

Head-to-head: Agile vs. Traditional

A comparison of methodologies

OUR CHALLENGE

Agile methods are on the rise, but are they any better?

According to the 2022 GRIT Insights Practice report, **78%** of research suppliers and **76%** of research buyers are using agile approaches.

But are they really better than traditional approaches, or innovation for innovation's sake?

GSK and Adelphi Research set up a unique head-to-head experiment

- Brand message testing research
- Two arms: Agile and traditional
- Same objectives, same messages, same respondent types in each arm

Traditional arm: Tele-depth interviews

75 min tele-depth interviews (TDIs)	N=50 in US (PCPs and specialists)
Message prioritization	Detailed message review
Performance on KPIs	Optimal story creation

Agile arm: Online bulletin board

75 min participation over 3 weeks	N=24 in US (PCPs and specialists)
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- Ability to handle high volume of messages
- Series of phased tasks:

Week 1: Message review, prioritisation, performance on KPIs

Week 2: GSK refinement of brand story

Week 3: Message recall, reactions to refined story

KEY LEARNINGS

Do you want to provide unique higher quality insights to your project, let's show you how...

Success measured against metrics relevant to agency and client

AGENCY	SHARED	CLIENT
Recruitment	Quality of insights	Ability to view research
Respondent experience	Speed	Cost
		Quick insights

Recruitment	
<p>✓</p> <p>TRADITIONAL</p> <p>Good response rates</p> <p>Ease of recruiting to a range of time slots</p>	<p>AGILE</p> <p>Good response rates</p> <p>Challenge is getting the full sample to participate in the same timeframe</p>

Respondent experience	
<p>TRADITIONAL</p> <p>A familiar methodology</p> <p>HCP is fully focused</p> <p>Ability to ask questions to aid understanding</p>	<p>⊖</p> <p>AGILE</p> <p>Flexibility on how and when to participate</p> <p>Perception of greater burden with multiple engagements</p>

Client Participation

<p>✓</p> <p>TRADITIONAL</p> <p>Live viewing, request probes in the moment, tweak stimuli during fieldwork</p> <p>Greater time commitment</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>AGILE</p> <p>No live viewing</p> <p>Phased approach enables refinement of stimuli plus areas of focus</p>
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Speed of insights

<p>TRADITIONAL</p> <p>Full findings available only after analysis and reporting are complete</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>AGILE</p> <p>Responses and topline data can be immediately available once each phase is completed</p>
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Quality of insights

Same overall pattern in terms of message performance, but...

<p>TRADITIONAL</p> <p>Greater depth of responses, but no option to retest revised messages with same respondents</p> <p>Lower insight confidence given typical smaller sample size</p> <p>Higher ratings across the board</p>	<p>AGILE</p> <p>Less depth of responses, but opportunity to retest revised messages with same respondents</p> <p>Increased insight confidence given potential for larger sample size</p> <p>Lower ratings across the board</p>
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Our hypotheses on why ratings were lower in the agile arm

- Respondents put in less effort when they are not being watched
- Respondents may be more 'honest' when unaccompanied
- Lack of opportunity for clarification of messages

A behavioral economics lens on the differences

1. Greater cognitive effort required for a self-administered task – more energy diverted into navigating the interview
2. Having someone guide you through the discussion takes on the cognitive labour and responsibility for making it work
3. The sense of rapport, plus the feeling of being valued as an expert increases engagement

Cost

<p>TRADITIONAL</p> <p>More expensive, primarily driven by moderation costs</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>AGILE</p> <p>Less expensive, primarily due to reduced moderation cost</p>
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IN SUMMARY

No outright winner, but each approach has its advantages

IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKET RESEARCH

One size does not fit all – approach must be tailored to needs and constraints

TRADITIONAL

- Complex recruits
- Depth of insight is the priority
- Complex topics
- Low volume of stimuli

AGILE

- Simple recruits
- Speed of insight is the priority
- Iteration required
- Large volume of stimuli
- Restricted budgets

HYBRID

- Agile pre-task followed by depth conversation or vice versa
- Note, cost implications must be considered
- Low volume of stimuli

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Agile and traditional approaches offer differing benefits and drawbacks
- Methodology selection must consider research and client needs, with approach selected on a case-by-case basis
- Client processes can also hinder methodology, e.g., turnaround time for approval of stimuli changes; market-specific requirements such as medical approval