While the buzz around Agile marketing has been undeniable for years, our Third Annual State of Agile Marketing marks a turning point in many ways.

This year, we collected responses from 637 marketers, most of whom hail from North America. They showed us that not only is Agile adoption accelerating (Agile marketers outnumbered all other groups this year!), ever-higher numbers of Agile marketers report enjoying key benefits of agility. We can also see crucial Agile practices are spreading to more and more teams as the maturity of Agile marketing teams steadily increases.

For long-time Agile marketing nerds like myself, there’s a lot to be excited about.

But the journey toward marketing agility is, in many ways, just beginning. Some of the biggest hurdles we now face are our own attitudes. In the coming months and years, I suspect the battle we’ll see is agility versus inertia.

Traditional marketers are still enamored with the status quo, feeling that their processes are good enough to get along. Ad hoc marketers, those who operate without a long-term plan and struggle with incoming requests, are deeply dissatisfied with how they work. Yet, they report the lowest likelihood to transition to Agile in the immediate future.

There’s no denying we’re making our way towards the peak of marketing agility, but there’s still a lot of mountain ahead of us. Let’s keep climbing.

Andrea Fryrear,
AgileSherpas Co-Founder
Marketers’ interest in Agile is stronger than ever. 41% of marketers report currently using Agile and, of non-users, 42% plan to adopt it. Of these, the vast majority would like to do so in the next year.

Lack of training and a feeling that current processes are working “well enough” remain the two most commonly cited barriers to marketing agility. However, when we compare the differences between Agile teams and their non-Agile counterparts, it becomes clear that processes that are “good enough” fall short of Agile ways of working.

Agile marketers are more likely than other groups to be satisfied with how their team is working and the results they can achieve. 74% of Agile marketers are satisfied, compared with just 58% of traditional marketers and 34% of ad hoc marketers.

Two-thirds of Agile marketing teams have been practicing for at least 3 years, but most admit that while they are using Agile practices, they’re “still maturing.”

Hybrid frameworks continue to be the most common ways for marketers to embrace agility. Most hybrid Agile marketing teams say their choice came from their unique activities that didn’t fit with traditional Agile approaches.

Proper training remains critical in successful Agile adoption. In-person and online training are cited as some of the most valuable elements in an Agile marketing transformation. The most popular training methods are Agile marketing-specific certification courses and in-person team trainings.
AGILE MARKETING ADOPTION AND BARRIERS
Marketers who label themselves as Agile now outnumber both traditional and ad hoc groups. Non-Agile marketers cite a lack of education and relative satisfaction with their current processes as the biggest barriers to greater agility.

MARKETING PRIORITIES AND HOW AGILE HELPS
Quality, productivity, and alignment with business objectives top the list of priorities for all kinds of marketers, but Agile teams report greater success in achieving these ends.

AGILE VS. TRADITIONAL VS. AD HOC MARKETING TEAMS
Ad hoc marketing teams are by far the unhappiest with how they manage work. Agile teams, on the other hand, enjoy operations and feel prepared to deal with the changing digital landscape.

WHAT AGILE MARKETING LOOKS LIKE
More marketers than ever report using key Agile practices like daily standup and kanban boards. They also continue to favor hybrid frameworks rather than traditional ones like Scrum.

DEMOGRAPHICS
Most respondents were from North America, but they represent a wide variety of organizations.
Which of the following most accurately describes your marketing team’s process?

- **42% Agile**
  We use at least some parts of an Agile marketing approach to manage our work, such as daily standups, a backlog, Sprints, kanban board, etc. We have plans, but they’re flexible and change often.

- **41% Traditional**
  We plan our work in advance using a lot of detail and try to stick as closely as possible to that plan.

- **16% Ad hoc**
  We don’t make long term plans. We work on what seems right from day to day and don’t have a well-defined process for managing incoming work.

More marketers are labeling themselves Agile than ever before. This year, we see a jump of ten percentage points in the Agile category, paired with a 9 point decline in those who identify their teams as traditional.

How long has your marketing department been practicing Agile?

- **66% **
  Of Agile marketing teams have been practicing for at least 3 years.

Source: State of Agile Marketing 2020 | AgileSherpas and Aprimo

n=259

Source: State of Agile Marketing 2020 | AgileSherpas and Aprimo

n=637
How would you rate your marketing department’s Agile maturity?

Over half of Agile marketing teams note they have room to improve. Very few say they have a high level of competency, despite the increase in teams using Agile for multiple years.

What were the most important reasons for adopting Agile within your marketing department?

In 2020, marketers are more likely to turn to Agile ways of working to help with changing priorities, improving team morale, better managing distributed teams, and enhancing predictability of campaigns.
Which other teams in your organization are using an Agile methodology?

Agile marketing teams looking for allies should turn to their colleagues in Sales and IT/Software, the two groups most commonly cited as fellow Agile functions.

Source: State of Agile Marketing 2020 | AgileSherpas and Aprimo

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**Plans and Hurdles for Non-Agile Teams**

**Does your marketing department plan to implement Agile marketing?**

- **43%** Yes
- **25%** No
- **32%** I don’t know

Source: State of Agile Marketing 2020 | AgileSherpas and Aprimo

**When does your marketing department plan to implement Agile marketing?**

- **46%** Within the next 6 months
- **49%** Within the next year
- **5%** 2-4 years from now

Source: State of Agile Marketing 2020 | AgileSherpas and Aprimo

Interest in Agile marketing is high among those not already using it, and there’s a strong sense of urgency to change ways of working in the immediate future. Last year, only 32% of non-Agile marketers said they’d make the switch within the next 6 months.
What are the biggest barriers preventing your marketing department from more completely implementing an Agile approach?

![Bar chart showing the top barriers to Agile approach implementation.]

**Source:** State of Agile Marketing 2020 | AgileSherpas and Aprimo

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**No Excuse Not to Train**

**IN-PERSON**

Multiple training organizations offer accredited workshops to allow attendees to become a Certified Professional in Agile Marketing (ICP-MKG):


**ONLINE**

No time to travel? You can still get certified with AgileSherpas’ online version of the ICP-MKG certification workshop:

[https://agilesherpas.getlearnworlds.com/](https://agilesherpas.getlearnworlds.com/)

**SELF-DIRECTED**

Webinars, podcasts, books, articles, and online classes on Agile marketing are just a simple search away. We’ve collected a ton for free here:

[agilesherpas.com/resources](http://agilesherpas.com/resources)

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**COMPARED WITH 2019, MORE THAN 3x AS MANY MARKETERS BLAMED THEIR DELAY IN AGILE ADOPTION ON NOT HAVING THE RIGHT TOOLS IN 2020.**
Marketers are increasingly focused on increasing productivity (+10%), aligning with their organization’s goals (+9%), and improving team morale (+9%), all benefits enjoyed by Agile teams.

Which of the following will be a high priority for your marketing department in 2020?

What benefits does your marketing department get from using an Agile approach?

Agile adoption delivers on expectations for marketers more than ever as the adoption of practices continues to expand. Twice as many Agile marketing teams reported improved productivity in 2020, and those enjoying better prioritization nearly doubled as well.
Differing Priorities:
While marketers share many priorities, regardless of how they get things done, there are some stark differences between what traditional, Agile, and ad hoc marketers are focused on:

**Changing gears in response to feedback**
- Traditional teams: 30%
- Agile teams: 37%
- Ad hoc teams: 16%

**Prioritizing the most important work**
- Traditional teams: 39%
- Agile teams: 52%
- Ad hoc teams: 45%

**Better alignment with organizational goals and objectives**
- Traditional teams: 44%
- Agile teams: 51%
- Ad hoc teams: 42%

**Producing higher quality work**
- Traditional teams: 52%
- Agile teams: 56%
- Ad hoc teams: 38%

Source: State of Agile Marketing 2020 | AgileSherpas and Aprimo
How satisfied are you with the way your marketing department currently manages its work?

**satisfied/very satisfied**
- Traditional: 58%
- Ad hoc: 34%
- Agile: 74%

**dissatisfied/very dissatisfied**
- Traditional: 8%
- Ad hoc: 16%
- Agile: 7%

Agile marketers are far more likely to be satisfied with their processes than those on either traditional or ad hoc teams. Dissatisfaction is twice as common on ad hoc teams.

Source: State of Agile Marketing 2020 | AgileSherpas and Aprimo

Different Views on Alignment and Adaptability

- **My marketing team can handle fast-paced work**
  - Agree/strongly agree
  - Traditional: 70%
  - Agile: 82%
  - Ad hoc: 48%

- **Our marketing team’s strategy is aligned with our organization’s vision**
  - Agree/strongly agree
  - Traditional: 79%
  - Agile: 86%
  - Ad hoc: 56%

- **I’m confident our marketing team can take advantage of emerging opportunities.**
  - Agree/strongly agree
  - Traditional: 81%
  - Agile: 89%
  - Ad hoc: 65%

Source: State of Agile Marketing 2020 | AgileSherpas and Aprimo
Which Agile methodology do you follow most closely?

Hybrid frameworks remain the popular approach for marketers looking to go Agile, with nearly half of teams citing this way of working as their preferred method.

Most Agile marketers using a hybrid approach do so because they have unique needs that traditional frameworks can’t satisfy. Many tried an "out of the box" approach and evolved from this starting point.

What factor(s) lead you to using a hybrid Agile approach?

- We have unique marketing activities that didn’t fit with traditional Agile approaches: 50%
- We tried traditional Agile approaches (e.g. Scrum) and adapted them based on what worked and what didn’t: 43%
- We were part of a larger organization-wide Agile transformation and adapted the Agile approaches being used by other groups in the transformation: 24%
- Our organization’s culture wasn’t a good fit for traditional Agile approaches: 20%
- We’re in a highly regulated space that made traditional Agile approaches difficult to follow: 19%
- We didn’t have the right people with the right skills to follow a traditional Agile approach: 15%

*Source: State of Agile Marketing 2020 | AgileSherpas and Aprimo*
Which Agile techniques and practices does your marketing department use? (Top 10 responses)

Every item on this list increased in adoption compared to 2019. Agile practices are being adopted more completely inside the marketing function, an excellent indicator of the growing maturity of the movement.

Which of the following have been most valuable in your adoption of Agile marketing?

*Source: State of Agile Marketing 2020 | AgileSherpas and Aprimo

Want to ensure a strong rollout of Agile in your marketing organization? Consistency and training are the keys according to Agile marketers.
How are you training yourself in Agile marketing techniques?

Get your marketers training in their area of expertise. Marketers prefer courses tailored to their profession, as well as options that can serve their entire team.

*Source: State of Agile Marketing 2020 | AgileSherpas and Aprimo

- Agile marketing-specific certification courses: 56%
- In-person training for the entire team, with or without certifications: 56%
- Online training without certifications: 43%
- Other Agile certification courses, e.g. Certified Scrum Master or Product Owner: 38%
- In-person “train the trainer” for internal Agile leaders: 34%
Demographics

The Third Annual State of Agile Marketing survey was conducted from December 2019 to February 2020. It was produced by AgileSherpas in partnership with Mantis Research, and sponsored by Aprimo. We collected responses from 637 marketers and business owners via online survey. The majority of respondents (96%) were based in North America. Marketers reported a range of professional experience, with 28% on the job for 5 years or less, 49% in marketing for 6-15 years, and 22% working in the field for more than 15 years. Responses from non-marketers were excluded from these published results. Respondents represent a wide range of organizations and were drawn primarily from senior marketing professionals, as outlined in the demographic data below.

![Estimated Annual Revenue*](image1)

![Current Position*](image2)

![Number of Employees in Your Marketing Department*](image3)

![Type of Organization*](image4)

![Industry*](image5)

*Source: State of Agile Marketing 2020 | AgileSherpas and Aprimo
About AgileSherpas:

AgileSherpas is the world’s leading Agile marketing training, consulting, and coaching organization. We guide marketing departments toward high performance by translating successful Agile practices to work inside the marketing profession.

Our highly-trained coaches take organizations from zero to Agile in less than 18 months using the Marketing Agility Ascension©, our proprietary transformation model proven with over a thousand marketers at dozens of organizations.

This journey blends AgileSherpas’ coaching and consulting expertise with world-class certifications from the International Consortium for Agile (ICAgile), so every member of the transforming organization receives opportunities for professional development while discovering more effective ways of working together.

Visit AgileSherpas.com to start your own ascent toward marketing agility.

About Aprimo:

Aprimo provides technology solutions for content, operations, and performance that enable enterprises to optimize their brand experiences and the resources they use to deliver them. Our platform gives enterprises the advantage by streamlining and governing all the behind-the-scenes activities – from ideation to distribution – involved in delivering exceptional brand experiences.