



Agile Research Myths

The Truth Behind Why More
Companies Are Opting for
DIY Research





Contents

Breaking Misconceptions	2
What is Agile Research?	3
Benefits of Agile Research	4
Agile Research Myths	5
Improving Research Data Quality	13
Agile in Action: The Evening Standard	14
Is Agile Research for Me?	15



Breaking Misconceptions

“Agile research is quick and dirty. It would never work for my company!”

If that’s what you think, you might want to reconsider your position. Savvy product managers and marketers harness the power of agile research to deliver better products and campaigns in **less time** and at a **fraction of the cost**.

The perception that agile insights are “quick and dirty,” and therefore not as valuable, is one of several common misconceptions about DIY research. That’s why we’ve created this ebook. We think it’s important for brands to know why more companies are adopting agile strategies.

You’ll learn:



What agile research is



Why common agile myths are wrong



How to improve data quality

In the time it takes you to read this ebook, you could launch your first agile research survey. By the end of the day, you could have the results. In a world that’s constantly changing, getting quality feedback with minimal turnaround time is a huge competitive advantage.

Keep reading to learn how you can put agile research to work.



What is Agile Research?

Agile Research is a research approach where teams collect, analyze and report data findings continuously and quickly.

Traditional Research	Agile Research
<p>Traditional research uses a waterfall approach where everything proceeds in a linear and sequential process. You start by developing your survey, then deploy it, and finally analyze the results.</p> <p>Because of the time involved in developing and deploying the survey, companies may limit traditional research projects to only a handful each year.</p> <p>The surveys tend to be lengthy as many stakeholders compete to get their questions answered.</p>	<p>Agile research utilizes an iterative process. Instead of developing one lengthy survey, agile researchers ask questions as they go along.</p> <p>Researchers send short surveys to smaller samples for quick feedback.</p> <p>They apply those insights to the project they're working on and use the data to guide their next set of questions.</p>

Agile market research projects now show up in annual plans for more teams and departments than before. Why? ***Because it delivers actionable insights in a more timely fashion.***



Benefits of Agile Research

1. Keeps up with the changing world and reaches people in a more natural way.
2. Creative, cost-effective way to gain strategic insights and newsworthy data.
3. Comes without the high price tag and slow setup of a full-service research firm.
4. Enables teams to deliver faster and more focused projects as often as needed
5. Supports marketing, design and product development efforts simultaneously



Dealing with shrinking budgets? You're not alone.

Marketing budgets have fallen to their lowest recorded level, dropping to 6.4% of company revenue in 2021 from 11% in 2020, [according to Gartner](#).

Instead of deciding what one or two research projects to greenlight, companies can give teams access to agile DIY tools to conduct their own research whenever it's necessary throughout the year.



Agile Research Myths

01

It's suspiciously cheap

02

It's disorganized chaos

03

It's quick and dirty

04

It's not reaching enough people

05

It's talking to bots

06

It's a pain to manage

07

It's not for my business



Myth 1:



“It’s suspiciously cheap”

People assume agile research is for research-strapped companies. Or, for brands that don’t have any other choice. If they had the investment available, surely they’d spend it on more traditional research.

The reality is DIY research is growing. According to [Greenbook’s recent GRIT report](#) on agile methods, DIY agile research is a part of **at least 72% of researchers’ future plans.**

Why are more people taking a DIY approach to research? It’s more cost-effective and timely. You can eliminate the endless back-and-forth finalizing survey questions with a third-party expert.

For example, if you’re in the early ideation stages of a new product or advertising campaign, you can use market research as a “gut check” before proceeding with more research or development. Even if your company has the resources for more expensive traditional research, it might not be the best use of your time or money.



Myth 2:



“It’s disorganized chaos”

If you believe agile research lacks proper thought or strategy, think again. Agile methods require you to be more organized because projects are split up into smaller pieces.

In contrast, traditional research tackles everything at once. It’s built for a “set it and forget it” approach. You create your survey, ask the questions and analyze the results.

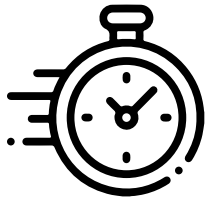
With agile, you might break the survey into multiple three question bursts. You’ll then analyze the results and tweak the next set of questions based on how consumers answered or what you learned.

For example, let’s say you’re working on a rebranding project. You could ask three questions: one about colors, another on taglines and the last comparing different logo options. Then, you can use the results to narrow down your choices and do a second survey to see which logo and tagline pairing performs the best.

Agile research requires continually updating your strategy to get the best results. It also enables teams and companies to be customer-centric and test, iterate, and launch products, concepts, or campaigns faster and more effectively.



Myth 3:



“It’s quick and dirty.”

There’s a reason companies don’t use the term “quick and dirty” in their marketing campaigns. Quick makes it sound like it’s done without proper thought or strategy. Dirty makes it sound like it’s a cheap way around something.

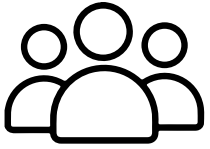
The “quick and dirty” term is said in the consumer insight industry when there isn’t enough time to do a “proper piece of research.” And is often followed by iterations of “Well, something is just better than nothing, right?”

But agile research isn’t necessarily “taking what you can get.” There is a misconception that you won’t get much value because it’s not costing you an arm and a leg. But that’s not the case.

Agile methods are often advanced technologies that cut out expensive third parties. It offers high value for a fraction of the cost of traditional methods. These tools are comparable to the direct-to-consumer shopping experience; you are connected directly to the source.



Myth 4:



“It doesn’t reach enough people”

Many insights professionals are concerned that agile research sample sizes are too small. However, which would you rather have?

- 1000 pieces of feedback at a 99% confidence level for 10+ questions
- Or, 200 pieces of honest, quality feedback on a few questions from a specified and hyper-targeted groups of people

More than likely, the people filling out the longer survey aren't paying as much attention to it. Agile research is built to address two things: low completion rates and mediocre survey-taking experiences, both of which lead to poor data.

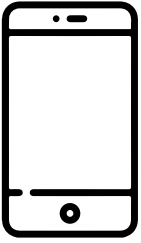
In agile research, sample sizes of a few hundred are typically used but with shorter surveys. This gives agile methods an advantage in getting quality insights as the shorter surveys get higher completion and engagement.

People are more likely to be honest about their opinions.

Although statistical rigor has its place in research, when we start prioritizing this over quality response and feedback, we start to miss the point of market research. And, you can run the risk of dehumanizing your research user experience.



Myth 5:



“It’s talking to bots”

There is a common misconception that agile research relies on bots or professional respondents. However, this myth ties into the whole “speed” equals low-quality argument.

The whole point of agile research is to provide you with data in minutes or hours, not weeks or months later. If your survey experience fits within the lives of everyday people, then convenience will lead to better engagement.

With people’s hectic schedules, longer surveys can be off-putting. Participants may be tempted to give up before completing a survey. Subsequently, long surveys increase the risk of producing biased results.

A shorter survey with three or fewer questions reduces fatigue, meaning that your respondents will be more likely to complete a survey and give it their full attention. This can lead you to higher-quality insights much more quickly.

Short surveys win over consumers

According to [a recent study](#), surveys containing 4-8 questions can result in a 65.15% completion rate on average, while surveys of 1-3 questions have an average completion rate of 83.34%.



Myth 6:



“It’s a pain to manage”

Agile research tools tend to be user-friendly and not overly complicated, which means they are intentionally built for efficiency. They are designed for a wider audience and not just for skilled or experienced researchers.

Large organizations with dedicated research teams can invest the resources in more traditional research, but even in those companies, smaller teams are opting for DIY agile research.

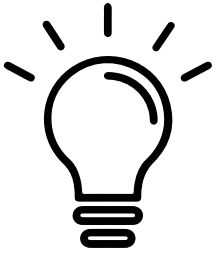
Product, strategy, and marketing teams rely on live trends and actionable data. They may not have the time to wait for the availability of their companies’ research department.

Through agile research, you are being smarter with your time because timelines are reduced. Agile tools are designed to meet this need for timely feedback and can be managed by anyone on your team.

Like any new research tool, there will be a ramp-up period for onboarding. But it’s certainly going to be a lot quicker than scheduling several meetings with an outside agency and waiting around to hear back when you need to make an adjustment.



Myth 7:



“It won’t work for my business”

Today, businesses often have to do product development and market research concurrently. The pace of innovation and product development has never been faster; agile market research can easily keep up with this cadence.

As the world becomes more global, there is no longer just one type of customer that a business needs to engage and onboard. Multiple buyer personas need to be considered, as well as influencers and active customer stakeholders.

Agile market research allows businesses to capture data about each of these groups. This can paint a more vivid and complete picture during each stage of the research process.

Agile research works in many different scenarios, such as:

- **Determining brand health.** Ask consumers directly about why they buy your products, use your services, or what they think about your brand.
- **Conducting competitive analysis.** Understand how your brand is perceived in comparison to your competitors.
- **Testing the potential success of a new concept.** Scope, test, and validate products and/or service concepts before taking their development further.
- **Insights to back up a presentation.** Gather relevant insights to present at a business development or product pitch meeting.
- **Understanding consumer motivations.** Evaluate your target audience’s purchasing decisions and behaviors.
- **Fine tune your marketing creatives and messaging.** Gather crucial consumer insight prior to launching your full marketing budget.



Improving Research Data Quality

So, how do we increase the chances of getting quality feedback in agile research or any survey-based project? Incorporate these tips to optimize your research for better results.



1. Plan and optimize.

Agile research breaks up a larger project into smaller tasks. The most important thing is that these tasks match up with the larger end goal, like deciding on a new label for a product or conducting rounds of [concept testing](#). Use what you learn to inform the next step.



2. Prioritize respondent experience.

If you annoy or bore your respondents, you won't get good feedback. Starting with several demographic screen questions prior to asking for any feedback will likely cause the respondent to tune out. Keep surveys short and [engaging](#).



3. Avoid intercepting and interrupting.

How often have you seen a pop-up that forces you to answer a few questions about your buying habits before watching a video? Were you annoyed? Did you answer honestly or just click through the answers without reading them? Design and deploy surveys so that respondents will be motivated to complete them.



4. Speak like a human.

Don't sound like a robot when writing survey questions. People need to respond quickly. If they have to reread the question three times, they might not answer honestly. Use a conversational tone for questions and response options. For example, which question sounds more conversational: "Which of the following factors influence your decision to purchase a new television set?" or "What's important to you when buying a new TV?"



5. Take advantage of retargeting and follow-ups.

Along with the conversational tone, agile tools often give you the ability to reassess or re-target consumers. It often works really well because you are doing several surveys in a short period of time. Retargeting will often give you the richest insight because you can dig deeper into why someone answered a question a certain way.



Agile in Action: The Evening Standard

The COVID-19 pandemic changed business and consumer behavior practically overnight. Anyone who conducted traditional research in the first quarter of 2020 knew the results would be compromised - by the end of March, the world was a different place.

Fortunately, London-based newsbrand, The Evening Standard, could rely on OnePulse's agile research platform to make data-backed decisions about how to navigate the COVID-19 lockdowns.

“We now have the opportunity to employ evidence-based thinking in almost all aspects of our business.”

OnePulse was a real asset during the early uncertain months of the pandemic. The Evening Standard knew that consumer behavior had changed radically in all sorts of areas but traditional research couldn't capture such quick changes.

“OnePulse has been a really useful tool for us during the pandemic – a lot of the larger datasets didn't get updated for a while so it didn't reflect actual audience behavior during lockdown,” said Philip McMullan, Head of Insight & Data, Evening Standard. “OnePulse was a great way of getting quick insights on everything from people's travel plans, attitude to furlough, financial worries – we ran a lot of Pulses!”

With fewer commuters picking up copies of the paper on their way home, the publisher had to pivot The Evening Standard's print distribution to home delivery. OnePulse was essential in proving and ensuring that the paper was being read in those homes it was being delivered to. The paper also used OnePulse to prove the effectiveness of high value, high impact ad formats. For example, they sent Pulses related to cover wraps to measure recall and consideration, the main metrics for advertising effectiveness

“We now have the opportunity to employ evidence-based thinking in almost all aspects of our business, this gives stakeholders greater confidence in planned outcomes,” McMullan said.

Evening Standard

www.onepulse.com



Conclusion: Is Agile Research for Me?

The need for market research is expected to grow over the next decade. According to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), employment of market research analysts is projected to increase 22 percent from 2020 to 2030, much faster than the average for all occupations.

Agile research will play a vital role in that growth because it can work in any company and be just as valuable as traditional research methods.

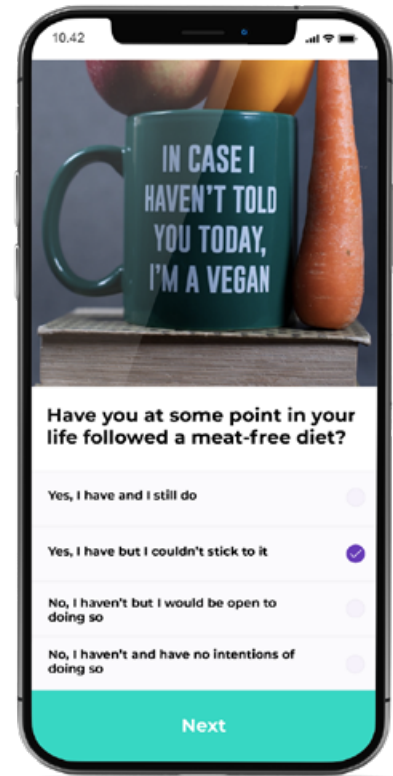
Because agile enables market researchers to conduct more frequent and timely research, findings can guide everything from product development to prioritizing future research projects.

How you use agile research depends on your priorities and team structure. But don't let one of the common myths we've reviewed keep you from adding agile to your market research toolbox.



Turn research into an engaging, real-time conversation.

[OnePulse](#) is a self-serve consumer opinion platform that reaches people where they're most comfortable - on their mobile phones. Our user-friendly app helps brands, marketing agencies and media publishers make smart business decisions in minutes, not weeks.



Go to [onepulse.com](https://www.onepulse.com) to learn more.

Question everything.

