



# MARKET RESEARCH TRENDS

**10 Predictions on the Future of  
Insights in 2020 and Beyond**

**RIVAL**

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**T**he beginning of a new decade provides a unique opportunity to reflect on the current state of the market research industry and imagine what's next.

The 2010s saw big challenges and opportunities for market research—everything from interesting new research platforms to increasing privacy concerns. The last 10 years were anything but boring. The next decade promises to be even more action-packed.

In this ebook, we curated some of the most provocative and insightful predictions about the future of market research in 2020. As you'll see in the next pages, the challenges facing the industry heading to the new decade are enormous—but so are the opportunities.



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the industry heading into the  
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# 1

## TRANSFORMING INSIGHTS INTO A REVENUE CENTER

Historically, research (just like marketing) was seen by the organization as a cost center. Insight teams were required to drive efficiencies, but their contributions were not necessarily tied to revenue or growth. Market research's reputation as a cost center made it vulnerable to budget cuts. 😞

In the 2010s, some forward-thinking research teams started to re-imagine their roles in order to amplify their contributions to the bottom line. And in the next decade, it's a good bet we'll see more insight leaders pushing the industry to take a more sales-driven approach.

In a conversation with Audible Insights podcast host David Paull, Electrolux Head of America Insights Brett Townsend explained it well: "If we aren't delivering sales-driving insights to our companies, then we're failing<sup>1</sup>."

Townsend thinks that everything the insights team does needs to lead directly to sales—and the team needs to be able to prove it. He's encouraging insights professionals to re-think their academic tendencies and use their skills to get closer to revenue.

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**“If we aren’t delivering sales-driving insights to our companies, then we’re failing.”**


-Brett Townsend, Head of America Insights at Electrolux

“A lot of times, we as an industry get caught up in what I call interesting research,” Townsend says. “I don’t have the luxury of being interesting. Interesting people get fired. We have to be able to have everything that we do have a path towards selling more stuff.”

Transforming market research into a profit center can take on several forms.

For instance, in media, market research might partner with ad sales to create offerings that can be sold to partners. In CPG, researchers might partner with their shopper insight

counterparts on the retail side to improve e-commerce websites and drive sales revenue. Many insight teams will innovate in the next decade to monetize research and get closer to sales.



**Many insight teams will innovate in the next decade to monetize research and get closer to sales 🙌**

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# 2



## NAVIGATING COMPLEX DATA AND SECURITY REGULATIONS

According to Howard Fienberg, VP of Advocacy for the Insights Association, new privacy and data security regulations will have a big impact to the industry in 2020<sup>2</sup>. Companies already have to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the California Consumer Protection Act (CCPA), but market researchers should prepare for more regulations on the way. Fienberg notes, for example, that a new privacy law already came into effect in Nevada, and “dozens of other states will work on convoluted CCPA-inspired legislation in 2020.”

Leonard Murphy, executive editor and producer at GreenBook, predicts that the need to comply with data privacy will result to interesting new offerings in the market<sup>3</sup>. “With the fear of sanctions for non-compliance being a very real threat for many organizations (and the bigger the company, the bigger the threat is) look for a variety of new solutions to flood the marketplace,” Murphy shares.

“No one standard or protocol will emerge and fragmentation may get worse before it gets better, but the momentum will be on the side of organizations that look for ways to address compliance needs while also unlocking new potential value for data stakeholders.”

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# 3



## HELPING CMOs THRIVE IN THEIR EVOLVING ROLES

This trend is not necessarily about market research, but it's tangentially relevant given that many insight teams now report to marketing. Forrester is predicting that the role of the chief marketing officer (CMO) will be put to test in the next year.

Keith Johnston, vice president at Forrester, says that "2020 marks the beginning of a final, desperate fight for CMO relevance<sup>4</sup>."

That prediction may sound a bit over-dramatic, but it's not surprising as the CMO role has taken a beating in 2019. For example, companies such as McDonald's, Uber and Johnson & Johnson have recently eliminated this role<sup>5</sup>. The CMO tenure is also getting shorter in many industries<sup>6</sup>.

Forrester's advice for marketing leaders who want to keep their jobs longer? Expand.

"The CMO must establish control that extends beyond marketing, because you simply can't build, express, sell, communicate, connect, or service today's brands without continuity in the budget or authority," Johnston explains.

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The CMO's evolution will have downstream effects on the day-to-day of market researchers. More pressure means CMOs will demand more data and insights about customers more than ever. Insight teams need to embrace iterative, agile research to keep up with the demands of the business.

**“2020 marks the beginning of a final, desperate fight for CMO relevance”**

-Keith Johnston, VP at Forrester



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## TRUST BECOMES A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

### TRUST IN MARKET RESEARCH



**26%** trust market research  
companies

© GRBN Trust Survey 2019

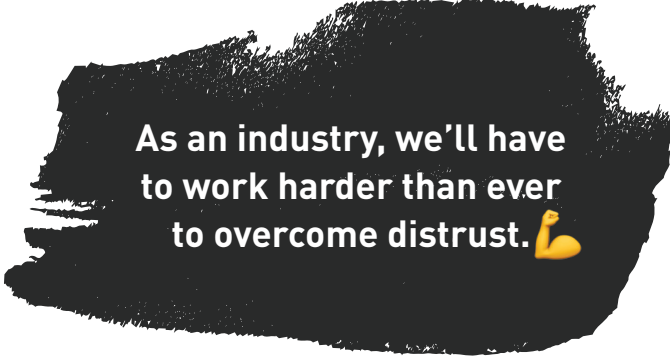
As global politics become more uncertain, market research will need to double down on trust. That's according to Eileen Campbell, chair and co-founder of our parent company Reid Campbell Group, who believes that the 2020 US election, Brexit and populist movements around the world will loom large in the new year.



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“Unfortunately, all of these will be fueled by disinformation and digital propaganda campaigns that risk leaving the public skeptical at best and cynical and disengaged at worst,” explains Campbell. “As an industry, we’ll have to work harder than ever to overcome distrust.”

Transparency, security and compliance will be more crucial than ever. “Trust is the currency of our industry—trust that we are using data and insights as a force for good to improve products and services and, ultimately, people’s lives,” Campbell adds.



**As an industry, we’ll have to work harder than ever to overcome distrust. 💪**

Campbell’s prediction is particularly interesting given that, according to a study from the Global Research Business Network, only 26% of consumers globally trust the market research industry<sup>7</sup>.

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# 5



## FINDING AN ANTIDOTE TO SURVEY OVERLOAD

“I can’t wait to get another survey in my email...” said no one EVER!

Thirsty for a real understanding of consumer behaviors, attitudes and preferences, companies are sending an overwhelming number of surveys every day. Many customers, unfortunately, are not on board with this approach. The problem isn’t just about the number of survey invitations that people receive—it also has to do with the experience people have when participating in surveys. 🙄

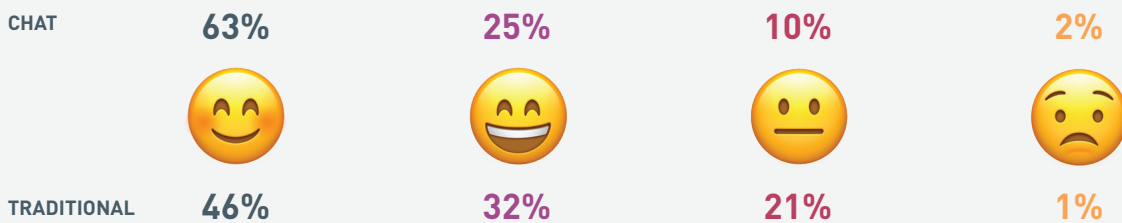
Too long<sup>8</sup>. Too boring. Too impersonal. Traditional surveys are anything but fun. Forrester is predicting that many companies will take significant action to address survey overload in the year ahead. The consulting firm says more than one-third of firms will “go beyond surveys” to capture experience data.

“Firms drown their customers in survey requests to gain insights into experience quality,” explains Gene Leganza, vice president at Forrester<sup>9</sup>. “Many customers submit themselves to this process, hoping for better experiences. But firms have rewarded these customers poorly: Customer experiences haven’t gotten better for three years.”

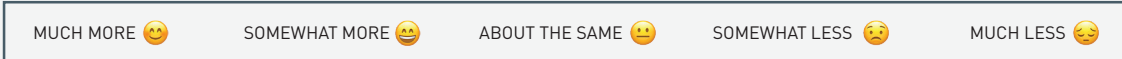
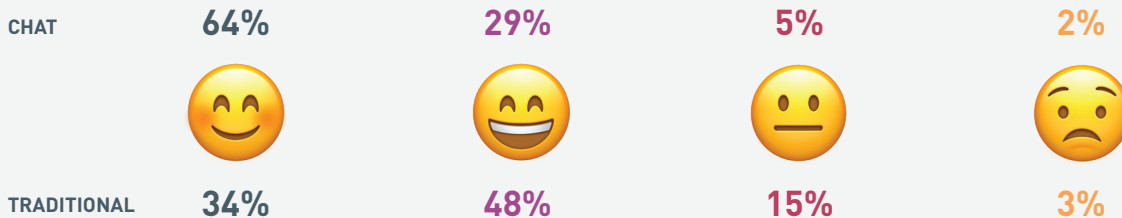
Leganza is predicting a big backlash against traditional surveys, saying, “the portion of firms that go beyond surveys will increase.”

## EXPERIENCE: CHATS VS TRADITIONAL SURVEYS

HOW DID YOU ENJOY TAKING THIS SURVEY IN COMPARISON TO OTHERS YOU MAY HAVE TAKEN BEFORE?



HOW MUCH FUN IS THIS SURVEY EXPERIENCE COMPARED TO OTHER SURVEYS YOU MAY HAVE TAKEN BEFORE?



Source: Rival Technologies, 2019

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At Rival, we're not necessarily predicting the death of surveys, but we think it's time to rethink the traditional approach to this important tool. Our solution is what we're calling conversational surveys—or simply “chats.”<sup>10</sup> Created for mobile-first users, chats turn the traditional survey experience on its head and re-imagines it for the messaging era. With chats, you can still capture both quantitative and qualitative data (and do everything you need to do as a market researcher), but you're not boring participants with a long, cumbersome experience.

Everything about chats—the UX design, the distribution channels and the language used—are optimized for the mobile web. A research-on-research study showed that 93% of research participants felt that chats were more enjoyable than traditional surveys<sup>11</sup>. Market research purists would be happy to know that this improvement in the respondent experience didn't result to any weird demographic skews.

**Not familiar with conversational surveys or chats?**

Give one a quick try by  clicking here 

# 6

## ADDRESSING DATA BLOAT

It's not just survey overload that market researchers need to find an antidote for. Mike Stevens, founder of Insight Platforms, says the industry also needs to address the growing "data bloat" problem<sup>12</sup>. Many companies today don't really lack data (they have plenty of it!); what they lack is real insights and the ability to execute meaningful changes based on customer feedback.

"Insight teams are struggling to reconcile so many conflicting signals about customers—from sales data, digital traffic, location analytics, surveys, syndicated panels," Stevens explains.

**Insight teams are struggling to reconcile conflicting signals about customers** 🙄

As a result of this data bloat, Stevens predicts that more client-side researchers will demand more storytelling capabilities from vendors.

# 7

## USING VIDEOS TO CREATE VIRALITY AND CUSTOMER EMPATHY

One prediction from Andrew Reid, our CEO and founder at Rival Technologies, complements Stevens'. Reid agrees that researchers need to lean on storytelling to capture the attention of decision-makers.

"It's interesting because while C-level execs are certainly interested in numbers, there's nothing quite like seeing the faces of your customers," Reid says.

"More insight pros will invest in approaches that allow them to capture videos from customers at scale. I see researchers using video content to create customer empathy and drive virality for insights within their organization."

### REACH3 DATA SAMPLE: AVERAGE WORD COUNT IN RESPONSES BY SOURCE

**700%  
Increase**



**122 words**

Average video response in conversational approach

**17 words**

Average text response in traditional email survey



Source: Reach3 Insights, 2019

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Videos submitted by research participants tend to be a lot richer and deeper than text responses. For example, a study from our sister company Reach3 Insights found that video responses result in 700% more content compared to text-only responses<sup>13</sup>.

You may be wondering: Are research participants actually willing to share videos? Based on our experience, the answer is a resounding yes! Smartphones make it exceedingly easy for people to share videos via mobile surveys.

**Check out how REVOLT TV & Media  
used chats to get more than 500 images  
and videos for its signature event<sup>14</sup>**

[👉 Read Now 👈](#)



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# 8



## ADOPTION OF NEW RESEARCH TECHNOLOGIES TO ACCELERATE

Compared to their colleagues in marketing, market researchers tend to be more risk-averse<sup>15</sup>. There's a lot of innovation happening in insights, but the adoption of new market research software and platforms doesn't happen as quickly as it should.

Will the new decade inspire research teams to take more risks? Reid thinks so. "The most widely accepted technologies in our industry today have been developed in the 2000s; now there's a new generation of insight leaders who are hungry for the next big thing," he explains.

This doesn't mean companies will bring new insight platforms without seriously considering the consequences. As data-driven organizations, insight teams will do their due diligence to make sure that new market research technologies are producing trustworthy data.

Reid explains, "I see more researchers making the investment in doing parallel studies to test the effectiveness of bleeding-edge technologies. This is a good thing for our industry as it will drive innovation while making sure we're still providing credible data to those who need it."

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## ENGAGING CONSUMERS ON THEIR TERMS

In 2019 we saw a team of early innovators embracing a more conversational approach to capturing insights—a trend that, according to Reach3 CEO Matt Kleinschmit, will continue in the new year.

“Marketers will discover that as important as big data algorithms and predictive analytics can be in optimizing how they market to their customers, it is equally—if not more—important to engage consumers on their terms in more human, conversational ways,” says Kleinschmit<sup>16</sup>.



**Engage consumers on their  
terms in more human,  
conversational ways**

“Common research techniques such as long, email-based surveys that feel to consumers like they are taking a test will give way to more natural, immersive research approaches that provide in-the-moment engagement, more immersive qual and quant inputs and ultimately deeper, richer and more human insights.”

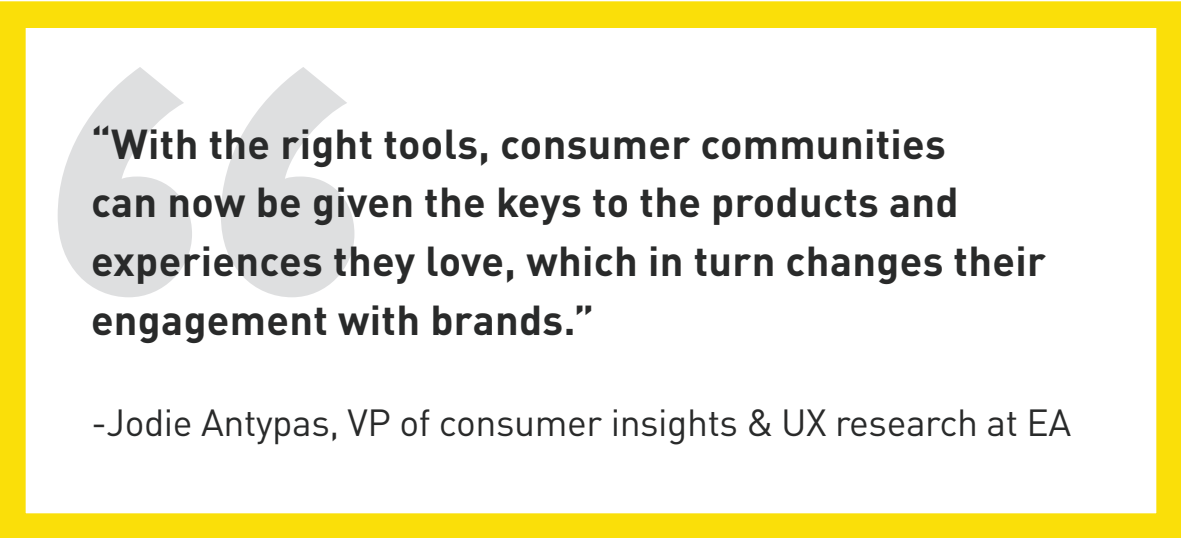
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# 10

## RE-IMAGINING COMMUNITIES IN THE ERA OF MOBILE MESSAGING

Online communities are now the most popular market research technology, according to a 2019 GreenBook Research Industry Trends (GRIT) report<sup>17</sup>. Over the last decade, many companies have invested enormous resources in building their own branded communities where they can engage customers for their feedback on an ongoing basis.



**“With the right tools, consumer communities can now be given the keys to the products and experiences they love, which in turn changes their engagement with brands.”**

-Jodie Antypas, VP of consumer insights & UX research at EA

Experts believe communities will continue to be popular. “With the right tools, consumer communities can now be given the keys to the products and experiences they love, which in turn changes their engagement

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with brands,” Jodie Antypas, VP of consumer insights and UX research at EA, tells AdWeek.

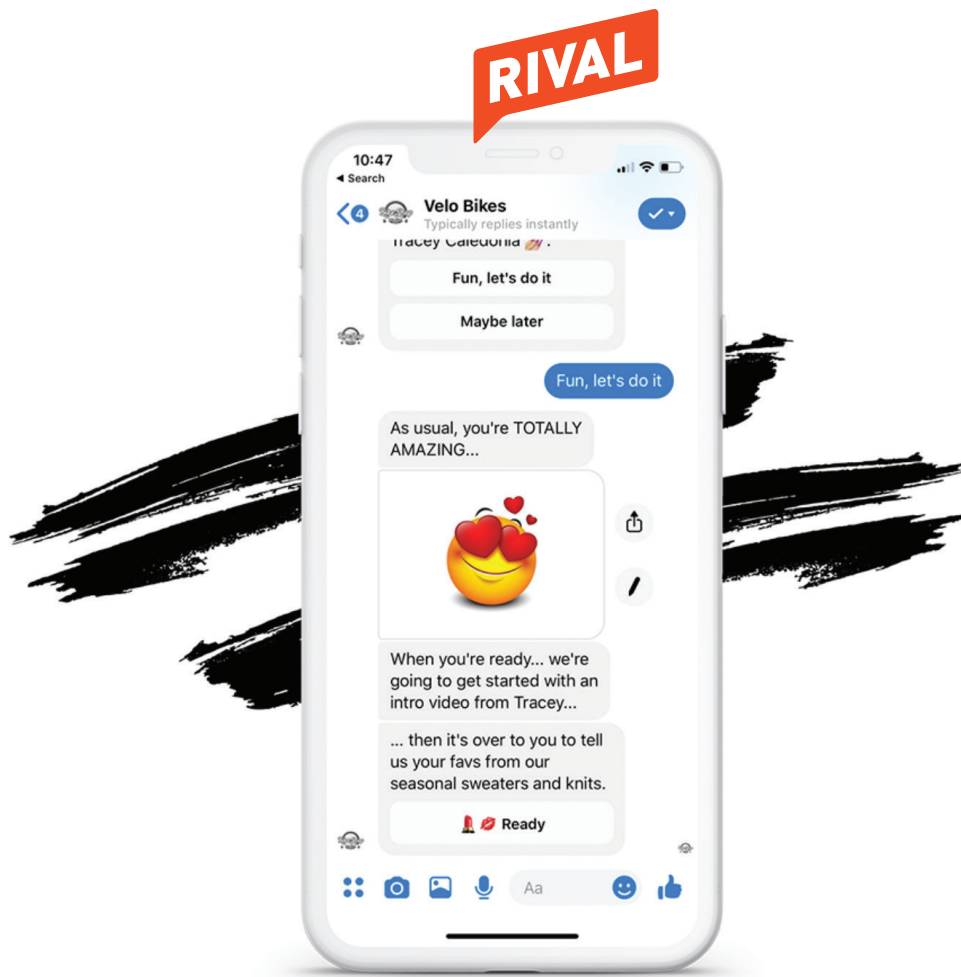
“It’s really exciting to see this beginning to take shape—it’s a whole new model of consumer ownership when you think about products that are designed and created in part by the community.”

The need to activate existing communities to get customer feedback at scale will continue to drive demand for insight communities, but this technology is ripe for disruption. In his ebook, *The Future of Insights is Conversational*, Kleinschmit notes that communities often depend on an antiquated method—emails—to recruit and reach research participants. “Not surprisingly, even these high-affinity communities are facing unacceptably low response and community participation rates,” he says. 🙅

At the very least, communities need to be re-imagined for the mobile messaging era. Kleinschmit adds, “More than ever, we need to engage with consumers the way we actually talk to each other. We need to reach people where they are rather than through channels that are convenient for us, not them. And when we do reach them, we need to engage in authentic conversations, using natural language that elicits honest and insightful opinions and accurate behavioral dynamics.”

In 2020 and the next decade ahead, market research platforms that provide on-demand, mobile-first and super flexible solutions will have the biggest chance of succeeding. 🙌

# GOODBYE SURVEYS... HELLO CHATS!



According to a recent research-on-research, 93% of respondents prefer chat surveys over traditional surveys.

[LEARN MORE](#)

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# About Rival Technologies

Rival Technologies lets companies connect with consumers as easily as you do with your friends and family. The company's platform enables industry-leading brands to activate their existing social media and online communities to engage the right audience via SMS and mobile messaging apps for consumer insights. Rival's voice-of-customer solutions use mobile-first technologies to capture real-time quantitative and qualitative feedback—enabling CX, market research and marketing professionals to be agile and get the insights they need to improve business outcomes. Rival is sister company to Reach3 Insights, a full-service research consultancy that offers conversational insight solutions to global brands. Learn more at [rivaltech.com](https://rivaltech.com).

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