READY, AIM, FIRE

A GUIDE TO AGILE INSIGHTS FOR CONSUMER PRODUCT TEAMS

PART 2: AIM FOR PROGRESS (NOT PERFECTION)

Digsite
by **QuestionPro**

ONE STEP CLOSER.

In ***Ready, Aim, Fire Part 1: Ready for a New Approach***, we covered the foundations of agile research. Now that you understand how agile research can help your organization test earlier to identify issues earlier to move decisions faster, this second guide will get your team started. Here's a quick refresher on the core principles that were covered in part 1. Agile research focuses on:

- *Quality of engagement over quantity of responses*
- *Experiments and experiences over asking about attitudes and beliefs*
- *Focusing on the "whys" over just measuring the "what"*
- *Learning and iterating over static testing*
- *Flexible collaboration over "go" or "no-go" decisions*

AGILE PRIORITIZES ITERATIONS.

Traditionally, research has told us to focus on stages and gates, where we pick among a few options or make a single "go" or "no go" decision. Instead of relying on research that simply validates a set of assumptions or a hypothesis, the agile methodology enables you to **build, test and learn at the same time**.

The initial ideas are only a starting point. While your team continues to come up with concepts, ads and experiences to be tested, they interact with customers **earlier in the process**. Teams can discover that their ideas aren't landing in the beginning stages of the development process, and can make many low risk-decisions that build up to final decisions you can feel confident with.

SPEED IS THE OUTCOME.

This approach helps you avoid the problems that have historically slowed down development teams. By using that information to inform future iterations and **repeating the process** several times until you're satisfied with the final outcome, you're able to solve more complex problems and create products, designs and campaigns that are ultimately better received by your consumers.

In other words, while decision-makers often ask for quantitative validation, **what they need is the confidence** that is achieved through iteration and continuous improvement.

One of the best ways to conduct agile research is using online methods where you have more flexibility in setting up your research. People are more likely to be honest online, you're able to reach more targeted and **geographically diverse participants** and you can easily ask follow-up questions to drill even deeper.

Not only is it cheaper and faster to conduct agile research, but you'll also get better insights. Traditionally, quick online surveys don't get to the "why," and in-person focus groups are time-consuming and expensive. **Good agile research combines both.**

GATHER UP THE TEAM.

Not everyone at your organization will be excited about changing the way things are done. One way to ease into change is to start with a test project and team of achievers who you believe are **open to trying new things**. Gather your team and explain that you have found a new research approach that has proven to give teams better answers to their research questions, big or small. Time and time again, we've seen this approach make teams look like rock stars to management.

**Here's how to sell agile research to your team:**

Figure out which members of your team are most likely to benefit from agile research. You might already be feeling the pressure to move faster. Instead of pushing back, let them know you are ready to say "yes," but need their help.

Buy them a latte! But really, ask about their interest in showing the organization a better way. Your team will look like heroes when they can meet deadlines and keep on budget by adopting agile methods.
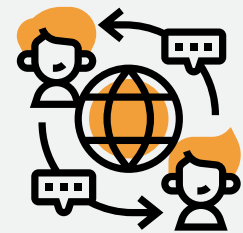
Reassure them that agile research won't take up all of their time and will help them do their best work. In addition to improving the team's collaborative learning and creating more innovative solutions in less time, the biggest win is seeing that research can really help them rather than be an obstacle.
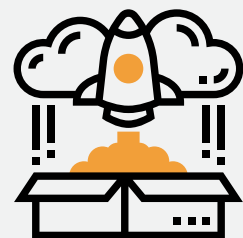
Find a tech platform with flexibility so you can cover most use-cases and iterate as needed (platforms like Digsite offer pilot options in addition to all-inclusive subscriptions). Get vendor set-ups and a budget in place so you can jump at the next study and showcase a quick turn-around.

OKAY, LET'S DO IT!

So you've got stakeholder buy-in and a decision that needs to be informed. Getting feedback that precisely explains how your customers are using your products, experiencing the purchase journey or interacting with your solutions is critical to understanding **what improvements you need to make**. Market research sprints can be broken down into five steps:

1 **Form a collaborative team.** Assign innovation projects to a team that is empowered to make decisions and collaborate together. Build a small cross-functional squad that includes a product manager, a researcher and a designer or developer. Be careful to not put too many people on one team so that everyone can engage on a daily basis. Four to eight people are just fine.

2 **Prioritize the focus.** Eliminate the noise by prioritizing one or two of the biggest problems and challenges. Hypothesize and brainstorm solutions that might address that problem. The more specific your focus is, the stronger your results will be.

3 **Design and research**. Figure out what your research sprint will look like. For example, if you want to find out how customers interact with your products, you can ask them to record videos or take pictures. Leading online platforms like **Digsite** can give you instant access to targeted consumers, expert-guided design approaches and multiple methods of engagement for greater flexibility so you can capture behavior and get feedback on new ideas.

4 **Learn and iterate.** Now it's time to gather your data. Observe your participants, interact with them and capture their experiences. Pitch your ideas to the decision-makers and use images, videos and other visuals to persuade them and guide decisions. Frequent engagement along the way will ensure that your organization feels vested in believing the results.

5 **Reflect and repeat.** At the end of each sprint, you should have a good idea about what worked and where you need to pivot. You may need the ability to recontact participants so you can keep iterating without creating a new study. Or you may want fresh sample to benchmark your improvements. Adjust your research process accordingly and refine your approach ahead of your next sprint.

Now that you've got a solid idea about the workings of the agile research process, let's turn our attention toward **the tools you need.**

YOU CAN'T USE OLD TOOLS
TO DO MODERN WORK.

In order to streamline the research process, you need tools that can keep pace. **Digsite** can serve as your underlying agile research platform, with both qualitative and quantitative concept exploration and testing capabilities and streamlined features like automated reporting that can easily analyze data, visualize results and **quickly share key quotes, photo or video responses.**

You may also want to use a Kanban-type platform like Trello to track team roles and statuses as your sprint progresses, a platform like MURAL to manage designs and dedicated channels in a collaborative messaging app like Slack to communicate in real-time.

PLAN YOUR FIRST SPRINT.

With a thorough understanding of agile research and the right tools and people in place, it's time to kick off your **inaugural sprint**. Once you're done, reflect on your experience, figure out how you can further improve the process and move on to the next sprint.

Remember, agile doesn't have to take much time. Using Digsite's platform, you can recruit research participants in as little as 24 hours and go from question to collaboration to decision in half the time of traditional research methods. You know your needs better than anyone else. Come up with a plan, be prepared to flex as you learn and **you'll do just fine**.

TIME TO FIRE UP!

The next segment of our series is a **study guide to keep handy** as you pursue your first (and second and third) agile research projects. It's not only a crash course that reviews the big beats from *Part 1: Ready for a New Approach* and *Part 2: Aiming for Success*, but it includes our list of the 10 best tips for launching a triumphant study using agile methodologies with your team. Watch your inbox for our final installment, *Ready, Aim, Fire Part 3: Fire on All Cylinders*.

Digsite

by **P** QuestionPro

Digsite's collaborative platform enables agile teams to iterate between qualitative exploration and idea validation. With Digsite, you get the flexibility you need to recruit your exact target audience and engage them in unique tasks to learn and iterate as you go.

Our advanced reporting capabilities and automated dashboard make it fast and easy to report on your research. Your entire team can see new insights in real time, making it easy to adjust your research and quickly change directions so you can feel confident you're always moving in the right direction.
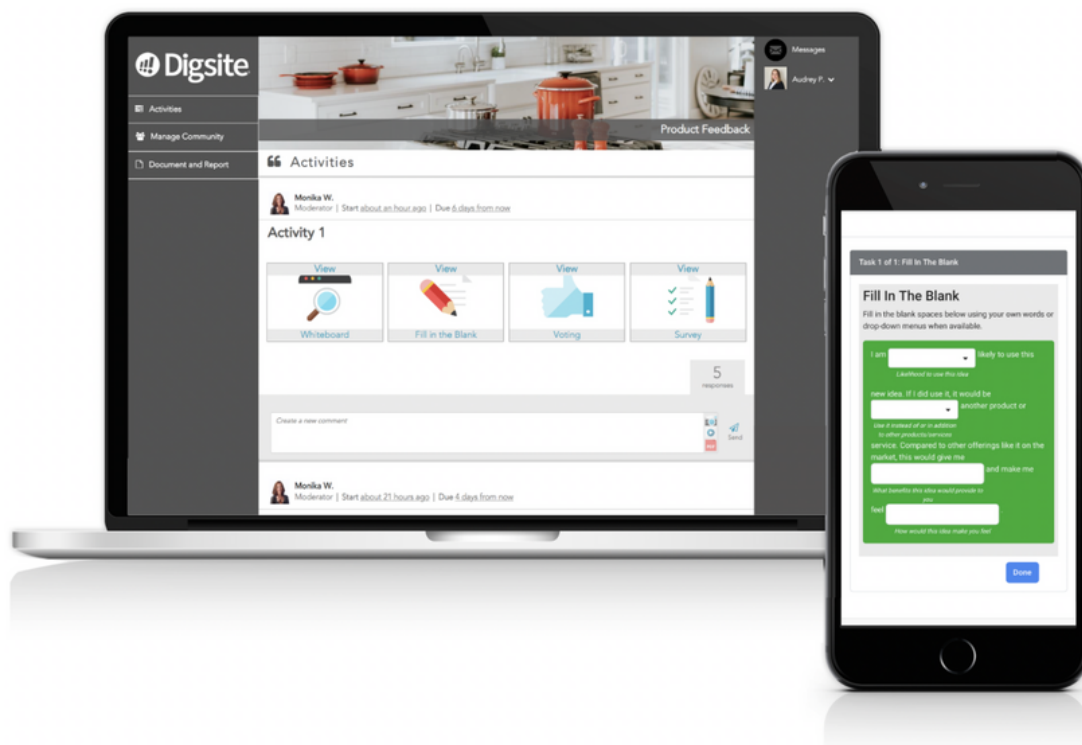
Does this sound like something you might need? Check out our site and **schedule a demo** *to learn more. We'd love to hear what you're working on and find ways that Digsite can help.*

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