proposition, the company risks being overlooked by potential clients seeking both technical expertise and regulatory reassurance. In response, Agility aims to conduct in depth research to better understand the current AI adoption landscape, the obstacles faced by financial institutions, and how consulting firms like itself can position their services more effectively. The goal is to refine Agility's offerings and provide strategic guidance to financial

institutions navigating the complexities of AI implementation bridging the gap between technological potential and responsible adoption

Research objective:

The objective of this research are to deliver a research report for Agility Startup before July 2025, providing data driven insights on AI adoption trends in the financial sector and examining key obstacles to implementation. The report will analyse AI integration challenges, regulatory compliance requirements, and best practices for overcoming barriers. In addition, it will examine effective positioning strategies for promoting AI driven financial solutions, which is essential for shaping marketing related recommendations. This study will help Agility Startup refine its consulting services and support financial institutions in developing effective AI adoption strategies.

Given that Agility Startup is based in the Netherlands and is looking to strengthen its position within the local financial sector, the country has been selected as the geographical focus of this study. The country presents a highly developed digital infrastructure and is actively aligning with the broader EU AI regulations, including the AI Act, GDPR, PSD2, and DORA (NautaDutilh, 2022). These regulations strongly influence how Netherlands financial institutions adopt and govern AI technologies.

Focusing on the Netherlands allows for a more targeted and context specific analysis, considering local industry conditions, regulatory practices, and customer expectations. Furthermore, since the researcher is based in the Netherlands, this scope provides practical benefits in terms of access to relevant stakeholders, respondents, and localized insights that can be directly applied to Agility Startup's strategic positioning and marketing direction.

1.3 Research Main Question & Sub Questions

Main Research Question:

How can Agility Startup adapt its AI consulting product portfolio and positioning strategy to help financial institutions adopt AI driven solutions while addressing regulatory compliance, cybersecurity risks, and operational challenges in the Netherlands?

Sub questions:

1. What are the key AI adoption trends and regulatory challenges in the Netherlands financial sector?
2. Who are Agility Startup's main competitors, and how do they position themselves?

3. What are the needs and preferences of potential customers in the Netherlands financial sector, and how can Agility tailor its AI solutions to address these effectively?
4. What are the main barriers financial institutions face in adopting AI?
5. What strategic positioning should Agility adopt to differentiate itself in the AI consulting market?
6. How can Agility improve its AI product and service portfolio to meet market demands?
7. What are Agility's main strengths and weaknesses in delivering AI driven solutions to financial institutions?
8. How should Agility strategically implement its AI solutions to best address market needs?

1.4 Reading Guide

This report is structured into nine chapters to guide the reader through the key components of the research. Chapter 1 introduces Agility Startup, outlines the problem statement and research objectives, and presents the main and sub questions. Chapter 2 explains the research methodology used to gather and analyse relevant data. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework, detailing seven models that form the basis of the analysis. Chapter 4 explores the macro environmental context using the PESTLE framework to identify external factors affecting AI adoption. Chapter 5 analyse the competitive landscape through Porter's Five Forces. Chapter 6 focuses on identifying market barriers using Lewin's Force Field Analysis and understanding customer needs and preferences through the STP model. Chapter 7 evaluates Agility's internal environment, including its strengths, weaknesses, and strategic capabilities. Chapter 8 summarizes the main findings of the analysis in relation to the research questions, and Chapter 9 provides strategic recommendations concerning positioning, service portfolio improvement, and implementation planning.

Chapter 2 – Methodology

This chapter explains how the information in this report was gathered and analyzed. It outlines the use of both internal and external sources that informed the final recommendations. Internally, insights were obtained through discussions with Agility's representative, Mr. Bruno Fon, to understand the company's operations and service offerings. Externally, research was conducted on relevant regulations, competitors, and potential customers in the Dutch financial sector. Each section of this chapter describes the methods used, ensuring transparency in how insights were generated and how they align with Agility's strategic objectives.

2.1 Internal Analysis

Bruno Fon, the company's Scrum Master, answered a structured written questionnaire to gain insight into Agility Startup's internal operations, structure, and capabilities. As a co founder and key decision maker, his perspective was considered highly valuable in evaluating the organization's strategic goals, product offerings, implementation methods, and internal alignment. The questionnaire was guided by a list of 30 prepared questions, divided into themes including organizational structure, product and service relevance, and implementation practices. The findings were synthesized into three analytical dimensions: strengths and weaknesses, product/service improvements, and implementation framework.

2.2 Regulation

The regulations analysis in this research was conducted through qualitative desk research, focusing primarily on the two most influential legal frameworks governing AI adoption in the Netherlands financial sector: the EU AI Act and GDPR . Sources included official documents from the European Commission, European Central Bank, ENISA, and legal platforms such as Chambers and Partners.

The analysis mentioned other frameworks like PSD2, DORA, NIS2, eIDAS, the Cyber Resilience Act, and the Data Governance Act just to give wider view of regulatory context. The primary aim was to understand how the AI Act and GDPR shape compliance requirements for financial institutions, particularly in areas like data governance, algorithmic transparency, and ethical AI use. This analysis also considered how these regulations affect AI consulting firms like Agility, which must ensure their solutions align with both legal mandates and industry standards.

2.3 Competitor Analysis

A competitor benchmarking approach was used to assess Agility's position within the Netherlands AI consulting landscape. Five peer companies BearingPoint, Sia Partners, Zuhlke, and GFT Technologies were selected based on their active presence in Netherlands, involvement in AI, and focus on the financial sector. Publicly available sources such as company websites, whitepapers, industry reports, and platforms like Consultancy.eu were used to gather data. Each firm was analysed across six dimensions: core services, target market, partnerships, brand reputation, achievements, and platform. This allowed for a structured comparison and the identification of potential strategic gaps for Agility.

2.4 Potential Customer Group

To understand the potential customer group for Agility's AI consulting services, the STP (Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning) framework was applied. The analysis focused on midsized to large financial institutions in the Netherlands, particularly those under regulatory pressure or lacking in house AI capacity. Data sources such as the European Banking Federation and the European Central Bank were consulted to estimate market size and characteristics. Customer needs and preferences were further explored through primary data collection in the form of expert interviews and survey design, aiming to understand key decision factors in AI adoption.

In addition to desk research, three expert interviews were conducted with individuals who have relevant experience in the financial sector. One interviewee is a former employee in the banking industry who now works in a consultancy role, bringing both insider knowledge and external perspective. Another works at a Dutch bank, offering direct insight into current institutional practices. The third interviewee is involved in the loans and insurance sector, providing a view from a financial service area closely connected to banking. Initially, the aim was to focus on experts in cybersecurity and compliance, but due to access challenges, the scope was broadened to include professionals with broader experience in financial services and AI related topics.

The interviews focused on three main topics: (1) how AI related regulations are affecting financial institutions, (2) key barriers and challenges to adopting AI solutions, and (3) the role of external support, such as consulting firms, in helping institutions manage regulatory compliance and AI integration.

To complement these interviews, selected speeches and reports from the European Central Bank (ECB) and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) were also reviewed. These sources

offered a broader policy level view on the future direction of AI adoption in finance, helping to enrich the analysis and ensure alignment with industry wide developments.

2.5 Recommendation

The strategic recommendations presented in Chapter 8 are derived from insights gathered throughout the internal and external analyses. These recommendations are structured in a logical sequence, starting with the identification of a refined target group within the Dutch financial sector, followed by a revised positioning strategy for Agility Startup. Next, specific suggestions for new and enhanced service offerings are introduced, aligned with both market needs and internal capabilities. Finally, an outline for implementation is proposed, including timelines, priority actions, and internal adjustments needed for successful execution. A qualitative and deductive approach was used, where patterns across primary interviews and secondary data were synthesized into actionable outcomes.

2.6 Limitations and Deviations

Several limitations and deviations influenced the research process. First, while primary internal data was obtained through an interview with Bruno Fon, one of Agility's co founders, the absence of additional internal documentation or an official company website meant that the analysis relied heavily on a single source. This presents a risk of bias, as the insights may reflect only one perspective within the company, rather than a broader organizational view.

Second, although the original research plan aimed to include more expert interviews from the financial sector especially in the areas of cybersecurity and compliance this proved challenging due to access constraints. As a result, the scope of interviews was narrowed and only three respondents were included, representing more general roles within the sector. This deviation from the original PoA was addressed by complementing primary data with official speeches and publications from regulatory institutions such as the ECB and BIS.

A third deviation involved a change in the geographic scope of the research. The original plan intended to examine the broader European market however, the study was ultimately limited to the Netherlands. This shift was made to allow for deeper contextual analysis within a manageable scope, considering time constraints and data accessibility. While this focus brought more detail to the Dutch market, it also means the findings may not be fully generalizable to other European countries, particularly those with different market conditions.

Lastly, due to Agility's early stage nature, some internal business data such as market share, client portfolio, or performance metrics was unavailable. As a result, benchmarking or quantitative internal analysis could not be conducted, and the study relied more heavily on qualitative methods.

Chapter 3 – Theoretical Framework

To support the analysis, this chapter introduces six theoretical models that frame the research findings. These include PESTLE for understanding the macro environmental context, Porter's Five Forces to analyse industry competitiveness, STP to guide market segmentation and positioning, McKinsey's 7S framework to assess internal organizational alignment, Lewin's Force Field Analysis to evaluate change, and additional theories related to product and service portfolio management as well as positioning strategy. These frameworks were selected to align with the research questions and offer a structured approach to interpreting Agility's internal and external challenges.

3.1 PESTLE

The PESTLE framework is used to examine the political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental factors that could influence a company's strategic direction. Political factors include government regulations, stability, and policy changes. Economic aspects look at market conditions such as inflation, interest rates, and economic growth. Technological factors focus on innovations, digital transformation, and R&D development. Legal considerations involve regulations, data protection laws, and compliance requirements. In the context of this research, special attention will be given to the economic political, legal, and technological dimensions, as they are highly relevant to AI adoption and regulatory compliance in the European financial sector (Perera, 2017).

The Social and Environmental aspects were left out because they were found to be less relevant for the specific goal of this research. Since Agility primarily works with financial institutions not directly with consumers social trends like changing customer preferences or demographics were not considered a key influence on its strategy. Similarly, while environmental concerns around AI (like the energy usage of data centres) are becoming more widely discussed (IEA, 2024), but sustainability is not (yet) a core part of Agility's offering.

3.2 Porter's Five Forces

Porter's Five Forces model is applied to analyse the competitive environment that Agility is entering. It examines the intensity of competition within the industry, the threat posed by new entrants, the availability of substitute services, and the bargaining power held by both suppliers and buyers. By focusing particularly on competitive rivalry, the threat of new entrants, and the availability of substitutes, the analysis helps identify where Agility stands in the competitive

landscape and what strategic positioning may be required to differentiate itself effectively (Porter, 2008).

3.3 STP (Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning)

The STP model Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning is a well known marketing framework used to better understand customer groups and deliver tailored value. Segmentation divides the market into smaller, manageable groups with shared characteristics. Targeting involves selecting the most attractive segments to serve. Positioning then defines how the product or service should be perceived in the minds of the selected target group. This framework is particularly helpful for Agility as it seeks to define its niche within the financial sector and design services that are closely aligned with customer expectations (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

3.4 Positioning Strategy

Positioning strategy, as part of the broader STP framework, plays a key role in shaping how Agility's brand is perceived by potential clients. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), companies can position themselves based on a variety of factors such as product benefits, price quality relationship, usage occasion, target user, symbolic value, or direct comparison to competitors. Choosing the right positioning helps companies differentiate themselves in a competitive market.

In Agility's case, the positioning strategy needs to reflect the company's strengths and market ambitions. Possible directions include positioning as a premium provider of specialized AI solutions, a niche expert in regulatory compliance, or a cost effective alternative to larger consulting firms. A well defined positioning will help Agility build a strong brand identity and connect with financial institutions that align with its value proposition.

3.5 Product and Service portfolio

In addition to understanding how Agility should position itself, this research also considers its product and service portfolio. A well managed portfolio allows a company to align its offerings with market demand and company goals. Frameworks such as the BCG Matrix or Ansoff Matrix help evaluate which services are worth investing in, expanding, or possibly phasing out. For Agility, this means identifying which AI consulting services resonate most with financial institutions and which areas require innovation or refinement to meet evolving needs.

3.6 McKinsey's 7S Framework

The McKinsey 7S Framework is a management model used to assess how well an organization is aligned internally in order to execute its strategy. It examines seven interconnected elements: strategy, structure, systems, shared values, style, staff, and skills. These elements are divided into “hard” elements (strategy, structure, systems) that are easier to define and influence, and “soft” elements (shared values, style, staff, skills) that are more cultural and harder to change. For Agility, this framework is particularly useful to evaluate whether its internal capabilities, such as team expertise and organizational setup, are aligned to support the successful delivery and implementation of AI solutions in the financial sector (Stanke, 2023).

3.7 Lewin's Force Fields

Lewin's Force Field Analysis is used to explore the forces that affect change and innovation adoption. This model distinguishes between driving forces factors that support the desired change and restraining forces barriers that resist it. Applying this framework helps uncover what motivates or hinders financial institutions from adopting AI based consulting services. This insight is key for Agility in crafting strategies that reduce resistance, highlight benefits, and improve the likelihood of market acceptance (Lewin, 1951, as cited in Institute for Manufacturing, n.d.).

Chapter 4 – Macro Environmental Analysis

In this chapter, external factors that may influence Agility's position and growth in the fintech and AI consulting industry are examined. Although the full PESTLE framework includes six dimensions, this analysis has been limited to the political, economic, legal, and technological aspects, as these were identified as most relevant to the research objectives and the context of AI adoption in the financial sector.

Sociocultural and environmental dimensions were excluded, as no direct or significant influence was identified on Agility's service positioning or its engagement with financial institutions. By narrowing the scope, a deeper and more focused analysis was enabled, specifically on how regulatory developments and technological advancements may affect Agility's strategy.

Through this approach, targeted insights into potential risks and opportunities have been provided, supporting informed decision making as Agility aims to expand within the European financial sector.

4.1 Regulations, Legal Environment, and Technology (PESTLE Analysis)

4.1.1 Economic Analysis

AI is rapidly becoming a driving force in the economic transformation of the financial sector, bringing both opportunities and complex challenges. In the context of monetary policy, AI is expected to influence how such policies are transmitted through the economy. According to Cipollone (2024), in his speech at the European Central Bank, AI's impact on labour and capital markets through shifts in productivity, inequality, and sectoral employment can reshape consumption behaviour and access to credit, ultimately altering how households and firms respond to interest rate changes. He also emphasized that the rise of non bank financial intermediaries, which are often more reactive to long term interest rates, could shift market changing and require a reassessment of traditional macroeconomic tools.

In terms of economic growth and productivity, AI holds considerable promise. Hernández de Cos (2024), speaking at the Institute of International Finance Global Outlook Forum, highlighted how AI applications in banking ranging from fraud detection to customer personalization can significantly improve operational efficiency and lower costs. By enabling faster and more accurate financial services, AI contributes to economic expansion. However, he also cautioned that this increased reliance on third party providers could heighten concentration risks and undermine operational resilience in the financial system.

This concern was echoed by Christel Pieters, Product Owner within the Robotics Department at Rabobank, who explained that despite having access to AI tools like Microsoft Copilot, financial institutions must weigh each implementation against cost efficiency and regulatory risks. Some AI tools, such as document recognition for mortgage processing, operate on a usage-based fee structure, making adoption decisions highly dependent on cost benefit analysis (Appendix D: Interview with Christel Pieters, 2025).

Similarly, Marcell Slootweg, a former banking employee, explained that banks primarily use AI for internal purposes such as marketing or document processing rather than for risk modelling. He attributed this to institutional caution following the 2008 crisis and the lack of transparency in many AI models, often referred to as “black boxes.” As a result, many AI tools still require human oversight, which limits their promised efficiency gains (Appendix B: Interview with Marcell Slootweg, 2025).

Steven Maijoor (2022), during his address at the “FinTech Meets the Regulators” event, stressed the economic potential of open finance as an extension of open banking. He argued that allowing consumers and firms to share a broader set of financial data including investments, insurance, and credit history could unlock innovation, improve risk assessments, and lead to more inclusive financial products. This, in turn, fosters economic efficiency and competition. Yet, Maijoor also warned about the threat of data monopolies, especially from BigTech firms, which may distort fair competition and pose broader economic risks if left unregulated.

The potential influence of AI on long term economic indicators such as the natural interest rate is also under active discussion. Cipollone (2024) explained that AI driven productivity gains might push up the natural rate of interest by increasing capital demand. Conversely, if AI leads to increased inequality and labour market disruption, it could elevate precautionary savings and lower the natural rate. These contrasting scenarios underscore the importance of balanced policy responses that can adapt to the multifaceted effects AI introduces into the economic system.

AI’s role in reshaping the economic environment is multifaceted. It offers substantial efficiency and innovation gains, but also introduces potential disruptions particularly in labour markets, data ownership, and systemic dependencies. To ensure long term economic resilience, policymakers and financial institutions must take a proactive role in managing these changes, leveraging the benefits of AI while simultaneously addressing its risks.

As reflected in Rabobank's practices, institutions are already investing in energy efficient prompting, secure AI hosting environments, and strict compliance with the AI Act and GDPR to manage both financial and environmental risks associated with AI usage.

4.1.2 Legal Analysis

The legal environment surrounding AI in the financial sector is evolving rapidly, shaped not only by landmark regulations such as the EU AI Act and the GDPR, but also by emerging institutional concerns around cybersecurity, algorithmic accountability, and systemic risk. In light of increasing AI integration across banking and supervisory activities, this section explores both the codified legal frameworks and the interpretative insights shared by financial leaders, highlighting the importance of human oversight, data governance, and regulatory adaptability.

At the core of European AI regulation are the AI Act and GDPR. The AI Act, introduced by the European Commission in 2021 and slated for full enforcement by 2026, classifies AI systems based on risk levels and imposes stringent requirements for high risk applications such as credit scoring and fraud detection. These requirements include transparency, human oversight, documentation, and accuracy standards (White & Case, 2025). For companies like Agility, compliance with the AI Act is not optional it is a gateway to trust and market viability in the financial sector. In parallel, the GDPR continues to play a pivotal role in regulating the use of personal data. Article 22, for instance, prohibits decisions based solely on automated processing that significantly affect individuals, unless explicit safeguards such as human intervention are in place (European Union, 2016). These overlapping frameworks set a high legal bar for AI implementation in finance.

As emphasized by Pieters (2025), Product Owner at Rabobank, their AI deployment is heavily shaped by GDPR and the AI Act. She stated that Rabobank is not allowed to use AI for biometric categorization, emotional inference, or behavioural scoring due to ethical and legal concerns. AI is only permitted when used for crime prevention, such as detecting money laundering activities aligning with GDPR and Dutch AML regulations.

Building on these foundations, key policymakers have emphasized the need for AI safeguards and governance mechanisms. As ECB Board Member Piero Cipollone noted, central banks must establish guardrails for confidentiality, privacy, and cyber resilience when deploying AI internally. He stressed that while AI can enhance operational efficiency and data insights, it

also increases exposure to deepfakes, misinformation, and system dependence all of which necessitate strict regulatory controls and real time threat detection systems (Cipollone, 2024).

These concerns were also echoed by Pieters (2025), who explained that Rabobank prohibits the use of public AI tools like ChatGPT, Grammarly, or Adobe Sensei due to privacy risks. Instead, only secure, private environments such as Microsoft Copilot hosted internally are allowed

Similarly, DNB's Steven Maijor has advocated for regulatory frameworks that support "explainable AI" in open finance ecosystems. Maijor emphasized that while open finance enables more efficient and personalized services, it must not compromise data privacy or financial stability. He highlighted initiatives like DNB's credit register and iForum as proactive steps toward smart, data driven supervision. Yet, he cautioned against unchecked data mobility and over concentration in BigTech, advocating for a European level response through instruments like the Data Act, Digital Markets Act, and the forthcoming Open Finance Regulation (Maijor, 2022).

Furthermore, Pablo Hernández de Cos of the Basel Committee underscored systemic risks tied to AI in banking. These include dependency on third party providers, unexplainable model outputs, data hallucinations, and increased procyclicality during crises. He called for consistent governance standards across banks and tech vendors alike and emphasized the enduring necessity of human judgment in model oversight. Importantly, he argued that AI/ML models must not be assumed neutral; their speed, automaticity, and ubiquity could amplify financial instability without appropriate checks and supervisory alignment (Hernández de Cos, 2024).

Slootweg (2025), reinforced this viewpoint, highlighting that banks remain cautious in using AI for risk modeling due to regulatory expectations and historical caution post 2008 crisis. He noted that although banks utilize external consultants like McKinsey for large compliance projects, they avoid "black box" models controlled by BigTech due to transparency and regulatory risk concerns.

In addition to these supervisory perspectives, European institutions continue refining adjacent laws. The Revised Payment Services Directive (PSD2) shapes how AI systems handle digital payments and customer authentication. Cross sector frameworks such as DORA, eIDAS, and the Cyber Resilience Act introduce operational requirements that indirectly affect AI deployment by enforcing ICT security and data interoperability standards (European Commission, 2023). Transatlantic services must also account for the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA),

which, like GDPR, emphasizes transparency and user control over personal data (California Legislative Information, 2023).

From an institutional compliance perspective, Pieters (2025) explained that Rabobank employees are required to undergo internal AI training, and strict usage policies are enforced to ensure compliance with GDPR. Even using Google Translate for customer facing content is prohibited in some cases.

As of 2025, banks operating in the Netherlands must also comply with CRR3 and CRD VI, which integrate ESG and risk management into capital adequacy reporting. These updates reflect a growing recognition that legal compliance is not limited to AI specific laws but must encompass broader operational and ethical dimensions. Similarly, anti money laundering obligations enforced by the Dutch Central Bank now rely heavily on AI powered anomaly detection systems. This legal landscape represents both a barrier and an opportunity: organizations that master it, like Agility, can position themselves as trusted advisors in regulated, data intensive financial sectors.

4.1.3 Political Analysis

The European Union's political vision for AI is shaped by a dual ambition: to become a global leader in responsible innovation, and to ensure that AI development aligns with core democratic values. At the heart of this agenda is the belief that AI should serve the public good safely, ethically, and transparently (European Commission, 2025). Initiatives such as the AI Continent Action Plan reflect the EU's intent to assert digital sovereignty while investing over €1 billion annually via Horizon Europe and Digital Europe to promote secure and fair AI ecosystems.

However, Member States express differing political priorities. France and Germany advocate for more flexibility, especially regarding transparency and national security, fearing excessive constraints on innovation. In contrast, the Netherlands through actors like the Dutch Data Protection Authority has called for stronger regulatory guardrails and citizen first AI development (Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens, 2024). These internal tensions influenced the final draft of the AI Act, revealing a broader political balancing act between economic competitiveness and ethical safeguards (Pinsent Masons, 2024).

Political considerations also influence how AI supervision unfolds in the financial sector. Dutch supervisory bodies like De Nederlandsche Bank (DNB) and the Authority for the Financial Markets (AFM) emphasize cautious innovation encouraging new technologies, but only if aligned with ethical principles and operational resilience (DNB & AFM, 2024). Recent DNB initiatives

like iForum reflect this approach, where dialogue and technological development are integrated with a commitment to consumer protection and system stability (Maijor, 2022).

Globally, AI governance is now viewed as a political concern due to its systemic nature. According to Hernández de Cos (2024), unchecked AI/ML deployment in banking may intensify financial risks through model errors, automation bias, and excessive reliance on third party providers. Political institutions such as central banks and the Financial Stability Board (FSB) have increasingly framed AI as a risk to macroprudential stability and called for regulatory cooperation at the international level (FSB, 2024).

Cybersecurity has become a central political issue in this context. Generative AI has introduced new threats such as model poisoning and data leakage. International institutions like the Bank for International Settlements are responding with cross border programs (e.g., CRCC, GCRG) aimed at improving institutional resilience (Doerr et al., 2022; BIS, 2024).

Moreover, the political discourse is expanding to include ethical AI deployment and human oversight. Central bankers like Cipollone (2024) stress that while AI can support monetary policy and efficiency, its long term implications on income inequality, labor markets, and credit access require sustained public scrutiny and policy direction. In a similar vein, Maijor (2022) underscored that open finance cannot advance without addressing political questions around data ownership, fairness, and explainability.

4.1.4 Technology Analysis

Technological progress continues to reshape the European financial sector, with AI at the forefront of innovation. Financial institutions are increasingly adopting AI to enhance operational efficiency, deliver personalized services, and support complex decision making processes. However, these advancements also expose significant technological vulnerabilities, particularly in areas such as legacy IT infrastructure, system interoperability, model transparency, and cybersecurity risks.

A major barrier to AI adoption is the continued reliance on outdated legacy systems by many financial institutions. These systems are often incompatible with modern AI applications, making integration both costly and operationally challenging. For instance, a three day service disruption at Barclays in 2024 was largely attributed to failures in its aging IT infrastructure, demonstrating the fragility of legacy systems in an increasingly digital financial ecosystem (Financial Times, 2024). Pieters (2025) of Rabobank supported this concern, explaining that her

early tasks involved manually transferring data between Excel and CRM systems before her department began developing internal robotics to automate repetitive processes. This transition highlights the slow but necessary shift away from legacy systems within traditional banks.

Model transparency also presents a significant concern. Many advanced AI systems, especially those using deep learning, function as “black boxes” that lack interpretability. This opacity creates challenges for institutions attempting to meet regulatory requirements under the EU AI Act and GDPR, which mandate human oversight and explainability in high risk AI applications. As noted in recent industry discussions, financial firms risk losing public trust if they cannot clearly justify algorithmic decisions (LinkedIn, 2024). Slootweg (2025) echoed this by stating that banks are reluctant to use AI for risk modelling because of the “black box” nature of such systems and the lack of transparency. He emphasized that this limitation makes it difficult for institutions to maintain control and meet supervisory standards.

To mitigate these challenges, financial institutions are investing in modern cloud based infrastructure and more explainable AI solutions. A notable example is the partnership between Euroclear and Microsoft, which aims to integrate generative AI and cloud technology to modernize financial infrastructure, enhance system resilience, and improve data driven services (Financial News London, 2024). Rabobank, as explained by Pieters (2025), has adopted Microsoft Copilot in a secured internal environment to replace open AI tools like ChatGPT, demonstrating an institutional move toward safer, enterprise grade AI integration.

However, these technological upgrades come with increased cybersecurity risks. The outsourcing of AI functionalities and data storage to third party providers necessitates stronger controls to prevent data breaches and ensure compliance with operational risk management standards. The European Commission, in response, has introduced initiatives such as the Digital Operational Resilience Act (DORA) to strengthen ICT resilience in the financial sector (European Commission, 2024). This concern is validated by Pieters’s (2025) remark that open tools like Grammarly and Adobe Sensei are prohibited due to their inability to comply with internal data privacy requirements, and that only secure, vetted tools are permitted within the bank’s AI ecosystem.

In addition, a growing divide exists between large and small financial institutions. While large banks often have the financial and technical resources to upgrade infrastructure and recruit AI talent, smaller and mid-sized firms face considerable constraints. To address this disparity,

institutions such as the European Banking Authority (EBA, 2024) and European Central Bank (ECB, 2024) have launched digital transformation roadmaps to support broader and more inclusive AI adoption. Slootweg (2025) also pointed out that fintech startups tend to move quickly in adopting AI, but often lack the compliance capabilities of larger banks a gap that underscores the importance of tailored technological support.

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Chapter 5 Competitor Analysis (Porter's Five Forces)

This chapter analyzes the competitive environment in which Agility operates, using Porter's Five Forces framework. The goal is to understand the structural of the AI consulting industry specifically within the financial services sector in the Netherlands and identify the key forces shaping Agility's market position.

These forces help highlight the intensity of competition, how easily new players can enter the AI consulting space, and whether financial institutions might seek alternative solutions instead of working with firms like Agility. Together, they offer a clear picture of the market and help Agility identify both potential threats and opportunities to differentiate itself.

5.1 Competitive Rivalry

To understand Agility Startup's positioning within the competitive landscape of AI consulting in the Dutch financial sector, a benchmarking analysis was conducted using four selected peer companies: GFT Technologies, Sia Partners, BearingPoint, and Zühlke. These companies were chosen based on three key criteria: (1) their active presence in the Netherlands or broader European market, (2) their engagement in AI driven consulting solutions, and (3) their direct involvement with financial institutions, particularly in banking and fintech services.

Compared to global giants, these four competitors represent a more proportional reference group in terms of scale, service offering, and market agility. Their consulting models reflect a balance of technological depth, regulatory expertise, and adaptive delivery making them suitable benchmarks for Agility's strategic evaluation.

- GFT Technologies brings strong technical specialization in modernizing banking infrastructures and deploying cloud based AI systems, with a growing portfolio across Dutch and European financial institutions (GFT, 2024).
- Sia Partners offers a compliance first approach to AI integration, leveraging its proprietary Heka AI platform and a robust financial client base across the EU, including Dutch banks (Sia Partners, 2024).
- BearingPoint provides targeted AI and data analytics solutions, particularly in digital finance, risk management, and operational efficiency for mid sized European banks. Its presence in the Netherlands and modular approach to delivery makes it especially relevant to Agility's positioning (BearingPoint, 2024).

- Zühlke combines AI strategy and innovation advisory with specific expertise in financial services, offering agile implementation support for clients navigating complex regulatory and infrastructure environments (Zühlke, 2024).

The benchmarking analysis evaluates each competitor across six strategic dimensions: Core Services, Target Market, Pricing, Partnerships, Brand Reputation, and Achievements:

- Core Services capture each firm's AI offering from risk modeling and regulatory automation to customer analytics and infrastructure design.
- Target Market refers to their industry specialization (e.g., banks, fintechs, insurers) and client tier (e.g., Tier 1 banks vs SMEs).
- Partnerships highlight key alliances with platforms like AWS, Azure, or Google Cloud, which enable scalable AI deployment.
- Brand Reputation considers how clients perceive each firm's innovation, trustworthiness, and delivery reliability (Consultancy.eu, 2024).
- Achievements include proprietary platforms, awards, or major projects delivered offering tangible evidence of market credibility.

By applying this multidimensional benchmark, the analysis reveals competitive strengths, capability gaps, and strategic opportunities for Agility. These may include differentiation through compliance focused offerings, modular AI delivery, or specialized support for under served segments such as fintech SMEs. Overall, these four firms represent a realistic and relevant peer group for Agility to assess its positioning in the Dutch AI consulting market for financial services.

Table 1. Competitor Analysis Table

Competitor	Agility	Sia Partners	BearingPoint	GFT T.	Zühlke
Core Service	AI consulting specialist in Finance and IT.	Advanced analytics, AI compliance, in house AI platform (Heka AI), automation	AI & data analytics for finance, digital risk management, operational efficiency	AI driven digital transformation, customer experience optimization, data analytics	AI strategy consulting, innovation management, AI system integration
Target Market	Banking, Insurance, IT company and other finance sectors	Cross industry with a strong focus on banking, insurance, and energy	Mid sized banks, insurers, and financial institutions across the Netherlands and EU	Primarily banks, insurance, capital markets	Banks, fintechs, and innovation driven financial institutions
Partnership	-	Microsoft, AWS, and internal AI development teams	Strategic partnerships with Microsoft Azure, SAP, and regional fintech platforms	Strong partnerships with Avaloq, Thought Machine, and AWS (Amazon Web Services)	AWS, Google Cloud, and involvement in innovation ecosystems
Brand Reputation	-	Established in consulting with growing visibility in the AI space	Known for reliability and digital transformation in regulated sectors	Highly trusted in fintech and banking transformation	Recognized for innovation leadership and technical excellence

Achievement	-	Published major AI reports, awarded for innovation (e.g., Heka AI implementation)	Delivered digital finance transformation projects, published industry reports	Modernized core banking systems for major European banks	Implemented AI banking solutions, received innovation awards and recognition
Platform	LinkedIn, and Instagram	LinkedIn, Instagram, Youtube, Facebook, and X.	LinkedIn, Instagram, and Youtube	LinkedIn, Instagram, Youtube, Facebook, Blog, and X.	LinkedIn, Facebook, and Xing.

The competitor analysis table highlights the unique positioning of Agility Startup in comparison to four mid-sized AI consulting firms operating in the Dutch financial sector: Sia Partners, BearingPoint, GFT Technologies, and Zühlke. While each competitor brings different strengths such as proprietary platforms, strong partnerships, or technical specialization they share a common strategic focus on serving financial institutions through AI-powered services.

Agility distinguishes itself as a focused AI consulting specialist for the finance and IT sectors, while competitors like Sia Partners and GFT Technologies have a broader market reach and more mature brand presence. Notably, Sia Partners leverages its in-house Heka AI platform and is well known for its compliance-first approach. BearingPoint emphasizes digital finance transformation and has established itself as a reliable partner in regulated sectors, particularly through collaborations with Microsoft and SAP. Zühlke, on the other hand, positions itself as an innovation-driven firm, focusing on AI strategy and agile implementation with strong technical excellence.

The comparison also reveals that while competitors are actively engaged in strategic partnerships and have achieved significant recognition for innovation, Agility is still in the early stages of building its market presence. This presents an opportunity for Agility to differentiate by emphasizing niche specialization, agility in delivery, and potentially forming alliances with local fintech or cloud solution providers.

To support this strategic reflection, a second benchmarking table is introduced this time focusing on how competitors approach marketing and client engagement. The rationale behind this addition is to help Agility, as a smaller player in the market, understand current industry standards and common practices. By identifying which approaches are frequently used such as educational events, LinkedIn thought leadership, or client case sharing Agility can assess which activities are realistic and cost-effective to replicate given its limited resources.

This benchmarking also acts as a foundation for future differentiation. At this stage, the goal is not to immediately define what sets Agility apart, but to first understand what is already

being done in the market. From there, Agility can decide where to align, where to diverge, and eventually, how to build its unique identity and positioning in the Dutch financial sector.

Table 2. Type of Marketing

Competitor	Interaction Channel and Type of Marketing Content
Sia Partners	Website: publications, Article, podcast, and Events (webinars) Instagram: Activity and Storytelling with employee Linkedin: Events activity and Article
GFT Technologies	Website: Article, podcast library, Blog, Succes story with their clients Instagram: Activity, and Employee interaction Linkedin: Article, and events activity
BearingPoint	Website: Article, podcast library, Blog, Succes story with their clients, Events and webinars Instagram: Activity, and Employee interaction Linkedin: Article, and events activity
Zühlke	Website: Article, Case studies, Succes story with their clients Instagram: Linkedin: Article, and events activity

Based on the comparison in Table 2, three main platforms LinkedIn, company websites, and Instagram were selected for analysis, as they are the most commonly used across all competitors. These channels are also relatively low cost and manageable for a smaller consultancy like Agility to adopt effectively.

Across all companies, the types of content shared are quite similar. Most firms actively post internal activities, such as employee engagement, participation in conferences, and company events, to strengthen brand authenticity and relatability. Articles and thought leadership content are another common practice, particularly on company websites. For example, some companies like Sia Partners publish regular articles each month, while others update less frequently.

Many competitors also use more informal or engaging content, such as seasonal greetings, holiday posts, or team celebrations, especially on Instagram. On LinkedIn, the focus is more visual sharing photos from events, panels, or office moments whereas website content tends to be more structured and descriptive of the company's service areas.

Notably, most of the articles and publications shared are highly relevant to their specialization in AI for the financial sector. Topics often include AI driven risk management, regulatory compliance, fraud detection, and the use of generative AI in financial services. This consistency in content focus helps these firms build credibility as thought leaders in their domain, while also demonstrating a clear value proposition to potential clients.

In addition to articles and visual content, several firms also offer audio based materials, such as podcasts either hosted internally or in collaboration with industry experts. Some companies include blogs and client case libraries on their websites, showcasing real examples of success and impact.

While the scale and frequency of these efforts may vary, the general approach shows a balanced combination of expertise, transparency, and human connection offering Agility a clear path to follow in building its own brand presence and client relationships.

5.2 Threat of New Entrants

The AI consulting market within the European financial sector presents significant barriers to entry, thereby reducing the threat posed by new competitors. These barriers stem from regulatory complexity, trust and reputation requirements, specialized technical expertise, and lengthy sales cycles with integration challenges.

Regulatory complexity is one of the most formidable obstacles. The EU's AI Act introduces strict requirements for high risk systems such as those used in banking mandating robust risk management, transparency, human oversight, and traceability (European Commission, 2024). For new entrants, meeting these obligations without existing compliance infrastructure significantly raises costs and risks, acting as a natural barrier to entry (European Commission, 2024)

Trust and reputation are also critical in this space. Financial institutions, which are highly risk averse, tend to work with vendors that can demonstrate credibility, regulatory alignment, and a strong track record. Firms like GFT Technologies have established themselves through strategic partnerships with major cloud providers such as AWS, Google Cloud, and Microsoft Azure, as well as collaborations with fintech platforms like Thought Machine and Mambu. These alliances enhance GFT's ability to deliver scalable, secure, and compliant solutions tailored to the financial sector. (GFT Technologies, 2024).

Technical expertise and access to talent further limit new competition. Delivering AI consulting services in regulated industries necessitates not only proficiency in machine learning but also domain specific knowledge in compliance, algorithmic bias mitigation, cybersecurity, and financial risk modelling. The scarcity of such specialized talent makes it challenging for new firms to assemble capable teams quickly (Sia Partners, 2024).

Additionally, the process of onboarding new AI consulting vendors in the financial sector presents a hidden barrier for market entrants. Banks and other financial institutions typically follow a rigorous vendor onboarding process, which includes detailed documentation requests, compliance and risk assessments, contract negotiations, and IT system integration. These steps are not only time consuming but also resource intensive, often discouraging clients from switching to

new providers, even when more innovative solutions are available (Tipalti, 2024; Graphite Connect, 2024). This creates a form of institutional inertia that favors existing providers and increases the difficulty for newer firms like Agility Startup to break into long term consulting relationships. Altogether, these conditions contribute to a moderately high barrier to entry. For Agility Startup, this presents a protective market environment, yet it also underscores the importance of differentiating through credibility, technical specialization, and regulatory fluency.

5.3 Threat of Substitutes

In the Netherlands financial sector, AI consulting firms like Agility Startup are increasingly challenged by the rise of viable substitute solutions that allow banks to bypass traditional consultancy engagements. These substitutes come primarily in three forms: in house AI development, low code/no code AI platforms, and AI as a Service (AIaaS) solutions.

According to Financial News London (2024), major financial institutions such as JPMorgan, Citigroup, and Wells Fargo are actively scaling up their internal AI teams. This trend is mirrored in Europe, where banks like UniCredit in Italy are leveraging internal digital platforms like DealSync to identify M&A opportunities without relying on external consultants. Similarly, UBS in Switzerland has begun piloting AI based instant credit tools, bypassing traditional risk assessment teams for faster SME lending decisions (Reuters, 2024).

Another significant substitute is the growing adoption of AIaaS. These cloud based services allow banks to integrate advanced AI models directly into their systems without needing bespoke development. For instance, NatWest in the UK partnered with OpenAI to enhance its customer service chatbot, Cora, and internal assistant, AskArchie achieving a 150% improvement in customer satisfaction while reducing the need for human agents (Reuters, 2024). AIaaS offerings like these appeal to banks due to faster deployment, cost effectiveness, and scalability.

Meanwhile, the rise of low code and no code platforms enables non technical banking staff to develop AI tools using visual interfaces, eliminating the need for external technical support. Fortune Business Insights (2024) projects that 70% of new enterprise applications will be developed this way by 2025, further reducing dependence on AI consultants.

As Pieters (2025) of Rabobank explained, most banks now rely on secure internal tools like Microsoft Copilot instead of open AI platforms, and only work with pre-approved consultants to minimize risk. Likewise, Slootweg (2025) noted that large firms often turn to trusted partners like McKinsey or Capgemini for strategic projects, while smaller tech tasks are handled internally

or via longstanding vendor relationships. These insights affirm the growing preference for internal solutions and familiar providers over generalist consulting firms.

These developments signal a moderate to high threat of substitution. While substitutes offer speed and cost efficiency, they often lack the customization, regulatory alignment, and domain specific expertise offered by consulting firms. To remain competitive, Agility Startup must reinforce its positioning as a compliance focused, high trust partner. For example, the firm could focus on developing AI frameworks tailored for high risk use cases under the AI Act or offer integration layers for clients already using AIaaS.

Chapter 6 Market Barriers (Lewin's Force Fields) and Customer Insights (STP)

In this chapter, two key dimensions are examined: the potential barriers that may hinder Agility's Startup market entry or growth, and the actual needs and expectations of customers. Lewin's Force Field Analysis is first applied to identify the driving and restraining forces that influence AI adoption highlighting factors that either support or obstruct progress. Subsequently, the STP model is used to analyze customer needs by segmenting the market, selecting appropriate target groups, and formulating a positioning strategy that aligns with those needs. Through this approach, both the challenges to be addressed and the opportunities to enhance market engagement are revealed.

6.1 Market Barriers, Driving forces and Restraining forces

The adoption of AI in Europe's financial sector is influenced by a interplay of opposing forces. On one hand, several factors are accelerating the implementation of AI across banking institutions; on the other hand, a number of structural, technical, and regulatory challenges continue to hinder its widespread deployment. This section uses Lewin's Force Field Analysis to categorize these into driving and restraining forces.

6.1.1 Driving Forces

AI adoption in financial services is largely driven by the potential for improved operational efficiency, enhanced competitiveness, and evolving regulatory and customer demands. According to EY (2024), a majority of European financial executives believe generative AI will significantly increase productivity through automation, especially in areas such as customer service, compliance, and risk analysis. These operational improvements are vital for institutions seeking to streamline processes and reduce costs in a competitive industry landscape.

This sentiment is echoed in practice, as Renee who works in the insurance and loan department, focusing on coaching and training noted that AI is already being piloted internally to evaluate advisor client conversations, particularly focusing on the structure and completeness of interactions. This illustrates how banks are using AI not only for cost-saving purposes but also to improve service delivery consistency (Appendix A: Interview with Renee, 2025).

AI is also viewed as a source of strategic advantage. McKinsey (2024) reports that generative AI could contribute up to 3% annual productivity growth in Europe by 2030, particularly benefiting data intensive sectors such as finance. For early adopters, the ability to

deliver personalized services, perform rapid analytics, and launch new data driven products provides a significant market edge.

As Pieters (2025) explained, Rabobank already uses AI tools to flag transactions that pose potential financial crime risks an effort that not only improves compliance but also enhances operational safety. This illustrates how regulatory frameworks act as indirect drivers. The EU AI Act, while demanding in terms of compliance, signals to financial institutions the importance of investing in transparent and ethical AI systems. AI is increasingly used to improve regulatory reporting and automate fraud detection, helping banks meet supervisory expectations while improving internal governance structures (Pinsent Masons, 2024).

At the same time, customer expectations continue to evolve. Consumers increasingly demand fast, seamless, and tailored banking experiences. AI systems, particularly in the form of chatbots, recommendation engines, and fraud detection tools, offer banks the ability to meet these expectations at scale (EY, 2024). As Renee (2025) highlighted, although AI does not yet replace human empathy, it plays an important role in guiding advisors with structural support making services more efficient. Together, these forces are creating a clear incentive for banks to embrace AI not only to stay relevant but to thrive in a digitally evolving financial landscape.

6.1.2 Restraining Forces

Despite its potential, AI adoption in the financial sector faces considerable resistance, particularly due to regulatory uncertainty, organizational inertia, and technical barriers. One major concern is the complexity of existing and upcoming regulations. Although the AI Act and GDPR provide general guidance, banks continue to struggle with interpreting specific provisions and aligning them with internal systems and risk models. This ambiguity often causes implementation delays and increased legal costs (Pinsent Masons, 2024). This concern was echoed by Pieters (2025), who emphasized that while AI brings significant opportunities, there must always be human oversight in automated decision making, particularly when such decisions impact customers. This aligns with the spirit of GDPR Article 22, which discourages fully automated decisions without safeguards.

Another critical barrier is the shortage of talent with combined expertise in both AI technologies and financial regulations. As noted by EY (2024), many institutions in Europe acknowledge a lack of internal capabilities to implement AI responsibly, especially in a way that aligns with ethical standards and legal compliance. This challenge was also reflected in Renee's

(2025) input, who shared that while AI tools are promising, the current workforce lacks sufficient training to understand or question the AI generated output, limiting its effectiveness in customer facing settings.

Technical constraints, particularly legacy systems, also present a significant hurdle. Many European banks still rely on outdated IT infrastructure, making it difficult to integrate modern AI solutions. This not only limits scalability but also increases the risk of system failure and data incompatibility (InvestGlass, 2024). For smaller institutions in regions like Southern and Eastern Europe, high initial investment costs further hinder adoption, as these banks may lack the financial flexibility to support comprehensive AI initiatives (Bruegel, 2024).

In addition, the industry's growing reliance on a few dominant cloud and AI infrastructure providers, such as Microsoft, Amazon, and Google, raises concerns about vendor lock in and long term strategic autonomy. According to Reuters (2024), many banks fear that over dependence on these external platforms could result in reduced control, weaker negotiation power, and increased cybersecurity risks. Pieters (2025) also touched on this concern, indicating that Rabobank carefully evaluates each technology vendor and tends to prefer in house solutions or limited external integration to avoid lock in scenarios.

Finally, adoption rates vary significantly by region. Western European countries such as the Netherlands, France, and Germany are generally more advanced in AI implementation due to stronger digital infrastructure and government investment. Conversely, financial institutions in less digitally mature countries often struggle with insufficient regulatory support and a lack of AI development ecosystems (European Banking Federation, 2024; EY, 2024).

For Agility Startup, these barriers represent not just challenges but opportunities. By understanding the specific restraints faced by banks across different European markets, Agility Startup can offer specialized consulting services tailored to overcoming them such as regulatory interpretation, legacy system integration, or talent development programs. This is in line with Renee's (2025) suggestion that consulting firms like Agility Startup should focus not only on technology, but also on helping financial advisors and middle management build confidence in using AI tools.

6.2 Customer Needs and Preferences (STP)

To better understand client needs and align Agility's Startup services with current market conditions, the STP (Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning) framework is applied. However,

before finalizing the segmentation and positioning, it is important to first compare the characteristics of different segments within the Dutch banking sector.

By conducting a comparison of key bank groups such as large incumbents, regional/cooperative banks, and digital first fintech's Agility Startup can identify which types of institutions offer the most strategic potential. This comparison is based on relevant criteria such as size, AI maturity, regulatory pressure, cybersecurity readiness, and system complexity. These criteria were selected because they reflect real world operational conditions that directly affect AI adoption capacity and consulting needs.

To develop an effective segmentation strategy for the Dutch financial sector, five criteria were selected: size, AI maturity, regulatory pressure, cybersecurity readiness, and system complexity. These dimensions were chosen based on their relevance to AI adoption potential and consulting needs across different types of financial institutions.

- **Bank Size:** Market dominance varies significantly by institution size. According to Statista (2023), ING, Rabobank, and ABN AMRO alone control approximately 74.7% of total banking assets in the Netherlands, indicating a high level of market concentration.
- **AI Maturity:** Banks differ in their level of AI integration. For example, bunq has positioned itself as the first AI powered bank in Europe, adopting generative AI technology to personalize customer experiences (bunq, 2023).
- **Regulatory Pressure:** The level of supervision and regulatory scrutiny varies by institution. The European Central Bank (2024) classifies banks like ING, ABN AMRO, and Rabobank as "significant institutions," subjecting them to stricter compliance requirements under the Single Supervisory Mechanism.
- **Cybersecurity Readiness:** Larger institutions are more likely to have dedicated cybersecurity infrastructure and strategies. ABN AMRO's 2023 Integrated Annual Report highlights substantial investments in cybersecurity as part of its digital resilience roadmap (ABN AMRO, 2023).
- **System Complexity:** Traditional banks are often burdened with legacy IT infrastructure, which limits their ability to adopt and scale AI solutions. In contrast, digital native banks such as bunq operate on agile, cloud based systems that support faster technological integration (AWS, 2023).

These criteria help illustrate meaningful differences between segments and enable Agility Startup to tailor its positioning strategy based on the distinct needs and constraints of each group.

Table 3. Comparative Segmentation of Dutch Financial Institutions

Criteria	Large Bank (e.g., ING, Rabobank, ABN AMRO)	MidSized/ Digital (e.g., bunq, Knab)	Small/regional (e.g., Volksbank, TriodosBank)
Size	Very large, top 3 own ~75% of total banking assets (Statista, 2023)	Medium sized, digital native players	Small in asset size, more localized
AI Maturity	Medium to high – adopting use cases in marketing, compliance, fraud (Rabobank, 2024)	High – born digital, uses AI in customer service & operations (bunq, 2023)	Low to medium – slower adoption, often due to budget and legacy systems
Regulatory Pressure	Very high – constantly monitored by DNB, ECB (DNB Supervision, 2024)	Moderate – must comply but more flexibility due to agility and lower impact	High – same regulations as large banks, but limited internal compliance resources
Cybersecurity Readiness	High – with dedicated teams and strong infrastructure (ABN AMRO Annual Report, 2023)	Medium – relies on third party cloud providers with strong security	Medium – developing frameworks, often use standard vendor tools
System Complexity	High – legacy systems, high integration cost	Low – cloud based modern systems	Medium – mix of old and new, gradual modernization

Large banks such as ING, Rabobank, and ABN AMRO are characterized by their high asset volume and stronger regulatory oversight. According to TheBanks.eu (2024), these three banks alone account for approximately 74.7% of the total banking assets in the Netherlands. These institutions typically possess more mature cybersecurity frameworks and have adopted AI solutions in risk assessment, compliance, and customer service. However, their reliance on complex legacy systems remains a challenge, which opens the door for external consulting support to ensure regulatory alignment and effective system integration.

Midsized banks like De Volksbank and Triodos Bank operate under moderate regulatory pressure and often have limited internal AI expertise. The European Central Bank (ECB) has highlighted that the digital transformation in the banking sector has accelerated, especially due to the COVID 19 pandemic, leading to increased adoption of digital channels and technologies. However, the ECB also notes that these technological developments bring new risks, and banks need sustainable business models to be ready for this transformation . This context suggests that

mid sized banks, while progressing in digital adoption, may still rely on hybrid IT systems a combination of traditional and modern infrastructures making them suitable candidates for practical, hands on consulting partnerships (ECB, 2022).

In contrast, digital native banks such as bunq and Knab demonstrate high levels of technological maturity. For example, bunq has positioned itself as Europe’s first AI powered bank by introducing its own generative AI banking assistant, showcasing its commitment to innovation in the sector . While their market share remains modest, their agile infrastructure and proactive regulatory engagement make them early adopters of advanced AI applications.

This comparative analysis provides the foundation to identify which segments hold the most strategic potential for Agility Startup. Particularly, mid sized and large banks with high regulatory burdens but moderate AI maturity emerge as a priority target. These institutions must comply with a growing body of regulation such as the AI Act, GDPR, and DORA but often lack the internal capabilities to execute AI adoption smoothly (European Commission, 2024).

By understanding these differences, Agility Startup can better tailor its value proposition to meet the diverse needs of Dutch financial institutions. This segmentation analysis directly informs the STP strategy discussed in the following section.

Table 4. STP Table

STP Element	Details	Real Example (Banks)
Segmentation	Dutch banks segmented based on size, AI maturity, regulatory pressure, cybersecurity readiness, and system complexity.	• Large & regulated: ABN AMRO, Rabobank • Digital innovators: bunq, Knab • Smaller/regional banks: Volksbank, Triodos Bank
Targeting	Agility focuses on: • Midsized and large banks under strong regulatory pressure • Institutions without in house AI expertise • Banks that need explainable, safe, and regulation friendly AI	• Rabobank (Netherlands): Known for its ethical and responsible AI approach (DNB & AFM, 2024)
Positioning	Agility positions itself as a compliance first AI consulting partner. They focus on helping financial institutions meet EU regulations like GDPR and the AI Act. Their approach is personalized, transparent, and adaptable, unlike larger generalist firms.	Positioned against generalist firms like Accenture by focusing on deep regulatory knowledge and flexibility for middle market clients

These segments were selected based on their strategic alignment with Agility’s Startup core strengths and the opportunity within the Dutch financial sector. According to Statista (2023),

the Netherlands had approximately 84 domestic banks, while De Nederlandsche Bank (DNB) reports 55 foreign banks under supervision as of 2024 (DNB, 2024). Many of these institutions especially those in the small to mid-sized category operate under strict regulatory oversight from DNB and the AFM, yet often lack the in-house capacity to implement complex and compliant AI systems. This creates a clear need for external consulting partners that can offer explainable, secure, and compliance-focused AI solutions.

Agility Startup targets this segment because its service offerings focused on regulatory interpretation, automation, and risk-aware AI closely match the priorities of Dutch financial institutions. These banks are expected to comply with a growing body of regulation including the GDPR, EU AI Act, and DORA, yet many still require practical, high-touch support to align technology with these frameworks.

For example, Rabobank emphasizes its commitment to ethical and responsible AI, while digital native players like bunq and Knab are leveraging AI to optimize customer interaction and back-end efficiency. By tailoring its services to the specific needs of this segment, Agility Startup can differentiate itself from larger generalist firms and position itself as a trusted, regulation-savvy partner in the Dutch market.

Chapter 7 – Internal Analysis

This chapter presents an internal analysis of Agility Startup based on a selective application of McKinsey's 7S Framework, which explores the alignment between internal elements such as strategy, structure, systems, skills, and shared values. The framework was chosen to assess Agility's Startup internal readiness to deliver AI consulting services in the European financial sector and to identify both strengths and areas for improvement.

However, due to Agility's Startup early stage nature and lack of formal documentation, several internal aspects such as staff policies and leadership style remain informal or undefined. Additionally, the findings in this chapter are primarily based on a structured interview with Bruno Fon, Scrum Master and co-founder of Agility Startup, which introduces a limitation in terms of data scope and potential bias.

Given these constraints, the 7S Framework is used flexibly, focusing only on five relevant elements: Strategy, Structure, Systems, Skills, and Shared Values. These categories were chosen because they are most closely linked to Agility's Startup current operations, delivery approach, and future strategic positioning.

To provide a more complete picture of the company, the analysis also includes a description of Agility's Startup current product and service portfolio, Bruno's vision for positioning, and an overview of the team's key skills and expertise. Together, these insights offer a grounded understanding of how Agility Startup functions internally and supports its clients.

7.1 Organizational Strengths and Weaknesses (Structure, Skills, and Shared Value)

Agility Startup is a lean AI consulting firm aiming to accelerate digital transformation across Europe by integrating Agile frameworks and AI driven solutions. The organization defines long term success through measurable client outcomes, retention, innovation impact, and its ability to scale ethical AI practices across sectors such as finance, healthcare, and education. Its flat organizational structure supports quick decision making, while leadership plays an active role in coaching teams, aligning resources, and maintaining outcome driven cultures.

The team operates using tools like Jira, Trello, Slack, and Google Workspace, enabling real time collaboration and sprint based task execution. Agility's Startup core strengths lie in its interdisciplinary expertise across Agile coaching, AI development, and sector specific insights. Furthermore, the team maintains a strong learning culture, hosting monthly internal learning sprints and collaborating with research institutions to stay ahead of AI trends.

However, despite its strengths, Agility Startup continues to identify areas for development, particularly in emerging fields like prompt engineering, ethical AI, regulatory compliance, and data storytelling. The company's commitment to upskilling in these areas reflects a proactive approach to addressing evolving industry needs (Bruno Fon, Personal Communication, 2025)

This aligns with broader industry research, which highlights these skill areas as critical for AI driven firms. For instance, McKinsey (2024) indicates that organizations are increasingly hiring AI compliance and ethics specialists to navigate the complex regulatory landscape of AI technologies. Similarly, Deloitte (2019) emphasizes the evolving nature of job roles and the necessity for skills in ethical AI practices. Furthermore, resources like TealHQ (2025) and Business Insider (2024) outline the importance of prompt engineering and data storytelling as essential competencies for AI consultants.

7.2 Product and Service Portfolio Improvements (Strategy, Systems, and Skills)

Agility's Startup consulting portfolio is centered around three core programs: the Agile Transformation Program, the AI Adoption Framework, and the Growth Accelerator for Financial Services all of which are actively in use with clients and continuously evolving (Bruno Fon, personal communication, 2025). Each offering integrates elements of consulting, coaching, and technical implementation to address both strategic and operational challenges faced by clients, particularly in highly regulated industries such as finance.

The Agile Transformation Program supports organizations in adopting agile ways of working across various departments, focusing not only on technology but also on culture, leadership mindset, and structural change. It emphasizes agility as a cross functional transformation model, making it applicable beyond product or IT teams.

The AI Adoption Framework guides companies in implementing AI technologies through a structured process. This includes AI readiness assessments, use case identification, compliance and ethical alignment, and phased rollouts. The framework is particularly valuable for organizations looking to build long term AI capabilities without compromising on regulatory or ethical standards.

The Growth Accelerator for Financial Services is a sector specific program tailored for banks and financial institutions. It combines both agile transformation and AI adoption elements to enhance innovation, streamline compliance processes, and improve customer experiences. This

offering includes industry specific tools, templates, and use cases that make it highly practical and implementation ready.

Beyond the program structures, clients value practical resources such as onboarding playbooks, templates, and custom implementation guides. Agility Startup also demonstrates adaptability through mechanisms like rolling product backlogs, agile feedback loops, and periodic roadmap reviews. To maintain a competitive edge, the firm integrates emerging technologies like ChatGPT, robotic process automation (RPA), low code prototyping tools, and predictive analytics into its solutions.

Market demand for these services is growing, especially in areas like fraud detection, AI based process automation, and risk assessment. For instance, Agility Startup recently helped a midsized bank implement an AI powered loan approval system integrated with CRM tools, which led to a 60% reduction in processing time showcasing both the technical and strategic impact of its services (Bruno Fon, personal communication, 2025).

7.3 Strategic Implementation Framework (Strategy, Structure, and Systems)

Effective implementation plays a crucial role in the success of AI consulting services. Industry research suggests that successful AI deployment frameworks rely on clearly structured phases, the use of collaborative tools, measurable performance indicators, and frequent client feedback (Neurond, 2023). Consulting firms that adopt such structured implementation strategies are more likely to achieve consistent project outcomes, client satisfaction, and scalable adoption.

At Agility Startup, implementation follows a phased methodology that begins with a discovery sprint, followed by solution design, incremental rollout, and continuous support. Projects are managed using sprint reviews, monthly checkpoints, and measurable OKRs. The implementation team typically includes an Agile Coach, AI Strategy Lead, Data Analyst, and Client Success Manager, with additional technical experts added as needed. The company uses tools such as Jira, Power BI, and Miro to facilitate real time tracking and collaboration. Open dashboards and shared project boards help maintain alignment between internal and client teams.

Success is assessed not only through ROI and system adoption, but also via qualitative indicators such as time to value, team velocity, and client satisfaction. Identified skill or resource gaps are addressed early through readiness assessments, upskilling, or external partnerships. Agility Startup also ensures client onboarding through tailored training, follow up support, and

quarterly strategy evaluations to align project outcomes with evolving client goals (Bruno Fon, personal communication, 2025).

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

The report examined how Agility Startup can improve its positioning in the Dutch AI consulting market for the financial sector, specifically by supporting banks in adopting AI driven solutions that comply with regulatory frameworks, address cybersecurity risks, and overcome operational constraints. The internal analysis revealed that Agility's Startup main strengths lie in its flexible service design, domain focus on AI in finance, and value driven implementation methodology. However, the company also faces weaknesses such as limited brand recognition, lack of specialized compliance modules, and resource constraints for large scale delivery.

Externally, the analysis identified significant opportunities in the rising demand for ethical and explainable AI in finance, regulatory pressure that drives digital transformation, and gaps in micro consulting offerings targeting smaller banks. On the other hand, threats include growing competition from established consulting firms, the emergence of AI as a Service solutions, and increasing reliance on dominant cloud providers.

Based on this SWOT, two key issues emerge: first, Agility Startup must enhance its credibility and specialization to compete in a compliance driven landscape, second, the firm must differentiate its offerings to remain relevant in a market shifting toward internal AI development and standardized solutions. Addressing these challenges will require targeted service innovation, trust based communication strategies, and agile resourcing positioning Agility Startup as a strategic partner rather than a generalist provider.

Chapter 9 – Recommendation

This chapter presents strategic recommendations designed to help Agility Startup strengthen its position in the Dutch AI consulting market. These suggestions are based on the insights gathered from the internal and external analyses presented in previous chapters, including findings from interviews, market research, and benchmarking.

Readers can expect three key focus areas in this chapter. First, a proposed positioning strategy that reflects Agility's Startup core strengths while addressing competitive gaps. Second, product and service improvements that align with evolving client needs and market trends. And finally, an implementation strategy that outlines how these ideas can be translated into concrete actions, considering Agility's Startup current resources and structure.

Together, these recommendations aim to provide Agility Startup with a realistic and forward looking roadmap to enhance its credibility, relevance, and impact in the financial sector.

9.1 Strategic Positioning

Drawing from the internal and external analyses presented in earlier chapters, this section outlines a proposed strategic positioning for Agility Startup within the Dutch AI consulting market. The objective is to identify a focused target group and formulate a positioning strategy that aligns with both market opportunities and Agility's Startup core competencies.

Considering market trends, Agility Startup is advised to concentrate on medium-sized financial institutions, including regional banks, cooperative credit providers, and digital first fintech firms. This segment is particularly attractive due to its increasing demand for AI driven solutions, combined with limited internal resources for implementing such technologies effectively. Moreover, these institutions face mounting pressure to modernize operations while maintaining strict regulatory compliance, which aligns well with Agility's Startup current service capabilities.

To address the needs of this segment, the following positioning statement is proposed: "Agility Startup enables midsized financial institutions to adopt AI responsibly and efficiently through lean consulting, agile transformation, and regulatory aligned implementation."

This positioning approach is substantiated by the following findings:

- PESTLE analysis indicates a strong regulatory push for responsible AI adoption in the Dutch financial sector, especially under the AI Act, GDPR, PSD2, and DORA.

- Customer insights gathered during interviews suggest that institutions are open to AI adoption but remain hesitant due to knowledge gaps and integration complexity.
- Competitive benchmarking reveals that many established consultancies either target large scale enterprises or operate with rigid service models that are less accessible to smaller firms.
- Internal capabilities show that Agility's lean structure, proven consulting frameworks, and emphasis on client enablement through practical resources offer a strong value proposition for this target group.

By focusing on this underserved yet growing market segment, Agility Startup can build a distinctive market position balancing technical expertise, agility in delivery, and a deep understanding of regulatory constraints. This strategic focus not only aligns with the company's mission and scale but also sets the foundation for long term differentiation and sustainable growth in the Dutch financial services industry.

9.2 Improvement of product and service portfolio

To strengthen Agility Startup's market positioning and respond to evolving client needs, several improvements to the current product and service portfolio are recommended. These enhancements aim to increase scalability, relevance, and customer engagement particularly for small to mid-sized financial institutions that face mounting digital and regulatory pressures.

To strengthen its service portfolio and better address client needs, Agility Startup can enhance its existing offerings by introducing three modular solutions. First, integrating an AI Compliance Readiness Module within the current AI Adoption Framework would directly support financial institutions in aligning their AI strategies with evolving regulatory requirements, such as the AI Act, GDPR, and DORA. This module could include tailored risk assessments, a compliance checklist, internal policy templates, and ethical AI implementation guidelines. It would take the form of a toolkit combined with light consulting, consisting of downloadable content such as PDF/digital checklists, editable policy templates (Word or Excel), and slide-based training materials. Delivery would be facilitated through Agility's Startup internal client portal or during hybrid workshop sessions (online or onsite). The module would be developed and delivered by Agility's Startup in-house consultants, leveraging their regulatory expertise. As the content is built using existing internal knowledge and standard office tools such as PowerPoint, Microsoft Word, and Teams, the development cost is minimal to nearly zero, allowing the solution to be reused and

adapted across clients without significant additional investment. By offering this tool, Agility Startup positions itself as a responsible, regulation first partner, particularly attractive to mid-sized banks and fintechs seeking to adopt AI in a safe and explainable way.

Second, the company could develop a Digital Maturity Assessment Tool, designed to help clients benchmark their technological capabilities and readiness for AI integration. The tool would evaluate key areas such as infrastructure, cybersecurity, internal workflows, and talent availability. Based on the assessment results, Agility Startup could offer tailored advice and phased consulting services. This solution could take the form of a lightweight web-based tool or interactive form using platforms such as Google Forms, Typeform, or a custom-built interface. The assessment process would be semi-automated, generating categorized results (e.g., “Basic,” “Intermediate,” “Mature”) along with a preliminary PDF report and general recommendations. A follow-up consultation session would be provided by Agility’s Startup consultants to discuss the results and outline potential next steps. The tool can be designed in-house by Agility’s Startup consulting and tech team, requiring minimal investment and leveraging free or low-cost platforms. As such, it represents a cost-efficient, scalable solution that not only delivers immediate insights to clients, but also serves as a low-barrier entry point into larger consulting engagements.

Finally, Agility Startup could introduce Micro Consulting Services small-scale, fixed-fee advisory packages that address specific challenges such as regulatory alignment, AI roadmap design, or vendor selection. These packages would be particularly attractive to regional banks or early-stage fintechs that lack the budget or internal resources for long-term transformation projects. The service would be delivered purely through human consulting, without the need for dedicated software. Each package could include one or two Zoom sessions (e.g., 2 hours), a concise recommendation document, and one round of follow-up review. Communication and delivery would be handled via email and video call, accompanied by practical working documents tailored to each client’s case. These micro-consulting formats would be executed by Agility’s Startup in-house consultants, making use of their existing expertise and time-limited availability. As the structure is straightforward and relies on standard tools such as Microsoft Teams and Word, the operational cost remains low while maintaining high value. By introducing this flexible, accessible service line, Agility Startup strengthens its ability to serve smaller institutions and reinforces its positioning as a modular and adaptive partner within the Dutch financial consulting landscape.

On the marketing side, Agility's Startup digital presence remains underdeveloped and presents a clear opportunity for strategic improvement. Although the company maintains a LinkedIn account and has occasionally hosted webinars, its overall engagement has been limited. This is likely not due to the content format itself, but rather because Agility Startup is still relatively unknown within its target audience in the financial sector.

To address this visibility gap, Agility Startup could implement a structured, multi channel content strategy that combines educational value with authentic brand storytelling. One key initiative would be the launch of a recurring podcast series delivered either episodically or in short seasonal formats shared via platforms such as Spotify, YouTube, and a future company website. These podcasts could cover industry insights, use cases, and internal experiences, serving as both a knowledge sharing tool and a credibility builder.

The podcast content plan is structured into three stages, each with different levels of production and cost. The first stage is the most affordable, or even free, involving voice only recordings that can be uploaded to platforms like Spotify or Apple Music. In this format, Agility Startup Consulting will speak as a solo host, delivering insights in episodes with a maximum duration of 15 minutes. The second stage introduces video content, allowing for visual engagement through platforms like Instagram or YouTube. While this format enhances reach, it may require a small additional budget for recording tools or production equipment. The final stage involves inviting external parties to join the podcast based on relevant topics. This setup typically demands a higher investment, considering the need for proper coordination, venue setup, and potential collaboration fees unless the guest agrees to participate voluntarily. These high quality episodes can then be distributed on platforms such as YouTube, LinkedIn, or other professional channels with the maximum duration can me more than 30 minutes.

In addition, content from each episode could be repurposed into blog posts for the website and summarized into more visual and digestible formats on LinkedIn. This dual format strategy allows Agility Startup to reach a broader audience those who prefer in depth written content as well as professionals seeking quick, visual updates.

As part of a broader strategy to increase visibility and engagement, Instagram can play a key role in connecting with both customers and non customers in a more personal way. In the Netherlands, many companies use Instagram not only to promote services, but also to build brand trust and stay relevant, especially among younger, digitally active audiences. Here, the people

Agility Startup wants to reach especially young professionals and those who live online are highly active. Instagram, known for its visual storytelling and strong engagement among chronically online users, presents a strategic opportunity to humanize the brand and amplify its visibility.

Agility's Startup Instagram account, which has seen limited activity, could also be reactivated to document company milestones, team culture, and conference participation. As a visual platform, Instagram is well suited to showcase Agility's Startup personality, making the brand more approachable and memorable particularly for younger professionals or future talent.

To maintain consistent output across these platforms, it is recommended that Agility Startup initiate a remote internship program for marketing students. This arrangement, such as a 24 hour per week unpaid position, would provide much needed support for content creation while offering students practical experience. Overall, this digital content strategy can significantly improve Agility's Startup visibility, foster community engagement, and support business development without placing a heavy burden on the core consulting team.

Finally, active participation in industry events will be critical for building visibility and trust. Agility Startup can consider joining the following upcoming conferences:

- Amsterdam Fintech Event 2025, 1 - 3 October

This conference covers current topics in finance, banking and regulation, relevant to AI consulting services in the financial sector. For HFA members, the regular price is €1,400 and the early bird price is €995. Non-members will pay €1,800 for regular registration and €1,395 for early bird registration.

<https://hollandfintechassociation.org/holland-fintech-event-2025/>

- Outvie – Connecting Knowledge and Networking - AI in Banking Conference Amsterdam
7 October 2025

Van der Valk Zuidas, Amsterdam

This summit navigating compliance, leading innovation, or rethinking customer engagement (AI in Banking Professional Banking Early Bird Ticket € 599, AI in Banking Professional Regular Ticket € 799, AI in Banking Other (financial) Institutions / Service Providers € 899)

<https://outvie.nl/conferenties/ai-in>

[banking/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=22548629730&utm_content=180320637340_752122230167&utm_term=ai%20finance%20conference&gad](https://outvie.nl/conferenties/ai-in-banking/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=22548629730&utm_content=180320637340_752122230167&utm_term=ai%20finance%20conference&gad)

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These events present an excellent opportunity for Agility Startup to demonstrate its expertise, build partnerships, and increase brand visibility within the Dutch and European financial sectors. Together, these portfolio enhancements and marketing efforts will not only increase Agility's Startup reach but also solidify its relevance and differentiation in a competitive, fast evolving market.

9.3 Implementation strategy

Implementing the proposed product enhancements and marketing strategies requires a phased and cross functional approach. This section outlines a six month roadmap for Agility Startup, identifying key actions, responsibilities, potential risks, and the broader business impact across departments.

Table 5 Implementation RoadMap

Phase	Timeline	Key Activities	Responsible Roles
Phase 1: Preparation & Prioritization	August 2025	- Internal kick off meeting - Prioritize service improvements (e.g., AI Compliance Module) - Define content themes and website scope	All team members
Phase 2: Content & Platform development	September – October 2025	- Develop Digital Maturity Tool prototype - Write initial blogs/articles - Design website structure	Consultant A (Tech/Platform) Consultant B (Content)
Phase 3: Soft Launched & Marketing setup	November 2025	- Launch new website (beta) - Reactivate Instagram - Produce podcast/video series pilot - Set up marketing KPIs	Consultant B (Content/Marketing) Consultant C (Coordination)
Phase 4: Event participation & Networking	October – December 2025	- Attend Amsterdam FinTech Event (Oct) - Participate in Digital Banking Summit (Nov) - Join FinTech Connect online (Dec)	Consultant C
Phase 5: Evaluation & Scalling	January – February 2025	- Assess feedback from early website visitors and event contacts - Adjust service packages (e.g., micro-consulting) - Plan Phase 2 podcast/content expansion	All team members

Table 6. Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Strategy
Low conference turnout or engagement	Medium	Medium	Focus on smaller, targeted events and pre event networking
Budget overrun for website and content production	Medium	High	Use phased rollouts and prioritize high impact channels (LinkedIn, website)
Limited internal capacity to deliver on new modules	High	High	Outsource non core tasks or use micro consulting to test in small scale
Inconsistent marketing execution due to time constraints	High	Medium	Develop a content calendar and assign dedicated owners per channel

Impact Analysis Across Departments

a. Marketing & Sales

Increased digital visibility through podcasts, Instagram, LinkedIn, and SEO optimized website content. To support this initiative, Agility Startup could launch an unpaid remote internship program for a marketing student (24 hours per week). This would help maintain a consistent and engaging content pipeline without adding financial pressure to the team.

The podcast series could be distributed through Spotify, YouTube, and once developed Agility's Startup official website, offering accessible and scalable ways to share expert insights and company updates. In parallel, blog articles and thought leadership pieces can be published both on LinkedIn (with more visual storytelling) and on the company website (with in depth, text rich content), ensuring outreach to different types of audiences.

Instagram can serve as a creative visual portfolio, showcasing Agility's Startup day to day activities, such as conference attendance, internal initiatives, or moments of engagement with partners and potential clients. This multi-channel strategy not only strengthens Agility's Startup brand identity but also creates stronger connections with its target audience through a mix of education, credibility, and authenticity.

b. Finance

The proposed marketing strategy requires minimal financial investment. Instead of hiring a full time employee whose salary in the Netherlands can reach approximately €3,000 per month for a junior marketing position (Glassdoor, 2024) or relying on freelancers who typically charge between €50 and €90 per hour (HighTekers, 2025), Agility Startup can reduce costs by offering a value driven internship opportunity. This approach not only supports consistent content development but also creates learning opportunities for students.

Additional budget may be required for podcast equipment, basic content creation tools, or participation in relevant industry events. These expenses are estimated to range between €700 and €2,500 per quarter, depending on the format and scale of execution. General, subscription plans start at around €11 per month for basic features, while more advanced plans range between €280 and €1860 per year, depending on the level of functionality required (NoCode.Tech, 2023).

c. Supply Chain (Service Delivery)

Agility's Startup consulting delivery model remains flexible, with no change in physical distribution or logistics. However, increased online visibility may lead to a higher volume of client inquiries. To accommodate this, the implementation plan includes internal resource mapping and prioritization of consulting capacity based on project size and readiness level.

d. Human Resources (HR)

The internship program will require light supervision, onboarding, and regular feedback cycles. A team member preferably with communications or project management skills should oversee intern activities. This also provides an opportunity to test talent fit for potential future hiring.

Accountability Report

1. What did you want to realise/achieve with doing this FIA? Why did you choose this topic? What were your expectations?

Through this research, I want to understand how a consulting firm like Agility Startup can support financial institutions particularly banks in adopting AI solutions while managing regulatory risks and operational challenges. I chose this topic not only because it was interesting, but also because it broadened my perspective. Before starting this project, I knew very little about the relationship between AI and regulation. My expectation was to help Agility Startup explore the AI adoption landscape in the banking sector and to offer strategic recommendations that could assist the company step by step in competing with more established consulting firms.

2. How did you work and act during the process of working on the FIA? What choices and considerations did you make? What were the consequences of your choices?

Throughout the process, I worked steadily step by step starting from the smallest scope and gradually expanding. My initial priority was secondary research because it was the most feasible task to begin with. In the meantime, I slowly started arranging primary research. I knew from the beginning that securing expert interviews would take time and could not be completed within a week. As a result, the process took longer, but I made the conscious choice to interview at least four experts to avoid biased results. I also hoped the raw insights from the interviews could benefit Agility Startup directly. The consequence of this approach was a longer timeline, but I believe the quality of insight made it worthwhile.

3. What did you do well and what could you have done better? What are possible explanations for the highs and lows in the process?

I believe I did well in collecting and synthesizing secondary data, and I also made consistent efforts to connect with potential interviewees. I didn't work alone I reached out to lecturers and even asked help from a friend's aunt living in the Netherlands to find relevant experts. What I could have done better was time management. If I had finalized the Plan of Approach earlier, I could have started the research phase sooner, which would have allowed more time to collect and process data. The high point of this process was receiving valuable insights from interviewees and the support I got from people around me. The low point came when

I had to change my research scope from a European perspective to focusing solely on the Netherlands, which required reworking part of my research design.

4. Have you realised/achieved what you had wanted to?

Yes, I believe I achieved everything I originally planned. I'm confident that the recommendations I provided to Agility Startup are realistic and well suited for a small startup like theirs.

5. Are you satisfied with the results achieved?

Overall, yes I am very satisfied. I believe Agility Startup can implement the strategies I've proposed. This research gave me a chance to make a meaningful contribution while sharpening my own understanding of AI consulting in the financial sector.

6. Taking the Conscious Business perspective into consideration: what is your conclusion about how well this perspective is visible in the result?

Yes, I believe the conscious business perspective is still reflected in the result, although not explored in great depth. Ethical concerns such as data privacy, fairness, and transparency were acknowledged, but the broader environmental or societal impact of AI adoption was only briefly mentioned. This is mainly because Agility's Startup current focus lies in helping clients navigate compliance and adoption challenges, rather than addressing the wider implications of AI. Still, by recommending explainable and regulation aligned AI solutions, the thesis promotes values like responsibility, trust, and ethical business conduct. These values align with the principles of conscious business, even if they were not the main focus of this research.

7. What conclusions do you draw from the answers to your previous questions? What are you going to do the same next time and what are you going to do differently next time? (Explain why and how).

Next time, I will continue to prioritize a structured research approach starting with secondary research and then moving on to primary data collection. This sequence helped me work more efficiently and gave me a clear foundation before engaging with external interviewees, even though securing interviews was time consuming. However, one area I definitely want to improve is my planning and time management. I realized that the most challenging part of the process was how long I spent finalizing the Plan of Approach (POA). In hindsight, I should have been more aware of prioritization and allocated time more wisely

to start my research earlier. Better planning would have given me more space to analyse the data thoroughly and reduce unnecessary stress along the way.

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Appendix A - Interview Transcript Miss Renee, Insurance and Loans

Conducted via WhatsApp Call

8. Could you share a bit about your role and how it connects to advising customers in the financial sector, especially in loans and insurance?

Yes. I work for consumer clients, which means I coach and train colleagues who help everyday clients not business ones. I coach them on how to improve their sales techniques, give proper advice, and work better in teams. I act both as a skill coach and team coach.

9. So it's kind of like an internal consultant role?

Not really. It's more coaching. My focus is on helping individuals and teams perform better, not giving strategic advice.

10. Have you noticed any shift in how financial institutions interact with customers using digital or AI tools?

Not too much yet. We use some chatbots that can predict how questions will go. Recently, we've started testing AI to coach colleagues based on their phone conversations with clients. That's still in early stages.

11. Do you think AI is a good fit for supporting customer needs in areas like loans or insurance?

Yes, I think it is. I'm not very familiar with it yet because I'm kind of a late adopter myself, but I can see its convenience and usefulness.

12. During your coaching sessions, do you personally use AI tools?

Not directly, but we are piloting tools where AI evaluates whether advisors hit all the necessary topics in a conversation. It's not about soft skills yet, but more about structure.

13. How do everyday customers usually respond to AI-based tools like chatbots or automation?

We use chatbots and tools that help colleagues structure conversations. AI also helps predict customer behaviour so we can guide them to specific pages online. These tools are becoming more common.

14. Do you think people are more hesitant or excited about AI in customer service?

Personally, I still prefer human interaction. I think many customers do too at least for now. But like with internet banking, people may change once they see the benefits. I'm cautiously excited and curious.

15. Do most customers still prefer speaking to a person over digital tools?

Yes, for now. But that could change. If AI tools provide real benefits, people might prefer them eventually.

16. What kind of challenges do financial institutions face when introducing AI or digital tools?

Security is the biggest concern. Financial data is sensitive, and if systems aren't 100% secure, customers lose trust. That's why it has to be perfect before rollout. Hackers are getting smarter too.

17. Do you know if your organization works with external tech providers or consultants for AI adoption?

Probably yes, but not in my direct role. I know we have consultants, but I don't work with them personally.

18. Do financial institutions prefer big consulting firms or more specialized ones?

That's a good question. I think specialized consultants are often preferred because they offer unique knowledge. I know we work with consultants from abroad, like India, for that reason.

19. Are you familiar with tools like Google Cloud, AWS, or Microsoft Azure?

Personally, no. I've heard of them, but I don't use them. Some of my colleagues might, but I'm not that familiar.

20. From your coaching experience, what kind of support do advisors need when working with AI or digital systems?

They need to understand the tools fully before using them with customers. Experience is important. Some colleagues adopt fast, but customers don't always keep up. We often deal with older clients too, so patience is key.

21. Are you familiar with AI-related regulations like GDPR?

Not in depth, but we do get internal training on AI and what's allowed or not. For example, we're told not to use tools like Google Translate for giving advice. Regulations are useful to ensure people don't misuse AI without understanding the risks.

Appendix B - Interview Transcript – Mr. Marcell Slootweg, Former Employee of Bank

Conducted via In - Person Interview

1. How did your institution start using AI? Was it a gradual process or strategic decision?

When I worked in banking, there was no use of AI because I left the industry in 2019. Even though AI models existed, banks were still reluctant to use them, especially in risk models, due to experiences during the 2007–2008 financial crisis. Banks relied too heavily on internal models, which contributed to the meltdown. That's why central banks remain cautious with AI, especially in risk modelling.

2. Why are banks reluctant to use AI in risk models?

AI is often a “black box” and controlled by big tech companies like Microsoft, Facebook, Amazon. Banks are concerned about data ownership and transparency. They prefer full control over risk models, which is hard to achieve with third-party AI.

3. You mentioned AI is used more internally. What kind of use is this?

Yes, AI is typically used for internal tasks like marketing or handling correspondence not for risk modelling. Banks are more comfortable using AI in non-critical areas.

4. Are tools like AWS and Azure part of this internal use?

Yes, these are used mainly for internal purposes like marketing, not risk modelling.

5. How about AI-powered chatbots?

Chatbots are used for customer service, like at Rabobank or insurance companies. But from personal experience, they don't work well. They often fail, requiring human follow-up. These are considered external-facing tools but are not yet reliable.

6. Are cost savings a reason banks use AI?

Definitely. Banks use AI to lower costs by reducing reliance on human staff. However, current AI tools like chatbots still make too many mistakes.

7. Have you been directly involved in applying regulations during your time in finance?

Yes. I dealt with Customer Due Diligence (CDD), classifying clients by risk level (high, medium, low). High-risk clients were handled by a central desk.

8. Did your company apply all regulations?

Yes, it had to. Banks in the Netherlands and EU must follow all rules to maintain their central bank license. If they don't, their license is revoked.

9. Did your bank work with external parties to help with regulations?

Yes. Banks commonly hire external auditors and law firms. That's standard practice.

10. Do you think all regulations need to be applied, even with the many in Europe?

Yes. Regulations like GDPR protect customers. We need them especially after the financial crisis and with the influence of big tech.

11. Were there any regulations that were particularly hard or easy to apply?

Privacy rules can be challenging at first but manageable once you're used to them.

12. Do regulations support responsible innovation or act as barriers?

I think regulations are good. Sometimes innovation goes too fast without considering customer risks. Regulations help keep that in check.

13. Now that you're no longer in finance, how do you view AI in the sector today?

There's a clear difference between banks and fintech. FinTech move fast but struggle with regulation. Banks are better equipped, though more conservative. Not all innovations are necessarily good for the public.

14. Are GDPR and similar laws applied to insurance and loan companies too?

Yes, GDPR applies across all financial sectors banking, insurance, loans.

15. Did your previous employer work with AI consulting firms?

Yes. Large firms like McKinsey or Boston Consulting Group were hired for major projects. For example, in 2013, we worked with Thomson Reuters and others to implement a new front-office system. Using external consultants is normal for large-scale IT or compliance projects.

Appendix C – Mr. Bruno Fon, Scrum Master at Agility Startup

Conducted via written questioner an

1. What are Agility's Startup main goals in the European AI consulting market?

Agility Startup aims to help European organizations accelerate digital transformation through the integration of Agile frameworks and practical AI solutions. Our primary goals include enabling adaptive business models, fostering innovation in industries like finance and health, and becoming a trusted partner for AI-driven operational and strategic improvement.

2. How does the company define success in the long run?

Success is defined by the long-term impact we create in our clients' ability to innovate, adapt, and deliver continuous value. We measure this through client retention, measurable performance outcomes, industry recognition, and our capacity to scale ethical and sustainable AI solutions across sectors.

3. Are the current projects and activities in line with Agility's Startup long-term vision?

Yes. Our current programs—like Agile transformation consulting, AI readiness assessments, and hybrid innovation frameworks—are aligned with our vision to make agility and innovation core competencies in every organization we serve.

4. How is the company's structure designed to help with decision-making and growth?

Agility Startup is structured as a lean consultancy with cross-functional teams. Strategic decisions are made collaboratively between leadership and project teams to ensure alignment with client needs and market shifts. This flat structure encourages agility, innovation, and quick decision-making.

5. What role does the leadership team play in helping teams work efficiently?

Our leadership fosters a culture of empowerment, clarity, and learning. They set direction, ensure resource alignment, and coach teams to be self-organizing and outcome-driven. They actively participate in retrospectives and strategic planning.

6. What tools or systems does Agility Startup use every day to run its operations?

We use a suite of collaborative tools: Project Management: Jira and Trello; Communication: Slack and Zoom; Documentation & Storage: Google Workspace; CRM & Marketing: HubSpot.

7. How do these systems support teamwork and project management?

They enable real-time collaboration, transparent task management, structured sprint cycles, and asynchronous documentation—critical for hybrid work and international collaboration.

8. What are some unique skills or strengths that Agility's Startup team has?

Our team brings a rare combination of Agile coaching, AI development, business model innovation, and sector-specific expertise—particularly in finance, health, and education.

9. Are there areas where the team could use more training or development?

We continuously invest in upskilling, especially in areas like prompt engineering, ethical AI practices, regulatory compliance, and data storytelling to stay ahead of market trends.

10. How does the company make sure employees stay up-to-date with AI trends?

We host monthly internal learning sprints, participate in industry conferences, and maintain partnerships with AI research institutes and certification bodies.

11. What values guide how Agility works and makes decisions?

Our core values are adaptability, integrity, human-centered innovation, and continuous learning. These values guide our client engagements, hiring, product development, and growth strategies.

12. Which of Agility's products or services are most popular with clients?

Our top services include the Agile Transformation Program, AI Adoption Framework, and the Growth Accelerator for Financial Services. These integrate coaching, consulting, and AI implementation in a practical, business-aligned way.

13. How does Agility respond when client needs change over time?

We use a rolling backlog approach, updating client roadmaps every 2–4 weeks based on feedback and emerging priorities. This ensures responsiveness and co-creation.

14. Are there features or services that clients are especially happy with?

Yes—clients consistently value our AI Readiness Assessment, custom AI onboarding, and our practical use of interactive playbooks and templates that guide implementation with clarity.

15. How does Agility use new technology to improve or create services?

We incorporate tools like ChatGPT, RPA platforms, and predictive analytics engines into our services. We also develop internal low-code tools to rapidly prototype AI-based solutions for clients.

16. What's the process for collecting and using client feedback?

We collect feedback at every iteration using forms, retrospectives, and NPS surveys. Data is synthesized monthly to inform service design, training focus, and content development.

17. In which industries like finance does Agility see more interest in AI solutions?

The most interest comes from finance, healthcare, logistics, and education—especially in areas like fraud detection, predictive analytics, patient care automation, and personalized learning.

18. Can you give examples of how Agility's AI solutions have helped finance or other industries?

In finance, we helped a mid-sized bank automate loan approvals using an AI model integrated with their CRM, reducing processing time by 60%. In healthcare, we supported a client in implementing AI-powered scheduling and diagnostics prioritization.

19. How does Agility guide or support clients when they start using AI solutions?

We provide onboarding workshops, stakeholder alignment sessions, use-case modeling, and follow-up coaching to ensure adoption and clarity. All solutions come with playbooks and user training.

20. What does Agility do to make sure its services stay relevant and competitive?

We invest in R&D, maintain strong feedback loops, monitor EU AI regulatory trends, and update our offerings quarterly based on strategic foresight and market insights.

21. What steps has Agility taken to deliver its AI solutions to clients?

Each engagement begins with a discovery sprint, followed by solution design, phased rollout, capability training, and ongoing support. We focus on quick wins while enabling long-term adoption.

22. Does the company have certain goals or milestones to track progress?

Yes—each project has measurable OKRs (Objectives & Key Results), sprint reviews, and monthly progress checkpoints. We also set strategic learning milestones.

23. Which teams or roles are involved when implementing a solution for a client?

Typical teams include an Agile Coach, AI Strategy Lead, Data Analyst, and Client Success Manager—supported by designers or developers as needed.

24. What tools are used to monitor progress and performance?

We use tools like Jira for task tracking, Power BI or Tableau for dashboards, and Miro for visualizing workflows and sprint retrospectives.

25. How does Agility keep everyone inside the company and the client on the same page during projects?
- We use shared project boards, weekly stand-ups, monthly steering meetings, and digital dashboards accessible to all stakeholders.
26. How does the company make sure that each implementation is successful?
- We define clear success criteria, ensure stakeholder buy-in, offer phased rollouts, and track KPIs like adoption rate, ROI, and system performance.
27. How does Agility identify and deal with any skill or resource gaps during a project?
- Through readiness assessments, skill audits, and feedback loops, we identify gaps early. We fill them via upskilling, hiring specialists, or bringing in partners.
28. Does the company offer training or onboarding to help clients use the solutions effectively?
- Yes—every implementation includes user onboarding, role-specific training, and post-launch support. Clients also get access to digital learning materials.
29. How often is the implementation strategy reviewed or updated?
- Strategies are reviewed at each sprint review (bi-weekly or monthly), with a formal quarterly strategic review to assess scalability and evolving needs.
30. What key metrics or results does Agility use to measure success?
- We track metrics such as business value delivered, team velocity, solution adoption rate, client satisfaction (NPS), and time-to-value.

Appendix D – Mrs. Christel Pieters, Product owner at the department of Robotics Rabobank

Conducted via Teams Interview

I work for Rabobank. I've been working at Rabobank since 2016. It was my first job after graduation, and I started as a pension advisor at Rabobank Group Central. In that role, I worked with a lot of customer data moving it from one system to another, creating reports. It was very manual, like transferring data from Excel to our CRM system.

That's when I came into contact with the Robotics department, which creates software to reduce repetitive tasks. I ended up building three robots myself to handle those processes and eventually moved into IT. At that time, AI wasn't in the picture yet it was mostly just process automation. I became a robotics engineer working on automating tasks for HR and commercial banking, which handles corporate clients. Now, I'm a product owner within the Robotics department, leading a team of engineers who automate processes across the bank.

You asked me about how AI is currently being used at Rabobank. We're definitely seeing more and more AI initiatives. There's a dedicated group that oversees AI deployment, and we categorize it into types like generative AI, which uses language models, and others that help with backend automation. However, tools like ChatGPT aren't allowed due to privacy risks. We use Microsoft Copilot instead, but only a secured, internal version.

When you asked which regulations Rabobank follows, I mentioned that we strictly adhere to DORA, GDPR, and the EU AI Act. The bank is not allowed to use AI for biometric categorization or for inferring sensitive personal attributes like emotional state or social scoring. We also avoid using AI to analyze personal data such as economic status, health, or behaviour. For example, while automating resume screening in HR could save time and money since we hire around 100 people each week it's prohibited by both the AI Act and our internal ethics committee.

You were curious about whether we could still analyze transaction data, and I explained that GDPR forbids us from using private customer data for commercial purposes. Even if AI could help us offer clients better deals based on their behaviour, we're not allowed to do that. However, AI is permitted when used for crime prevention. The Dutch government requires all financial institutions to monitor for financial economic crimes, like money laundering. In those cases, AI can be used to detect unusual activity but not for sales or marketing.

When you asked whether these regulations help or hinder innovation, I admitted that sometimes it feels like a missed opportunity. AI could make many processes more efficient. But in cases like resume screening, the potential for algorithmic bias makes it too risky. The AI could, for instance, favor or discriminate based on names or background, even unintentionally, and that's not acceptable.

You also asked how Rabobank keeps up with regulatory changes and whether we work with external consultants. The answer is yes we work with many consultant groups. McKinsey is a major one at the strategic level, but we also work with Accenture, Capgemini, and others. That said, everything related to AI is still in the pilot stage. Nothing goes live unless it's fully tested and proven compliant.

When you asked what kind of barriers we face in adopting AI whether legal, financial, or technical I said the biggest ones are legal and ethical. For instance, all open AI tools like ChatGPT are completely blocked. Even Microsoft Copilot can't be used in its open version. We use a secure version hosted privately by Microsoft, exclusively for Rabobank.

You then asked if every Dutch bank uses a similar approach. I told you that yes, it's safe to assume every bank has its own enclosed AI environment. Ours happens to be with Microsoft. Copilot is integrated across platforms like Teams and Outlook, and almost every Rabobank employee uses it to some extent. But again, the AI has limitations it can't be used on sensitive data, and we receive specific training on writing prompts responsibly.

You also asked which tools are allowed or banned. I mentioned that we're prohibited from using tools like Grammarly or Adobe Sensei. Our developers are allowed to use GitHub Copilot to help with writing cleaner code, especially in low-code environments. I explained that low-code still involves some basic coding, and these AI tools help make the process faster and more accurate.

Your next question was about trends in AI for the financial sector. One major trend is document recognition like using AI to read employer statements when processing mortgage applications. That could reduce processing time significantly. However, this kind of technology costs money. Every time it's used, there's a fee. So unless the time and money saved outweigh the cost, it's not always a logical investment.

You were surprised that AI isn't always the cheaper option, and I explained that while we do have a general license for Microsoft Copilot, more advanced AI features have additional costs.

For example, reading a mortgage document with AI might reduce turnaround time from two weeks to one and a half, but that use case must be carefully evaluated.

You also asked if Rabobank develops its own AI tools to replace external ones. I told you that no, we aren't a software company. We license tools from tech providers like Microsoft, but we ensure that those tools operate within our secure environment.

When we talked about transaction monitoring, I explained that millions of transactions happen daily at Rabobank. It's impossible to check all of them manually. So we use automation software to flag risky transactions those involving keywords like "bomb," "gun," or countries under sanctions like Russia. These flagged items are then checked by a human team. This system isn't full AI yet, but automation helps make the process manageable.

You also asked whether we consider the environmental impact of using AI. I told you that yes, we do. There's a sustainability team in IT that monitors the carbon footprint of digital tools. Even sending a single email produces CO₂. AI requires a lot more energy, so we train employees to write efficient prompts to reduce waste. If one good prompt gets the right answer immediately, it's better than writing five vague ones.

On the topic of consultants, you asked whether Rabobank ever chooses not to work with them. Yes, sometimes we try to solve things internally. But usually, we rely on preferred partners firms that have already been vetted and approved. This helps with speed and ensures compliance. Even if I wanted to hire a freelance expert, they would have to go through background checks and official approval before working with us.

You were curious about how Rabobank selects consultants. I explained that we have vendor management teams that assign preferred partners to specific areas. For example, McKinsey might be used for high level strategy, while a local IT firm might provide technical support. This system helps control cost and ensures consistency. Freelancers or smaller firms can be hired, but only after thorough screening.

When you asked about the common gaps consultants often have, I told you that many don't understand how different a bank is from a regular company. Banks are held to the highest standards of data privacy and legal compliance. The smallest mistake can have national or economic consequences. That's why understanding the banking mindset especially the legal implications of handling data is crucial.