

What is agile and is it relevant to consumer research?

If you're not using the word 'agile' at the moment, you may feel like you've missed something. It's as on-trend as the recruitment of a Head of Digital. But what does agile really mean, and is it relevant to consumer research?

What is agile?

Agile is an approach taken from tech start-ups. It was initially intended to manage complex software problems with unknown solutions and the continually evolving requirements of the end-user (or consumer). Sound familiar?

Its focus is on getting a **product to a market quickly** and **rapidly iterating it via continued feedback**, generating revenue as the product continues to evolve (which all accountants will tell you is a good thing!). As a consequence, it has been adopted by all manner of industries and organisations. It has clear applicability in broader product development and is currently front of mind for Consumer Insight and Marketing professionals across the food and drink sector.

Agile methodology encompasses three further subsets of the approach, all intended to drive different responses: creative and adaptive (SCRUM), continued elimination of waste (Lean) and reducing lead times (Kanban). All rely on **cross-functional teams**, and benefits have been shown to include better employee engagement and **better solutions** in a wide variety of contexts.

Is it relevant to consumer research?

We believe so. To us, an 'agile approach' is about delivering **research** that primes our clients and members to **respond to a dynamic consumer and marketplace**, aligned with their business objectives and appetite for risk.

We have seen the benefits of integrating **Market, R&D,**



Regulatory, Consumer and Sensory perspectives into scopes that have traditionally sat with pure-play consumer research agencies or internal functions. More often than not, it helps our clients bring products to market faster through better engagement with cross-functional stakeholders. An integrated approach also enables clients to be more prepared for unforeseen changes influenced by internal and external factors, such as a change in corporate strategy or a new competitor.

Ultimately, the **different perspectives** and constraints force us to deliver better insight.

"Agile isn't a new thing; it's been applied in other sectors for years. For us, it's about integrating R&D, Regulatory, Consumer and Sensory perspectives to generate better insight – insight that primes our clients to be able to deliver growth and increased profitability in a highly competitive and dynamic market."

"That doesn't mean we expect our insight to predict where the next big trend will be, rather like predicting the next card in the deck. It's more about helping you play the best game you can with the hand you've been dealt... and manage the uncertainty that goes with that."

Mark Butcher, VP Commercial