B2B marketing goes agile

Adapting and surviving in times of uncertainty

brightinnovation.co.uk

Bright

Why read this report?

If you've been looking for new, better ways of working to improve your marketing results and performance, you're not alone. As a leading B2B agile marketing consultancy, we've been watching the industry steadily move away from traditional marketing techniques, and this shift seems to have accelerated in recent years. To keep pace, read on to gain insight into what agile marketing could mean for the future of your business and marketing teams.

Benchmark your marketing

At Bright, we've been using agile ways of working to test, learn and build on marketing success for our clients over the last 7 years. We know how well it works, but we were curious to know what the marketing community thought about agile ways of working – who's using it, who wants it and how is it impacting their businesses? To find out, we embarked on a benchmarking survey in January 2020. We had a great response from business and marketing leaders who answered questions about their existing ways of working, where they see B2B best practice going in the future and if they're using, or are planning to use, agile marketing to meet their goals.

"It's very clear to me that there are significant benefits in moving from a traditional way of marketing in a fast-paced digital world to a much more nimble and agile manner which will undoubtedly delivery better business outcomes. Taking this approach is likely to lead to competitive advantage."

Mark Breslin, Transformation Leader

Leap to the future with better ways of working

This report summaries the survey findings and clearly proves that the future of B2B marketing is agile, as we suspected. Business and marketing leaders are looking to keep better pace with increasingly demanding markets and the majority are already using some agile techniques to get there. Why? Restrictive, traditional techniques delay time to market and make it difficult to demonstrate marketing value to the business. In sharp contrast, agile marketers are seeing impressive benefits and are empowered to measure marketing ROI and demonstrate success.

The data speaks for itself. The future of B2B marketing is agile and here's why...

Looking to the future of B2B marketing

How will you take command of your marketing performance to drive results?

Change is a dominant force in marketing today. Now more than ever, business leaders are aware of the impact marketing has on their success, and marketing teams are under great pressure to demonstrate clear, proven results and ROI. Customer demand for more intuitive and personalised marketing is also accelerating; spawning the complex challenge of meeting business goals whilst maintaining pace with market change.

How can marketing leaders rise to meet this challenge head on? To survive and thrive in the future of B2B marketing, they'll have to work more efficiently, produce better content and get their ideas to market fast – before the competition.

Our market research survey received nearly 100 responses from business and marketing leaders. The following analysis brings to life the value of adopting agile ways of working, but also raises questions on how to best apply agile principles to improve performance and drive better results.
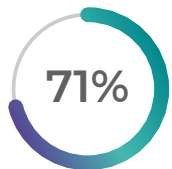
B2B marketing is changing

Out of the marketing and business leaders we surveyed:

45% find it difficult to demonstrate marketing ROI

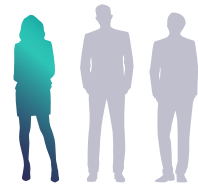**1 in 3** are focused on full adoption of agile ways of working

71% have already adopted agile techniques to get to market faster

Of those still using traditional techniques:

86% don't understand the impact of marketing on their business goals

1 in 3 don't know how to get started with agile

Lack of time, training and the **right tools** are barriers to agile adoption

Out of those practicing agile marketing for 1-2 years:

60% feel empowered to demonstrate value to the business

The majority experienced
- **faster** time to market
- strong **data-driven** decision making
- greater **adaptability** to market change

The future of marketing is agile.
Here's how we know.

Survey respondent personas

Senior Marketer
Needs to validate their ideas quickly without spending too much time and budget.

Senior Business Leader
Wants to deliver innovation at pace and transform their busy teams to work better and faster.

How are they working?

21% **Still use traditional techniques**
Making long-term plans, budgets and return on investment

35% **Have adopted agile marketing**
Testing, learning and iterating to drive results

36% **Work on an ad-hoc basis**
Doing what's needed to meet business goals day to day

71% are already embracing agile techniques or are working on an ad-hoc basis to meet business requirements and their marketing goals. With only 21% sticking to traditional techniques, we're clearly seeing a shift in the market. Agile marketing is here and it's already making an impact.

But is it here to stay? With nearly 50% of respondents stating that they're actively looking to fully adopt agile ways of working in the future, the rise of agile marketing can only continue to gain momentum in the market.
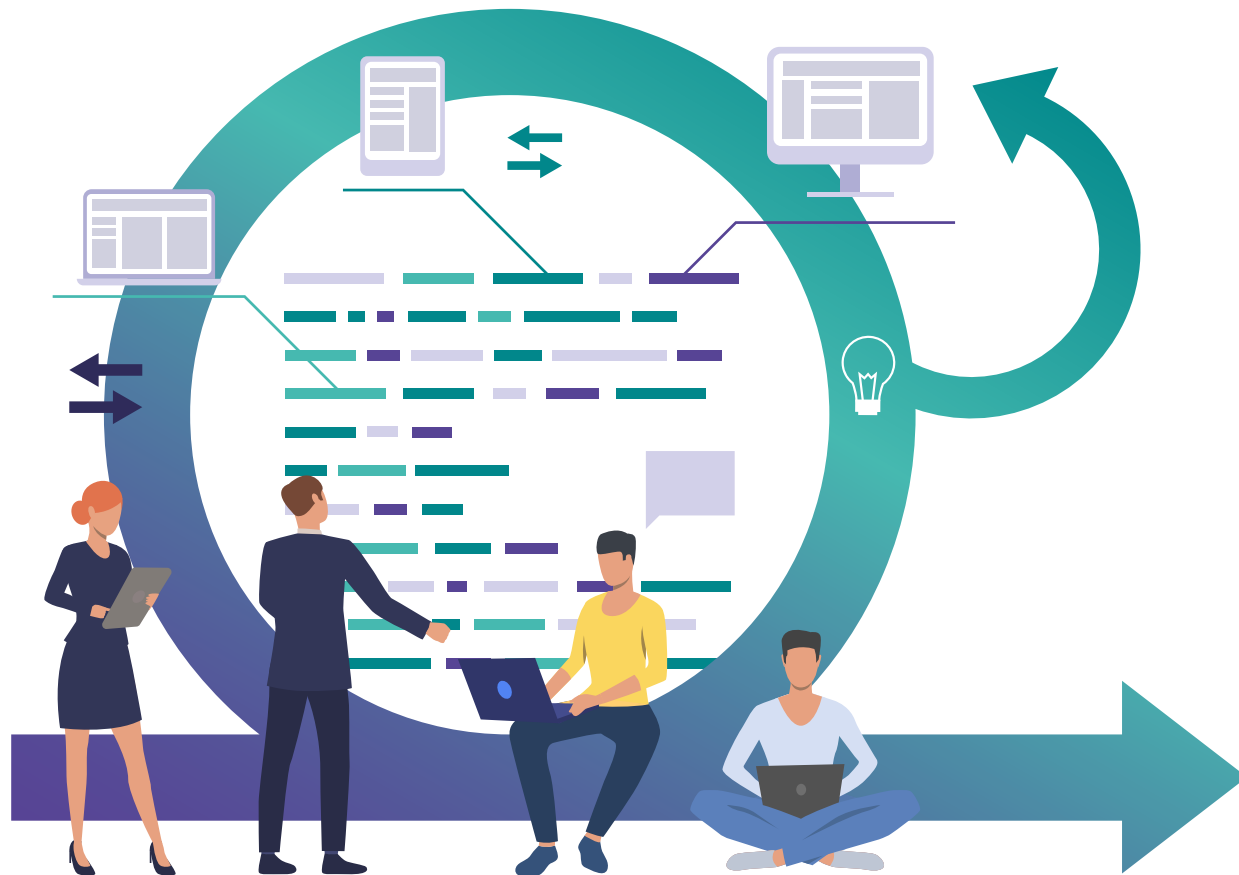
Traditional Marketing focuses on the sales cycle, moulding the customer's needs to assumptions and sales expectations, and using long-term strategies and campaigns to meet marketing goals.

Agile Marketing focuses on the customer's buying process, learning what works with them through an explorative, test-learn-iterate approach and short, adaptive strategies and campaigns to get results.

Key drivers for senior business and marketing leaders

What are they feeling?

- Incapable of keeping pace with change
- Frustrated by rich data but poor insights
- Inefficient and ineffective due to lack of team communication

What do they need to do?

- Adapt and respond to the market and business demands
- Prove success and value of marketing to the business
- Transform processes and innovate concept creation

What do they want?

- The power to drive company goals and vision for the future
- Actionable insights for data-driven decision making
- Increased productivity and faster time to market

"Embedding agile ways of working has transformed our marketing, helping us become more efficient and creative to hit stretch targets and take a new commercial proposition to market quickly."

Adrian Brooks, Strategic Change Lead at The British Medical Association

Leaving traditional marketing in the past

We know that an agile approach is the future of marketing – but why? What's driving adoption?

When asked if they understood the impact marketing has on the business, our respondents gave some surprising answers.

**45%** struggle to identify the impact of marketing on the business
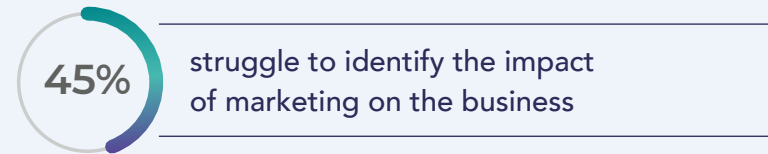
This tells us that marketing leaders often find it difficult to measure marketing effectiveness, analyse results or report to their leadership team – and traditional techniques may be to blame. That 45% jumped when we asked traditional marketers the same question.

86% of traditional marketers don't have a clear view of their marketing results
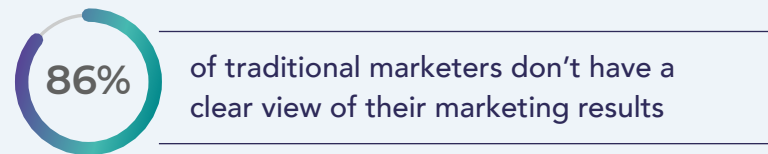
Whilst they're coming under greater pressure to effectively demonstrate ROI and their value to the business, marketing

leaders are also having to keep up with customer demands and maintain daily operations. This is an incredibly complex challenge only made worse by issues within traditional marketing, such as poor data insights, lengthy planning and approval cycles, delayed time to market and long, ineffective internal processes that fail to support dynamic strategies.

There's strong evidence to support the argument to move away from traditional techniques.

60% of agile marketers confirm that they're confident in their impact on the business
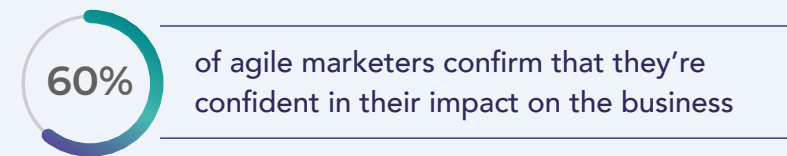
An agile approach clearly helps marketers get a better grasp of the power of their marketing to drive business outcomes and demonstrate value. Those who have practiced agile for more than a year also said they felt more empowered to make strong, data-driven decisions to meet their goals. This

is reflected in the 20% of agile marketers who said they're getting to market faster and delivering improved results, as well as more effective reporting and analysis thanks to an agile approach.

A cohort of traditional marketers who said they did understand the impact of their marketing on the business provided an interesting outlook on the future of marketing.

49% of traditional marketers are keen to adopt agile marketing to improve productivity

They noted an interest in how agile marketing could help them improve team productivity, quality of work and alignment to business goals. This suggests that when you understand the business outcomes and contribution of your marketing results, you gain the ability to lead transformation and innovation in the business.

Motivations driving
market change

> "With agile marketing, we were able to bring together key stakeholders, create allies and get projects done at pace in a global organisation."
>
> **Ghassan Sultan, CMO at TECHNIA**

Marketing priorities for 2020

Improving team and marketing productivity is a big motivator. It's crucial for working at pace, driving engagement and breaking into new markets. It's also the key to unlocking faster time to market. Both were listed as top business priorities in 2020.

Combined with the fact that only 14% of marketers said they would stick with traditional marketing in the future, this leads us to conclude that traditional techniques aren't helping business and marketing leaders achieve business goals or transform their teams as they would like.

Getting a boost with agile

Bogged down by restrictive ways of working and slow concept development, they're motivated to adopt agile ways of working to pick up the pace of execution, improve operations and give them a competitive edge

And they're clearly looking in the right direction. Those who have been practicing agile marketing – even for less than a year – reported experiencing impressive benefits to the business.

Top benefits
of agile marketing

| Faster time to market	Data-driven decision making	Greater adaptability to market change	More effective prioritisation of work

These proven benefits shows that an agile approach gives marketing teams greater flexibility, transparency and control over their project tasks. They feel more empowered to collaborate and react quickly to change in the market when their ideas are validated through the test, learn and iterate approach.

As marketing teams become more adept with agile practices (and tailor them to work best in their environment), they become better able to respond to issues and risks and use data to drive their marketing efforts. Leadership teams are also given the insights they need to set clear objectives for the future, thereby enabling marketing teams to focus on activities that drive demonstrable results. Data-driven marketing empowers and gives confidence around the development of more daring, creative concepts whilst understanding the impact they make to drive successful outcomes.

Practicing agile marketing

Less than a year	55%
1-2 years	26%
3-5 years	11%
> 5 years	5%
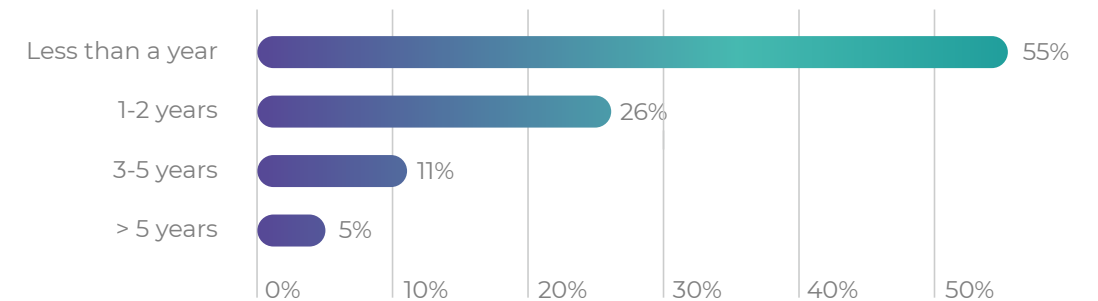
Those who have only been practicing agile methods for less than a year highlighted **aligning with business goals** and **making data-driven decisions** as early benefits of agile marketing, whilst those practicing for one or two years listed **proposition development**, **validation** and **vata-driven decisions**.

This clearly shows there is a maturity curve with increasing benefits for those on the journey to full agile adoption.

Overcoming barriers to success
with an agile mindset

"An agile approach gave us a fresh look at how content works at every stage of our buying cycle to maximise impact and engagement."

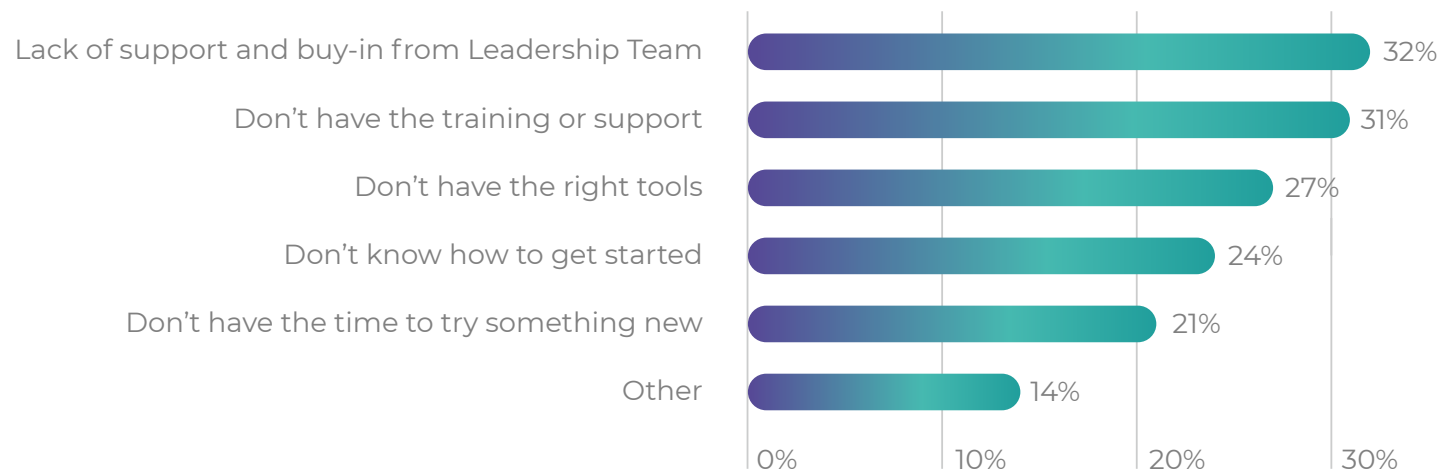**Tony Connor, Cloud Marketing Manager at ECS Digital**

It's clear that there are inspiring motivators and real, attainable benefits to adopting the more innovative and efficient agile approach to marketing. But to get there, you first need to adopt new ways of working and put them to use effectively according to your team's needs – and that's not always easy.

Knowing where to start

55% of traditional marketers said that the biggest barrier to adopting agile marketing is a lack of knowledge and support to get started. They need clear guidance during the adoption process and continuous support throughout the transformation period to give their teams a strong foundation for success with agile marketing.

Taking that a step further, we already know that 36% of marketing professionals are working on an ad-hoc basis, but a further 6% are following a 'mix' of agile and traditional or simply 'unstructured' techniques. It's likely these teams haven't adopted an agile approach only because they don't know where to begin. There's an opportunity here to engage and educate about a structured transition to a more innovative agile approach.

Barriers to adopt agile marketing

Lack of support and buy-in from Leadership Team — 32%
Don't have the training or support — 31%
Don't have the right tools — 27%
Don't know how to get started — 24%
Don't have the time to try something new — 21%
Other — 14%

0%   10%   20%   30%

A bright future with agile

Based on our survey analysis, agile marketing adoption is the way to the future for forward-thinking marketing professionals and business leaders. Traditional techniques aren't helping them meet goals, drive business outcomes or demonstrate value. Improved productivity and time to market are powerful motivators for adopting new ways of working, especially during uncertain times with ever-changing market conditions.

Active agile marketers are winning the argument against traditional techniques, demonstrated by the range of benefits – from stronger, data-driven decision making to streamlined task prioritisation – even in less than a year of practice and that only gets stronger with experience and maturity.

Don't miss the report webinar

Explore the future of B2B marketing trends: Agile marketing survey findings and QA

Sign up

Wednesday, 29 April 2020
11 am to 11:40 am

Adrian Brooks
British Medical Association

Sian Heaphy
Bright Innovation

About ⚲ Bright

The future of B2B marketing is agile, and it's here to stay. To sharpen your competitive edge and keep pace with market change, you need to take command of your marketing performance to get results. You need to go agile.

We know that transforming your marketing team with new ways of working isn't easy. Bright are experienced at embedding new ways of working and driving change at pace.

We've developed an Agile Marketing Hub model to make transformation straightforward and tailored to your business environment. You'll get the training, tools and techniques you need to effectively embed agile ways of working into your marketing team and you'll see benefits from the start.

Go agile with Bright