

Aligning to stay agile:
**3 steps to implementing
a research-first culture**

How to align people, processes, and technology
to fill the growing demand for research.

Market researchers wear a lot of hats

On one hand, there are big questions to be answered that drive strategy for every part of the business. How should we expand to new target buyers? Is now the right time to update our pricing strategy?

On the other hand, there are data requests to support the needs of a wide variety of stakeholders. Many of the daily asks can distract researchers from collecting data about the big business strategies their companies rely on.

And, as budgets get cut, market research teams are being challenged to do more with less.



1 in 5

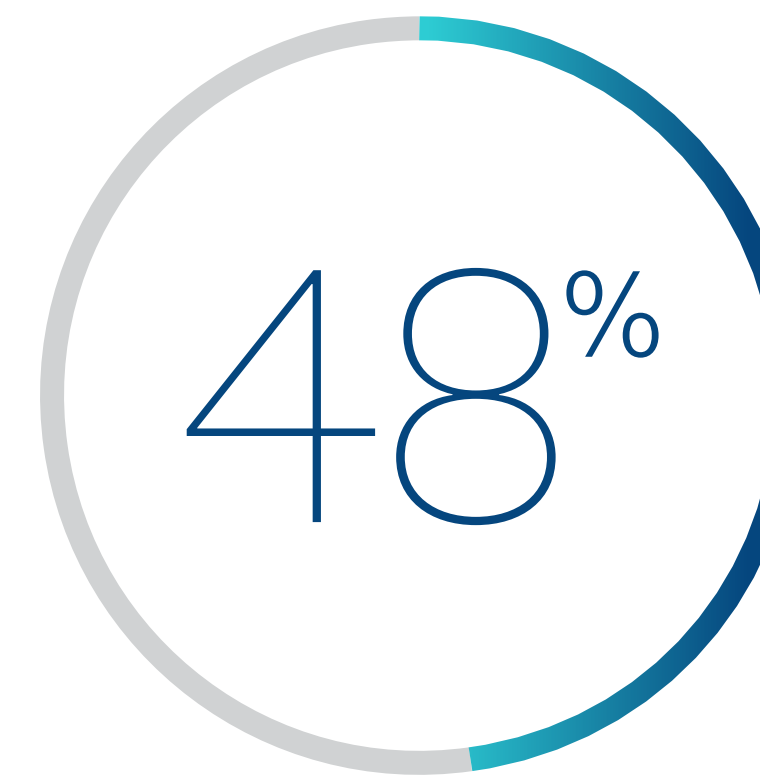
researchers say 2020 market research budgets have decreased due to COVID-19

10%

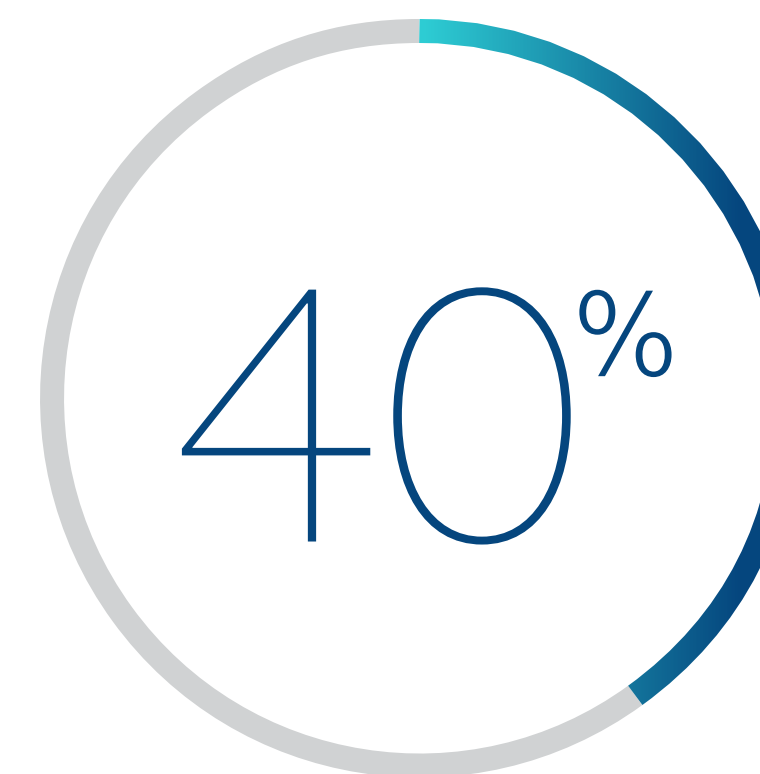
Only 10% of companies say they plan to do fewer projects in response to their budget decreases*

Which market research tasks get priority?

With budgets down and requests up, prioritization is the name of the game. We asked over 600 insights professionals about their jobs, and what they felt was most valued by their company, and by them.



Almost half of market researchers said they care about being able to quickly respond to changes in their industry*



However, 40% say extremely or very often they spend time on tedious tasks related to market research



Breaking the cycle of research busywork

For companies feeling the pressure to deliver faster results with fewer resources, there are options. DIY market research can be incorporated into the research roadmap to address needs right away.

The benefits are significant: faster turnaround, cost savings, absolute control of research methods and analysis, and data transparency.

Most importantly, as company success is increasingly at the mercy of market forces, the ability to adapt research to in-the-moment challenges is how businesses will survive.



For every business, especially those in the red, if you can take the time to find out what the data is telling you instead of ‘just going with your gut,’ you’ll be amazed how the strategy starts to show itself.



Matt Seltzer

Market Research & Strategy Consultant
S2 Research

3 steps to creating a research-first culture

Once research needs are assessed and existing tools evaluated, the gaps that can be filled by DIY approaches will become evident.

But mapping research needs to DIY technologies is only the first step. To really transition to a research-first company, you'll need to embed DIY into your company culture; from the people and teams who need data, to the process of getting it in their hands, and the technology that will facilitate that transformation.



Empower people

- Increase internal capabilities to do more in-house
- Train your team
- Enable transparency and knowledge sharing
- Empower teams to regularly evaluate and improve



Be a good manager, ensure that your staff is well-trained in the work they're doing so they can be efficient. Ensure they have the right tools for the job. Get your manager's support as you may need to say no to some projects.



Jake Pryszyk

Market researcher, blogger and speaker
The Research Geek



Align processes

- Look for ways to increase efficiency
- Create smaller projects, and faster, more frequent surveys
- Build feedback loops
- Establish internal DIY processes



One key to doing more with less is to standardize. Use survey designs and questions that have been used before and validated, have some house rules in terms of analysis, and have a framework for your reporting.



Ray Poynter

Founder
NewMR

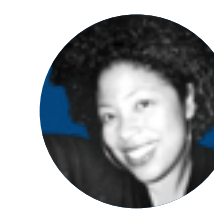


Harness technology

- Build your DIY research tech stack
- Establish a foundation of good research design
- Ask providers for help



Questions to ask...can your study be transitioned online versus in-person? How might you test a product, shelf placement, or packaging, virtually? There are many ways to reduce costs and leverage technological advances to improve efficiency.



Roben Allong
CEO
Lightbeam Communications



Goal: Transform market research into a center of excellence

The end game for a research-first organization is democratizing market research. That means that all departments in an organization feel empowered to get the data that they need when they need it, using appropriate methodologies.

However, for this transformation to be lasting, it will require executive sponsorship. Identify key executives, make the pitch, and ensure you have buy-in. Executive sponsors are the champions of change, and will need to communicate their expectations of self-service research from the top down.

Ultimately, to really scale DIY research throughout your organization, give people tools that are accessible, intuitive, and encourage them to get started on their own.



My recommendations for in-house researchers that are scaling their department:
Tools don't solve problems.
People do.



Jamin Brazil

Host

Happy Market Research podcast

A small but mighty research team leads Cuisinart's market focus



Julie Levine

Sr consumer insights manager
Cuisinart

Despite having a research team of 2, Julie Levine, senior consumer insights manager at Cuisinart is able to influence major growth initiatives. Two years ago, Cuisinart introduced a new product: air fryers. Since then, air fryers as a category have exploded in popularity, but at the time of launch they were still relatively unknown.

Levine's job was to do research that would target potential buyers, guide digital marketing efforts, and educate the sales team. She and her team conducted quite a bit of consumer research prior to the product launch.

They focused their research on:

- Purchase drivers—why do people choose to buy this product?
- Features/benefits
- Product design and size

Levine's research helped the team isolate the things people loved most about the air fryer—the health benefits of air frying food, the capacity for cooking lots of food at once, and the convenience of quick, healthy meals.

And since the launch, air fryers have been one of the fastest-growing small home appliances for Cuisinart.

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More from [the 2020 market research survival guide](#)

[Shift](#): Rethinking how market research gets done

[Assess](#): Getting efficient with market research

[Adapt](#): How market research has been impacted by industry changes

[Align](#): How high-growth companies compete using market research

More information on how we conducted [this study](#).