



Guide to modern agile research

The modern researcher's
handbook to faster,
better-quality insights



Table of contents

3	<i>Introduction</i>
5	<i>Why Agile?</i>
7	<i>Agile Is Everywhere</i>
11	<i>The Need for Agile Market Research</i>
14	<i>The Role of Modern Research Tools</i>
18	<i>Agile - Your Key to Competitive Success</i>

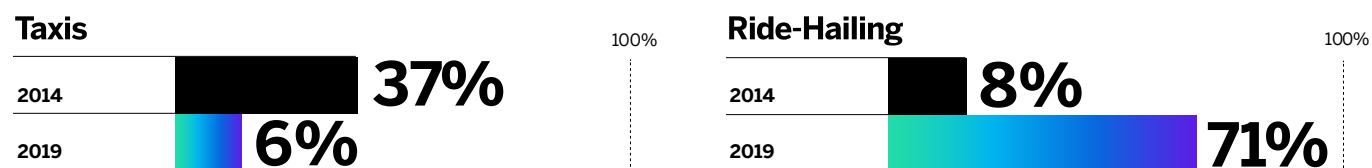
Introduction

Every organization aspires to be the market leader — not simply one of the masses. Companies that do it best continue to drive innovation and disruption in their industry. And they compete on experience.

Look at ground transportation for example. Riding in a taxi had never been an experience. You had to wait outside trying to flag one down. And then tipping was a hassle - waiting in the middle of the street to dig out your wallet. This industry was ripe for disruption. Ride-sharing companies like Uber and Lyft saw this as an opportunity to transform the industry by providing a better experience. Instead of waiting in the rain, or cold, or heat - you can simply order a car from your phone and then you can tip when it's convenient for you.

“Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower.”¹

Steve Jobs



In 2014, taxis owned 37% of all ground transportation. Now they own less than 6%. Meanwhile, ride-hailing went from 8% to 71%.²

This type of disruption happens across all industries - from real estate to financial services to higher education. No organization is immune.

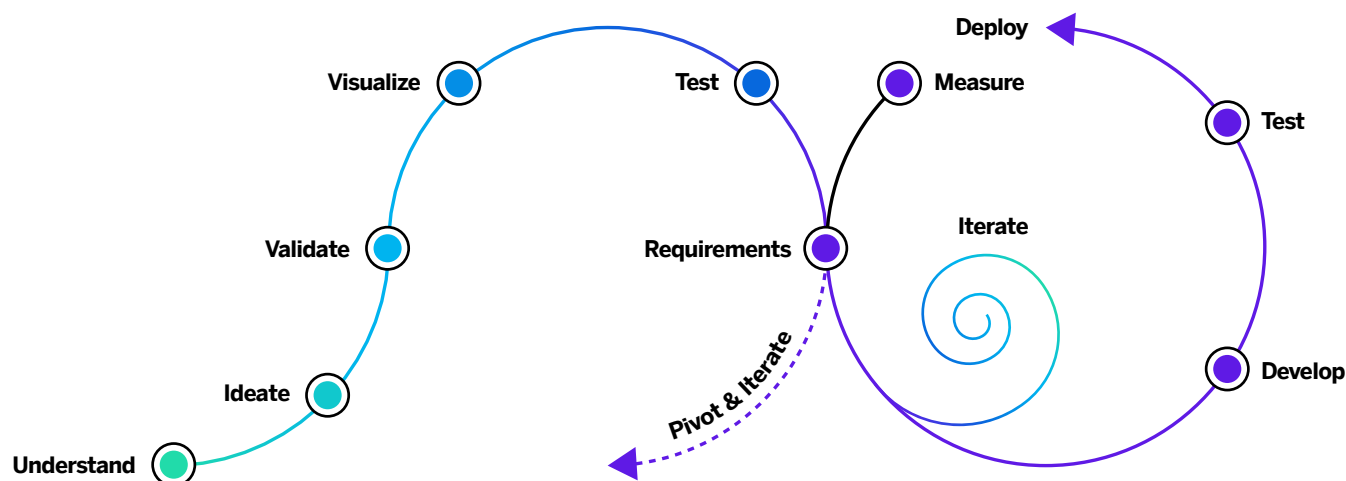
¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2012/10/04/tech/innovation/steve-jobs-quotes/index.html>

² <https://www.certify.com/Certify-SpendSmart-Report-Story-Infographic-Q1-2018.aspx>

To compete on experience, you need insights that expose experience gaps and the data to know which innovations can close those gaps.

This is where agile market research comes in. Using learnings from the software development industry, leading companies are applying agile best practices to use data to quickly determine which innovations have the power to transform the experience and which ones are flops.

This guide will help you understand what agile is and how to adopt agile methods into your everyday research to discover breakthrough insights within your organization.



¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2012/10/04/tech/innovation/steve-jobs-quotes/index.html>

² <https://www.certify.com/Certify-SpendSmart-Report-Story-Infographic-Q1-2018.aspx>

SECTION 1

Why agile?

Why agile?

With the modern challenges of needing to adapt to (or shape) changing market demands, you need a new way of developing innovations faster. This is where agile approaches come in.

WHAT IS AGILE?

At its core, agile methodology focuses less on delivering the perfect final product and more on producing incremental value for customers by creating a continuous stream of innovation.³ This approach allows you to be nimble and invest in the ideas that show promise and easily toss the ideas that won't have any impact.

Agile first started in the software development world. Rather than develop a piece of software from start to finish, developers would break up the project into smaller chunks, or sprints allowing greater flexibility when requirements would shift or new data would come to light.

Over the past 30 years, agile methodologies have transformed the software development industry and tripled the overall success rate of development projects. These findings are even more staggering for large, complex projects where the success rate is six times that of conventional methods.⁴

**agile methods
increased
success rates**

3X average
projects
6X complex
projects

As a result of agile's success, many organizations are applying agile principles to other areas of business.

³ <https://agilemanifesto.org/>

⁴ <https://www.bain.com/insights/agile-innovation/>

SECTION 2

Agile is everywhere

Agile is everywhere

Agile methods have permeated business practices in virtually every industry and have produced amazing results.



JOHN DEERE

In 2012, John Deere's Enterprise Advanced Marketing team became concerned that traditional project management approaches were slowing the organization down. The team worked together to develop a set of custom agile principles, which they dubbed "XI" for eXtreme Innovation. The goal was to "think unreasonably big, work as iteratively and as small as was practical, deliver faster than what's been possible, adjust and adapt constantly."

The result? The team was able to speed up prototype development by 75% and agile is now being adopted company-wide.⁵

The lesson: Agile helps you move faster.

⁵ <https://www.bain.com/insights/agile-innovation/>



When NPR faced a budget shortfall, they started looking for solutions and turned to agile. Today, agile is used throughout the organization. For example, show pilots are now generated quickly and with minimal staff, giving NPR the ability to filter out great ideas from poor ones with minimal cost - producing programs like TED Radio Hour. Plus, they were able to reduce some program costs by two-thirds and NPR was named one of the top 10 most agile brands in the U.S.⁶

The lesson: Agile helps you be more efficient

⁶ <https://www.nationalpublicmedia.com/news/npr-named-top-10-most-agile-us-brand/>



Agile business practices are at the very heart of Amazon's business model. Amazon is constantly expanding and trying new ideas. From its humble beginnings as an internet book retailer, the organization has added streaming services, web hosting, grocery stores, and more.

Not all Amazon's ideas have worked. Ideas like the Fire Phone, Amazon Local, and Amazon Destinations proved not to be as effective, and the company was able to quickly shift to other, more profitable products rather than keep pursuing expensive projects that weren't going to land with their target customers.⁷

The lesson: Agile helps you identify what is working (or not) so you know where to invest.

⁷ <https://www.insightsassociation.org/article/how-amazon-drives-growth-through-agile-market-research>

SECTION 3

The need for agile market research

The need for agile market research

If your organization is making strides to become more agile, adjusting business processes only provides a partial solution. It's not enough to just move fast — to be truly effective, organizations must be right.

Having insights at your fingertips puts you on the forefront of your company's future success. As an insights professional, you have the tools and expertise to identify experience gaps in your organization. Not only can you identify those gaps, but you have the skills to properly vet innovations to close those gaps and understand which ones will help you disrupt your market.

“Every company should work hard to obsolete its product line...before competitors do”⁸

Phil Kotler, *Father of Modern Marketing*

⁸ <http://www.philkotler.com/quotes/>

AGILE RESEARCH IN ACTION

To better understand the relationship between agile methods paired with insights, let's look at one of the leading companies that has completely integrated research into their business practices.

Amazon has built agile into the company's DNA, which is evident by its research spend. In 2017, Amazon spent \$17.4 billion on research alone. 'Research, test, fail fast, and iterate' is at the core of their approach, and it has put them at the forefront of innovation and set them apart from the competition.

With annual revenues of \$232 billion, driving breakthrough insights is a key ingredient to their successful adoption of agile.

But for research to be an essential part of agile approaches, the modern researcher needs modern tools to provide better insights faster.

SECTION 4

The role of modern research tools

The role of modern research tools

Modern demands require modern approaches to research. Traditional market research tools have several shortcomings when it comes to supporting an agile infrastructure. For example:

- + **Slower time to see results** Agile, by its very definition, means being nimble and quick. Waiting weeks or even months for study results is too long. This is true whether you're fielding your own studies or working with an agency.
- + **Long hours of analysis** Insights are often buried deep in a mountain of data. Spending days and weeks analyzing raw data is not only tedious but slows down the entire process. This process can be compounded if you are waiting on data from multiple vendors.
- + **Research is restricted to just one department or team** With the demand for more insights, research teams can become a bottleneck. This approach can result in several unforeseen consequences including business teams purchasing their own platforms and running rogue research projects.
- + **Oversurveying key customers** Customers have vital perspectives on both experience gaps and what solutions will work to close them. By conducting a lot of research for various teams, you can easily over-survey and alienate customers who provide this vital source of feedback.
- + **Inability to target the right respondents** Finding the right respondents can be a game of chance. Even if you target the right demographics – i.e., millennials in cities – making sure you get the right number or results from your customer base can be challenging.

Modern research solutions like Qualtrics CoreXM empower you to find and uncover insights faster and keep pace with agile demands. Here are a few ways modern platforms can help:

- + Shorter time to develop and launch a study** Often, some of the most time-consuming elements of launching a study come from survey design - from setting up the right logic to wording the right questions. Our XM Solutions can take the pain out of this process. XM Solutions is a catalog of 40 expert-designed projects spanning common use cases for product, brand, customer, and employee research. To launch a project, users provide a few details through a user-friendly, guided workflow. You also have the ability to make adjustments to these projects to add questions or adjust the methodology.
- + Faster insights with AI** Modern tools take the guesswork out of unearthing insights by offloading the heavy lifting to an AI platform. Solutions like Qualtrics iQ make it easy to run statistical tests and decipher topic and sentiment from text comments. This approach enables you to pass along insights faster, enabling your organization to move faster.
- + Make it easy for anyone to find insights while maintaining control** Rather than become a bottleneck for all the different groups in the organization trying to find insights, you can make it easy for them to run their own research through granular administrative controls. For example, you can allow the product teams to design their own tests and launch after you provide approval. You can also restrict who has access to what data.

- + **Control contact frequency** Being able to control contact frequency across your organization helps you maintain trust with your customers. This is essential for an agile organization where this type of feedback is in high demand across multiple departments. Solutions like XM Directory make it easy to set contact frequency rules across your entire database.
- + **Target the right audience with rich profiles** Contact solutions like XM Directory also enable you to capture rich details based on your interactions with your customers. Over time, you can capture preferences, demographic details, and more through other requests for feedback. This data is powerful – it will help you identify the specific subset of your customer base to solicit feedback from, leading to richer, more accurate insights.

Traditional Market Research	Agile Market Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Slower time to launch studies + Long hours of analysis + Research is focused on just one department or team + Easy to over-survey customers + Difficult to target the right audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Launch studies faster + Use AI to find faster insights + Have full control over the platform while sharing the research burden with other teams + Easily control contact frequency + Leverage rich profiles for better insights

Learn more about
Qualtrics CoreXM

BOOK A DEMO

SECTION 5

Agile - Your key to competitive success

Agile - Your key to competitive success

Agile is a proven methodology that helps you innovate and move faster than your competitors by identifying and closing experience gaps. This is how organizations like Amazon, NPR, and John Deere stay at the top.

But moving fast isn't enough. Research plays an essential role in agile by providing you with the needed insights to know if your approaches are working.

Armed with the right platform, the modern researcher can keep up with modern demands and help you drive breakthroughs for your organization.

WANT TO SEE HOW IT ALL WORKS?

Prefer to chat? Contact sales@qualtrics.com
for more information on how to get started.

BOOK A DEMO