

▶ SIXTH ANNUAL

# STATE OF AGILE MARKETING REPORT



# AGILE MARKETING LEADS THE WAY



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CEO and Co-founder  
AgileSherpas

First, let's cover some good news: Agile marketing is working. It helps teams do the right work faster, and at a higher level of quality. More good news: it accomplishes this no matter where people are in the world, as our new scope of respondents from a whopping 24 countries can attest.

But here's the problem: we're making Agile adoption much harder than it needs to be.

As the second wave of agility, we should be taking advantage of lessons learned by our predecessors. But marketers seem intent on doing this the hard way.

Tried-and-true tools – like certification courses, conferences, Agile coaches, and self-paced learning – help us succeed in our transformative efforts. The majority of marketers who've used them report they were highly effective.

And yet most marketers *don't* use them.

Likewise, marketing departments that transition everything and everyone to Agile enjoy the greatest benefits of agility (as we reported for the first time in last year's Report). But only one third of our Agile respondents say all their marketers are working this way.

So, if you want happy, effective marketers whose work aligns to organizational goals, I've got three action items for you:

1. **Do all your marketing work in an Agile system.** Yes, that's harder than building some pockets of agility here and there. It's also exponentially more effective.
2. **Train the people on your Agile teams in a tailored, relevant way.** Not everybody should be a Certified Scrum Master. Get them workshops and courses that match their context.
3. **Help people grow as your transformation expands with self-paced learning.** Even the best two-day workshop won't help forever. Provide continuous access to role-based, contextual content.

Those three steps may not be easy, but as the data on the following pages proves, they're extremely effective. So let's get to work.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, flowing 'A' followed by a smaller 'F' and a dot.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

▶ **AGILE MARKETING IS HELPING TEAMS CONQUER THEIR TOP PRIORITIES.**

The biggest benefits marketers get from Agile are the ability to prioritize work more effectively, boost productivity, and improve the quality of their work. These align with some of the top priorities marketers have for 2023.

▶ **THE MAJORITY OF MARKETERS WHO ARE ADOPTING AGILE AREN'T TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE TOOLS AND TRAINING AVAILABLE TO THEM – EVEN THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN PROVEN TO BE EFFECTIVE.**

Many things work well when organizations adopt Agile marketing, including Agile certification courses, conferences, Agile coaches, and self-paced learning. Yet, the majority of marketers aren't using these tools.

▶ **AGILE MARKETERS ARE CONTINUING TO LEARN ABOUT AND EXPERIMENT WITH DIFFERENT WAYS OF USING AGILE.**

90% say their organization has supported their Agile marketing teams in the past 12 months.

▶ **THE MARKETING DEPARTMENTS THAT SEE THE BIGGEST BENEFITS WITH AGILE ARE THOSE IN WHICH ALL TEAMS ARE USING AGILE.**

Departments that have undergone an Agile transformation are more likely to be able to confidently collaborate, handle fast-paced work, contribute productively to the organization's long-term success, and push back on unplanned work.

▶ **THE VAST MAJORITY OF AGILE MARKETING DEPARTMENTS ARE WORKING TOWARDS TRANSITIONING ALL OF THEIR TEAMS TO AGILE.**

87% who are not yet Agile plan to transition at least some of their teams to Agile.

▶ **THERE IS STRONG INTEREST IN AGILE FROM THOSE WHO ARE NOT YET USING IT.**

42% of marketers who are not using Agile would like to implement it within the next year – and economic uncertainty is accelerating interest in Agile.

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## 5 INTEREST IN AGILE MARKETING

While a slight plurality of surveyed marketers still use traditional waterfall frameworks, it's clear that most want to adopt Agile within the next year. In particular, concerns about the economy are driving many to finally try it. But some key barriers remain, most importantly a lack of coaching and training.

## 9 HOW AGILE IS USED IN ORGANIZATIONS

It's long been clear that Agile teams prefer to work with other Agile teams and that seems to be happening more and more. Agile is expanding to new functions like sales and HR because its benefits compound when it's used by more teams in a single organization. As Agile expands, hybrid approaches are enabling practitioners to adapt it more than ever.

## 16 HOW ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORT AGILE MARKETING

Agile marketing requires ongoing support from leadership to really hit its stride, but is that support being provided? Here we see what is being offered and, critically, what kinds of support Agile marketers themselves are getting genuine value from. There's also the question of how Agile marketers are evolving how they plan and budget, abandoning traditional schedules for more flexible approaches.

## 20 CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS OF AGILE MARKETING

While the benefits of Agile marketing very clearly outweigh the difficulties involved, just where marketers are struggling points to how organizations should adjust how they provide support. Overall though, respondents report nearly universal success rates. So despite the challenges that exist, there's a lot to celebrate here.

## 26 WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

We want to empower you to use this data to improve how you implement Agile in marketing. With that in mind, this section provides suggestions for next steps you can take to further improve the value you get from Agile.

## 27 DEMOGRAPHICS AND METHODOLOGY

To help you better understand how we got this data and how you should use it, in this section, we break down the demographics of our respondents and the methodology of our survey.

# INTEREST IN AGILE MARKETING

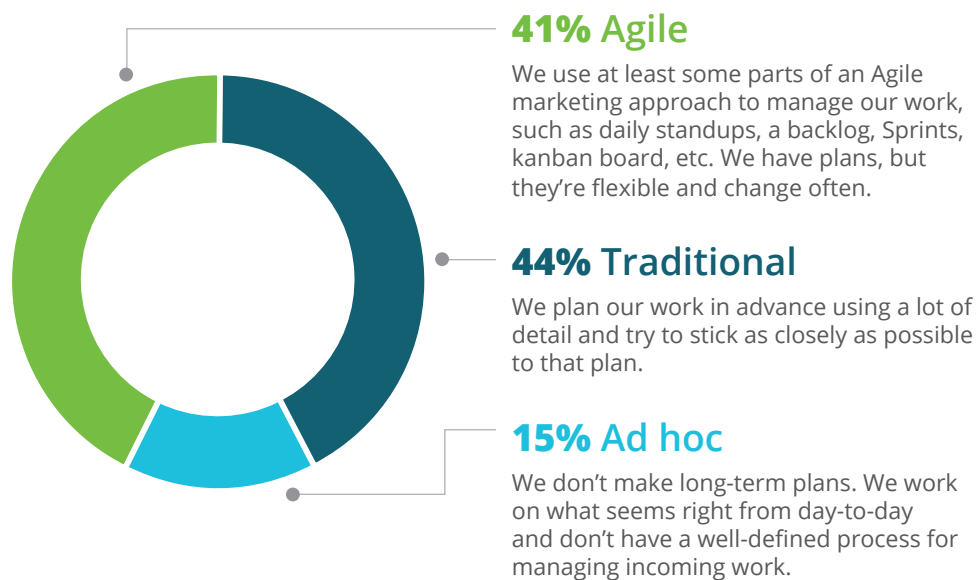
With this survey going international for the first time, we were very curious to see how Agile marketing is spreading globally. In short, while results from previous years show that US marketers are slightly ahead of the curve, the rest of the world isn't far behind.

Agile remains the reality or goal for most marketers, driven in part by worries about a potential economic downturn. However, barriers remain. The single greatest element blocking teams from trying Agile is the belief that current methods are good enough. But for those who want marketing that's better than "good enough," the biggest barrier remains a lack of training and coaching.

## **STRONG INTEREST, BUT BARRIERS REMAIN**

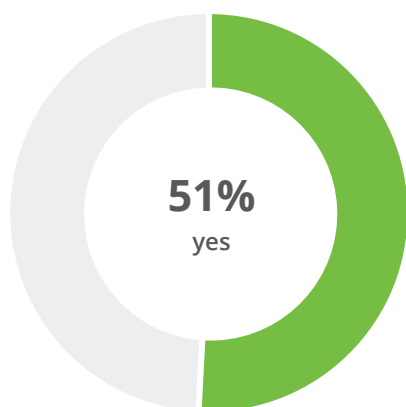
- ▶ 41% of marketers surveyed currently use Agile.
- ▶ 51% of those who don't use Agile plan to begin using it, meaning 71% of all marketers surveyed either use Agile or plan to.
- ▶ 82% of marketers who plan on switching to Agile aim to do so within the next year.
- ▶ Most marketers who plan on switching to Agile see the global economic climate as a factor in this choice.
- ▶ Besides feeling current processes are acceptable, the biggest barrier to Agile adoption is a lack of training about Agile approaches.

## Which of the following most accurately describes your marketing team's process?



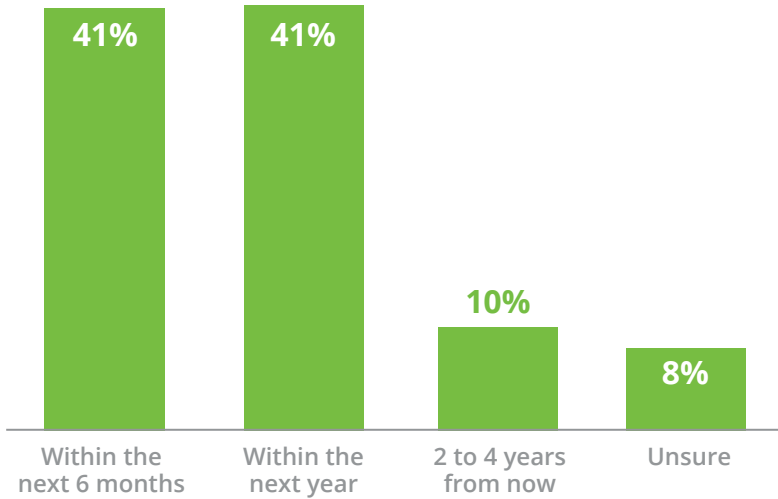
Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

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



Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

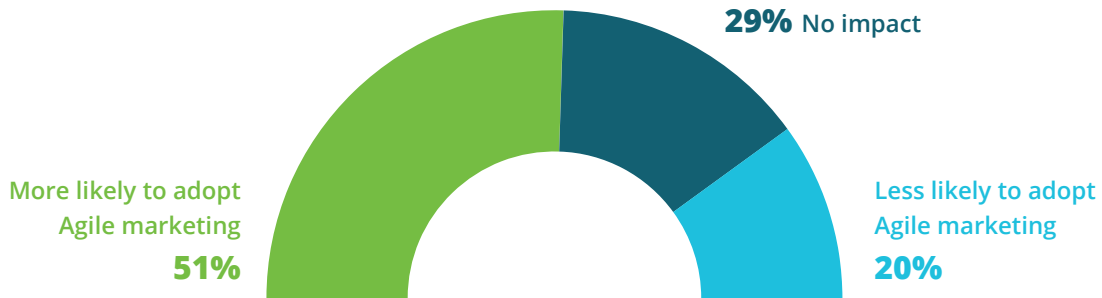
## When does your marketing department plan to implement Agile marketing?



Pressures like economic factors are pushing teams interested in Agile to consider implementing it sooner rather than later.

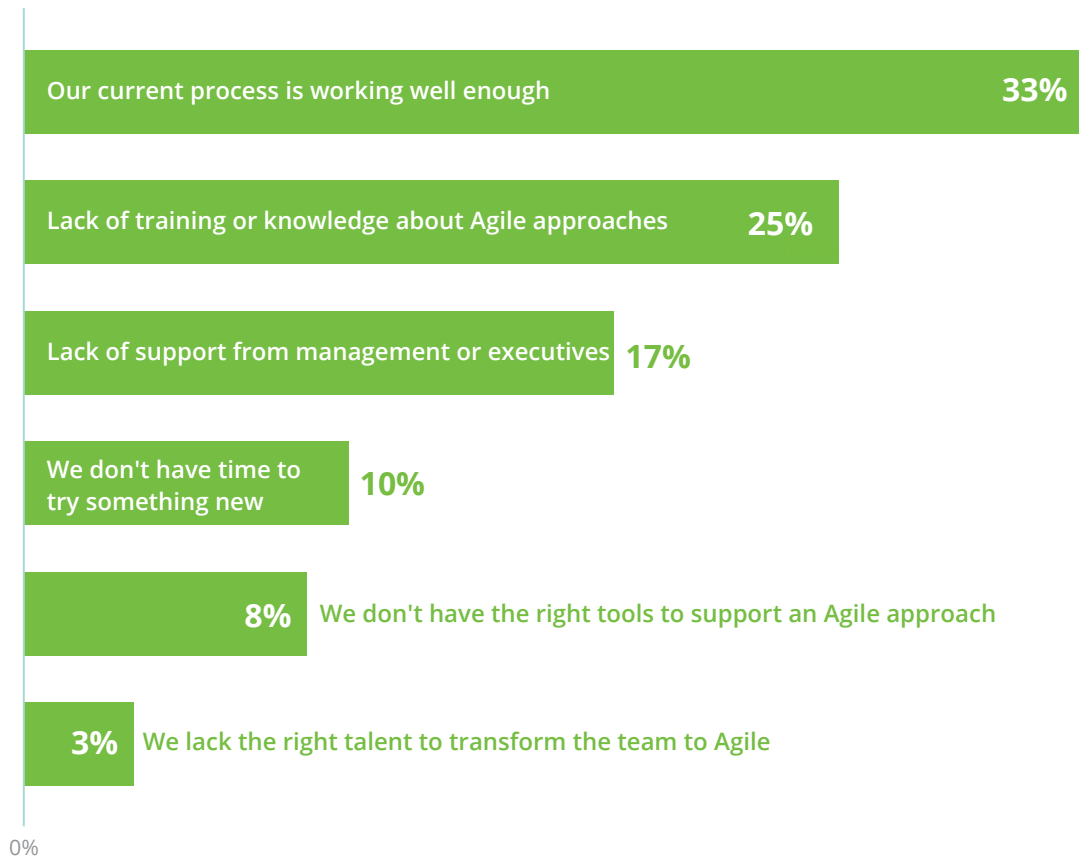
Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

## What impact, if any, does the current economic climate have on your decision to adopt Agile marketing?



Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

## What is the biggest barrier preventing your marketing department from fully implementing an Agile approach?



Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

▶ While recent US-based surveys found the biggest barrier to be a lack of training and knowledge, it's clear that globally, more marketers are simply settling for the status quo.



# HOW **AGILE** IS USED IN ORGANIZATIONS

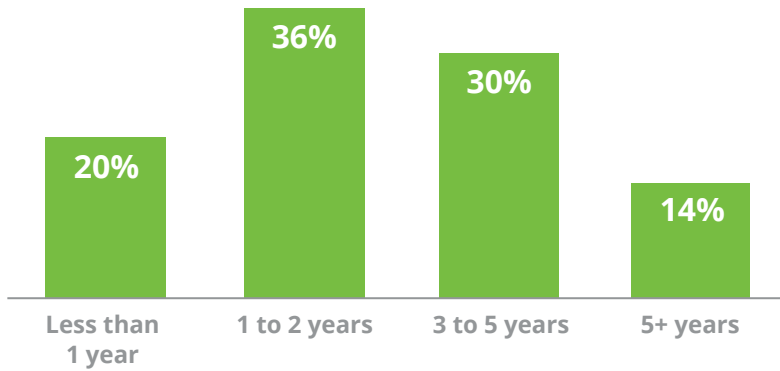
Once again, our survey has found that Agile marketers want fellow marketing teams and related functions to adopt Agile ways of working as well. Our results make it clear why, as we found a substantial difference in the benefits teams got from Agile when all teams used it compared to when only some teams did.

It's no wonder that 90% of Agile marketers who work with non-Agile functions like sales, finance, or HR wish they would use it as well. Fortunately, Agile is expanding in these areas as well as teams help their colleagues adapt it to their needs through hybrid approaches.

## **AGILE IN PRACTICE**

- ▶ 83% of Agile marketers surveyed operate in organizations with more than one Agile team. 90% want other functions to transition to Agile as well.
- ▶ Organizations where all marketing teams use Agile are about 20% more likely to report getting key Agile benefits compared to those where only some teams are Agile.
- ▶ We were happy to see that Agile is becoming more popular in functions like sales and HR, where 47% and 28% reported using it respectively.
- ▶ Hybrid approaches remain the most popular with Agile marketers largely because that's what other Agile teams established first.

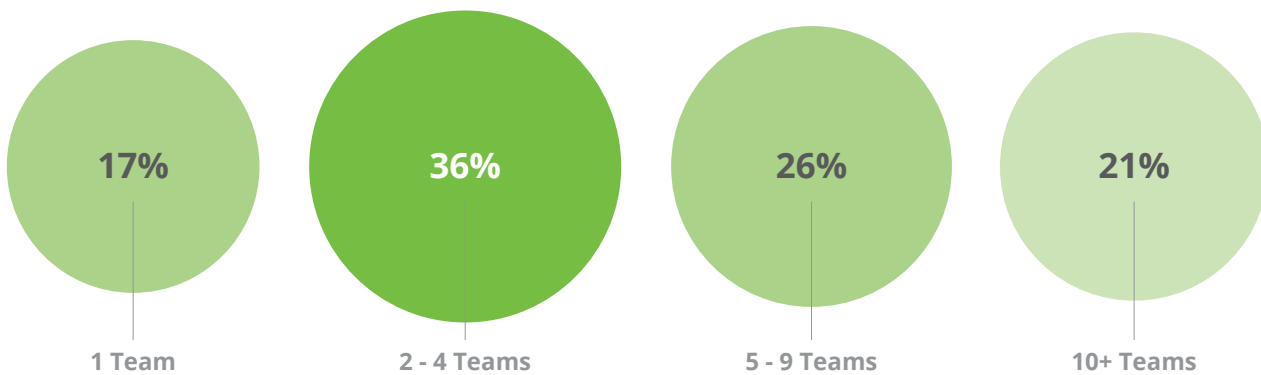
## How long has your marketing department been practicing Agile?



▶ We've long seen Agile marketers report benefits from working with fellow Agile teams, so we're happy to see that becoming the norm.

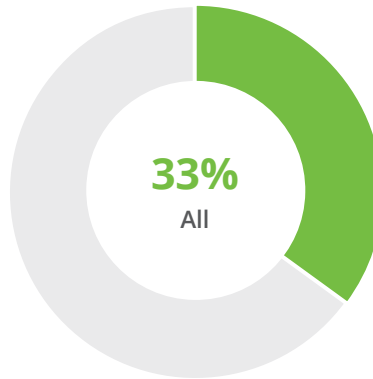
Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

## Approximately how many Agile marketing teams do you have?



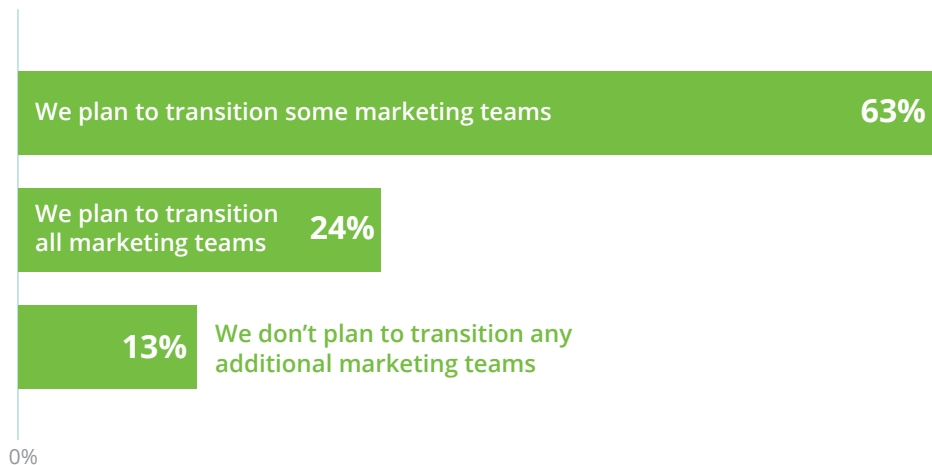
Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

## How many of your marketing teams employ an Agile framework (rather than continue to use traditional ways of working)?



Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

## To what extent do you plan to transition additional marketing teams to Agile?



Organizations where all marketing teams use Agile are about **20%** more likely to report key Agile benefits.

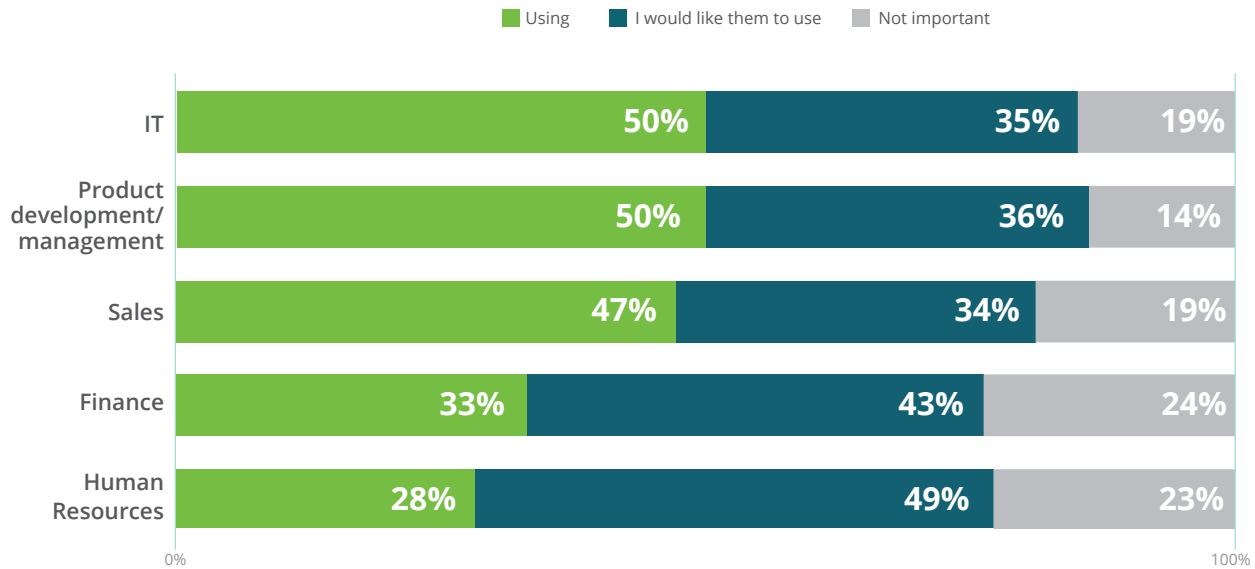
Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

## Benefits of Agile transformation

	All marketing teams use Agile	Some marketing teams use Agile
Marketing is very empowered to push back on unplanned work when it doesn't align to their team's goals and/or puts high-value work at risk	82%	52%
It is easy for the team to connect its daily activities to corporate strategy and objectives	54%	25%
Marketing is very satisfied with how their team currently manages its work	75%	59%
Marketing effectively contributes to the organization's long-term success	92%	76%
Marketing is very confident their team can take advantage of emerging opportunities	82%	66%
Marketing is able to handle fast-paced work	86%	71%
Marketing is very confident their team can collaborate regardless of where team is working	85%	73%

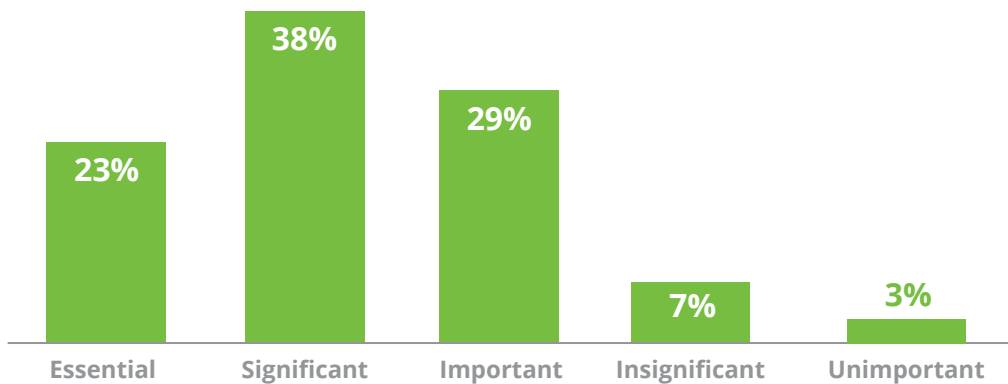
Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

## Which other functions in your organization are using an Agile framework?



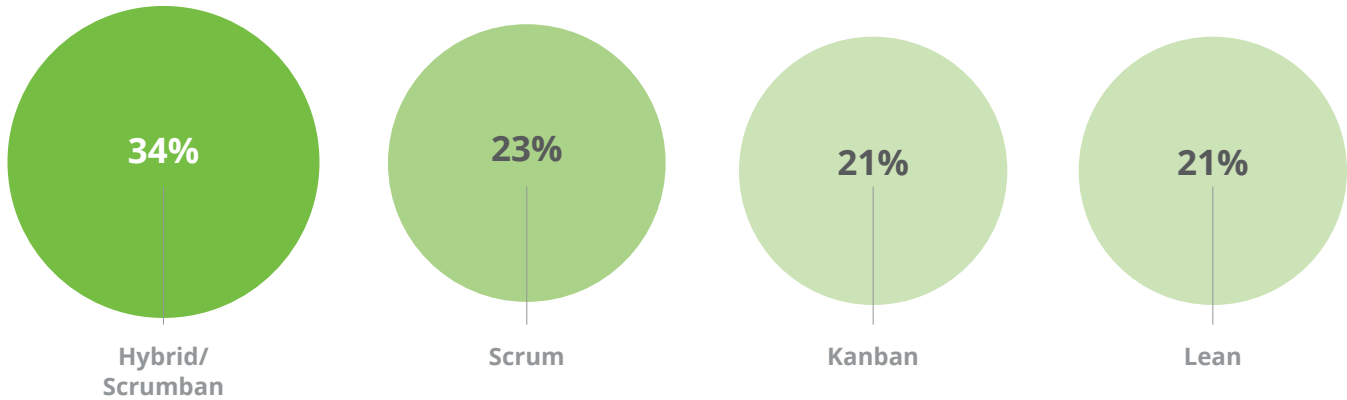
Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

## How important is it to the success of your marketing efforts that other departments adopt Agile ways of working?



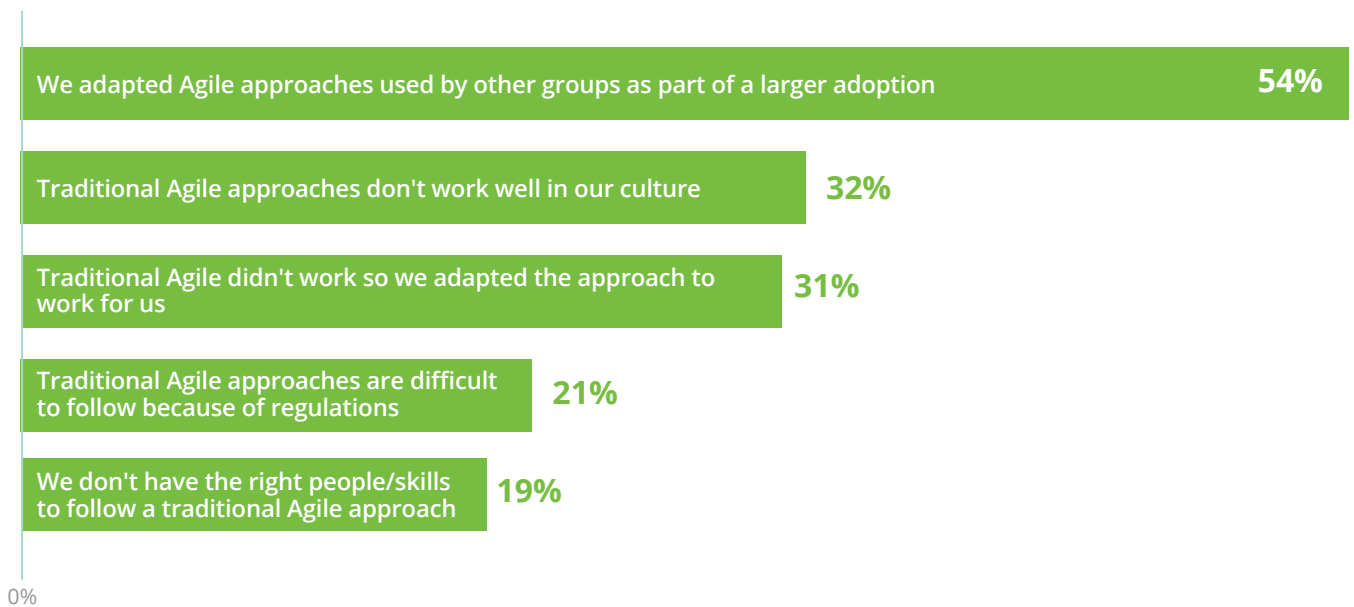
Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

## Which Agile framework does your marketing department follow most closely?



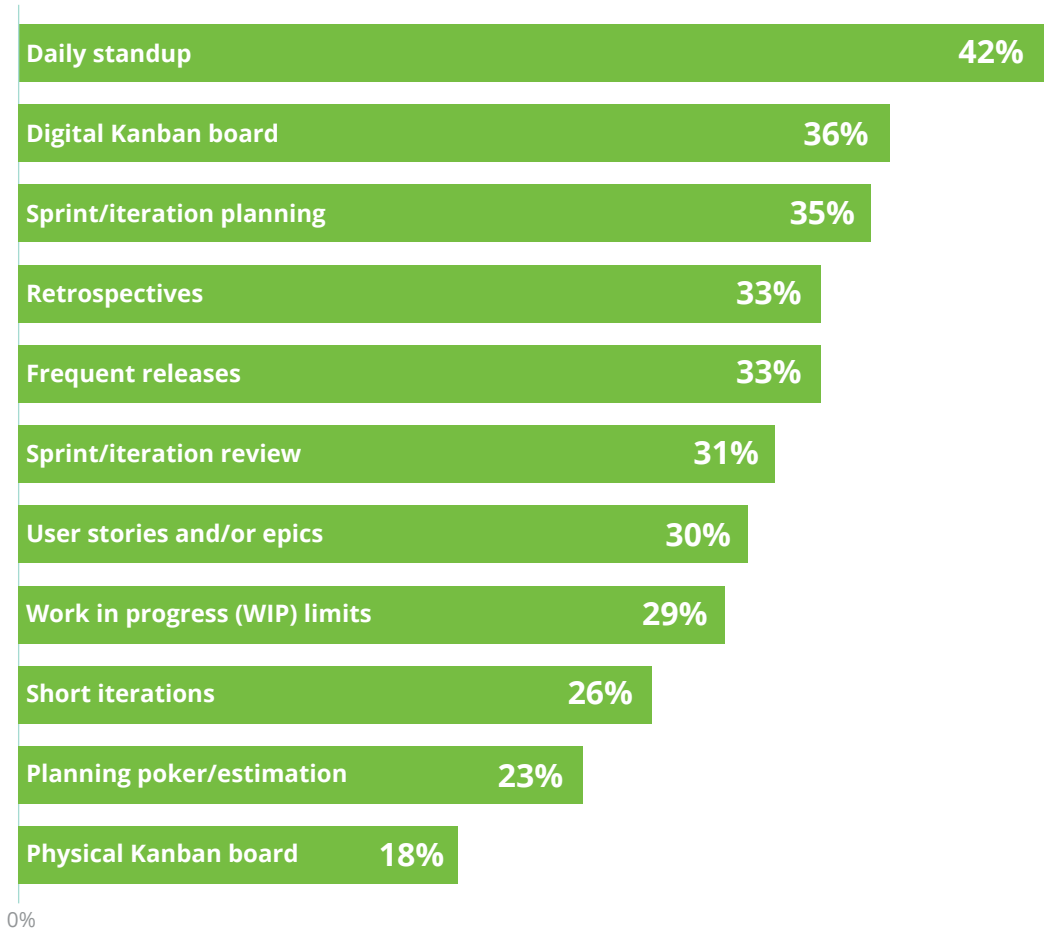
Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

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



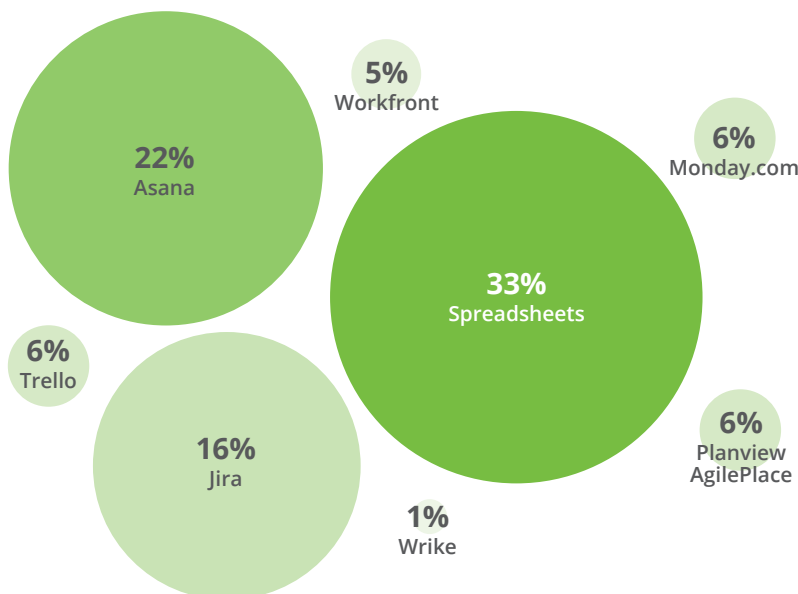
Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

## Which Agile techniques and practices does your marketing department use?



Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

## Which tools do you use to manage your marketing tasks and projects?



▶ Agile marketers' preference for hybrid approaches means that they use a wide variety of techniques and practices.

Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

# HOW ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORT AGILE MARKETING

Because Agile is always evolving within individual marketing teams and organizations, ongoing support is an essential ingredient for Agile marketing success. Our annual reports have shown this for years. This year's data is no different, as most surveyed marketers found most types of ongoing support useful.

And yet, we were unable to find a single type of ongoing support provided to a majority of Agile marketers. It seems too many organizations are falling prey to the misconception that once an Agile transition or transformation is complete, they're done. The reality is that unlocking the full potential of Agile's continuous improvement requires support.

Elsewhere, we're delighted to see that nearly all Agile marketers have by now abandoned traditional annual marketing and budgeting plans for flexible alternatives. There's no single right approach, but embracing flexibility and adaptability is key and Agile marketers clearly see that.

## **THE RIGHT SUPPORT IS KEY FOR AGILE MARKETING SUCCESS**

- ▶ 80% of Agile marketers found certification courses useful, however only 35% actually use them. This shows one area where lots of potential value can be unlocked through more education.
- ▶ Considering the fact that a lack of training remains the biggest barrier for Agile adoption, we're happy to see that over a third of all Agile marketers are getting ongoing training. Still, this number should be higher for marketers to reach their full potential.
- ▶ 80-90% of Agile marketers are abandoning traditional annual planning and budgeting in favor of approaches which offer more flexibility.

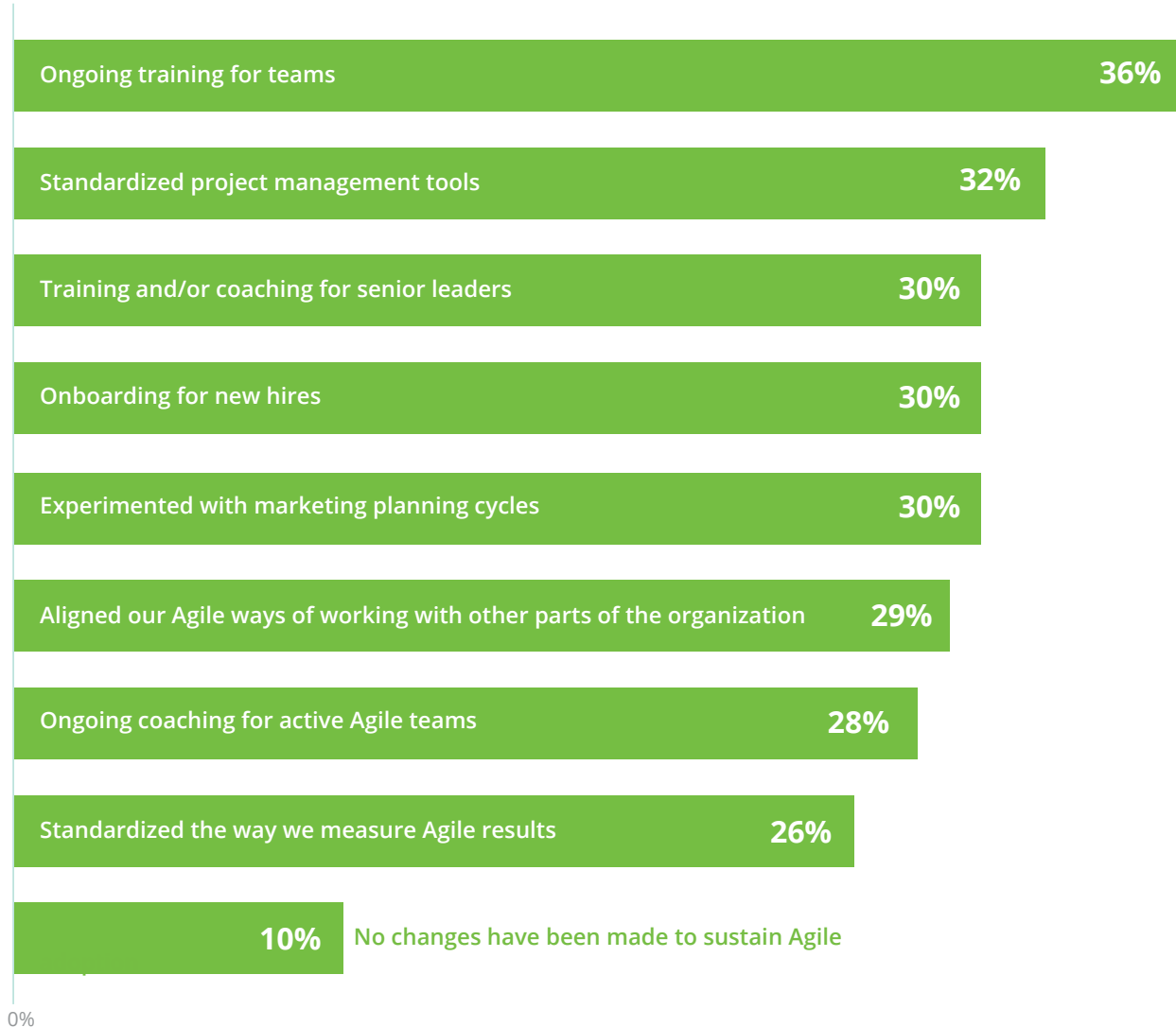


## Which of the following were used when you adopted Agile marketing? And which have been valuable?

	Percentage of Agile marketers who have used this	Percentage of users who found it to be valuable
Agile certification courses (e.g., certified scrum master (CSM) or product owner (CSPO), certified professional in Agile Marketing)	35%	80%
Conferences	31%	66%
Agile coaches	33%	63%
"Train the trainer" programs	35%	60%
Self-paced learning	34%	60%
Implementing an Agile project management tool	39%	57%
Consistent practices and processes across teams	31%	57%
Articles or books about Agile marketing	28%	49%
Executive sponsorship	22%	27%

Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

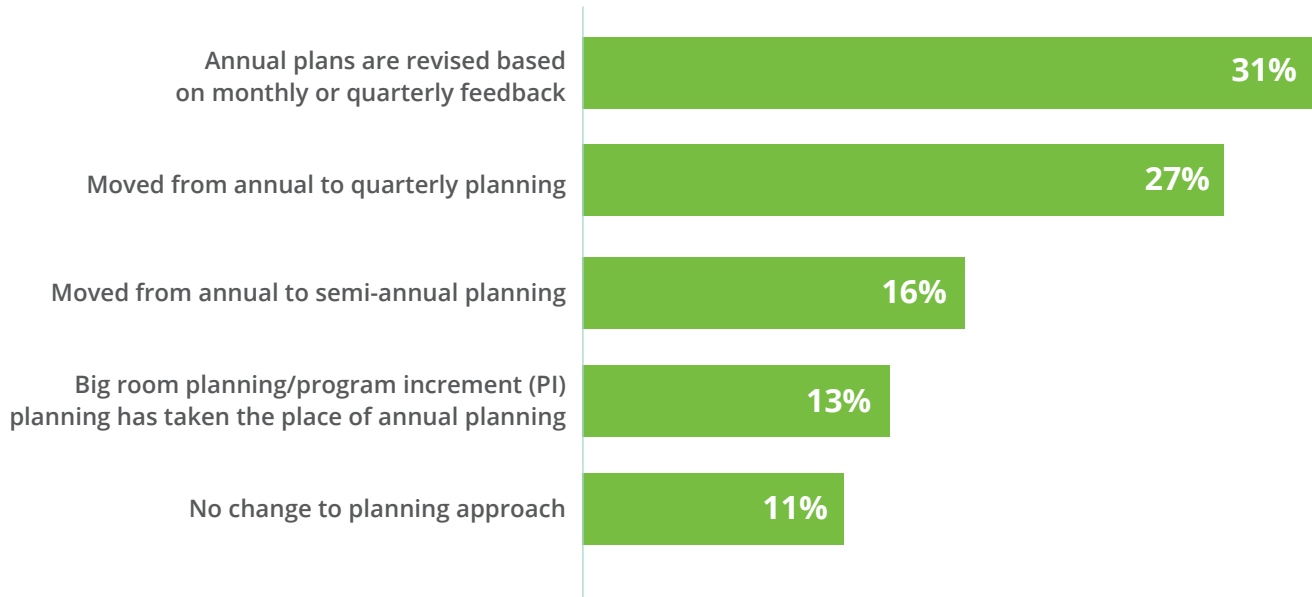
## How has your organization supported your Agile marketing team(s) in the past 12 months?



Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

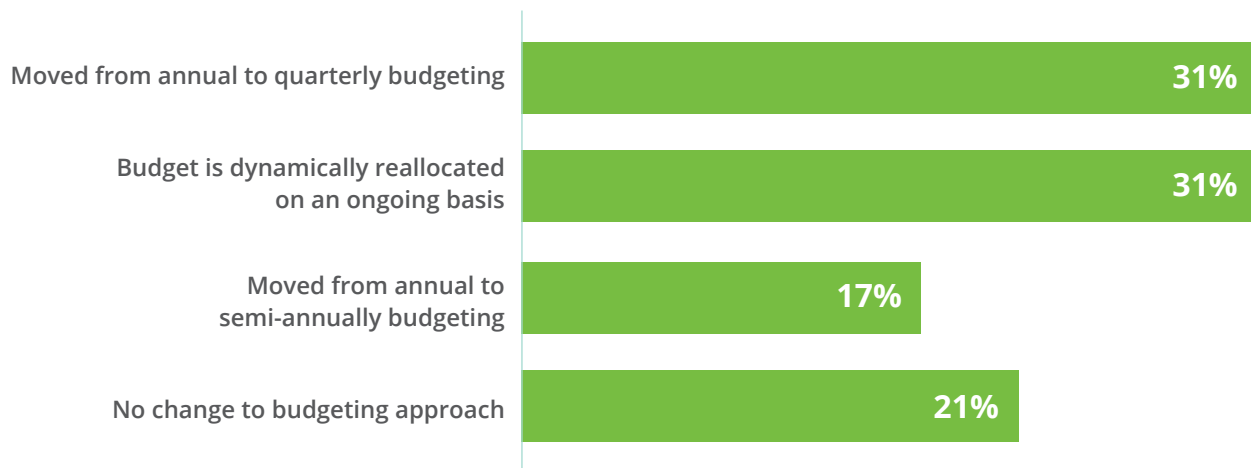
▶ In both planning and budgeting, Agile marketers are striving for a balance between long-term plans and Agile flexibility.

## How has marketing planning changed in the past year?



Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

## How has the adoption of Agile marketing changed marketing budgeting?



Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

# CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS OF AGILE MARKETING

Here we see the impact of the data presented in the previous section. With too few Agile marketers getting the ongoing support they need, over a third tell us they struggle with plans changing too often.

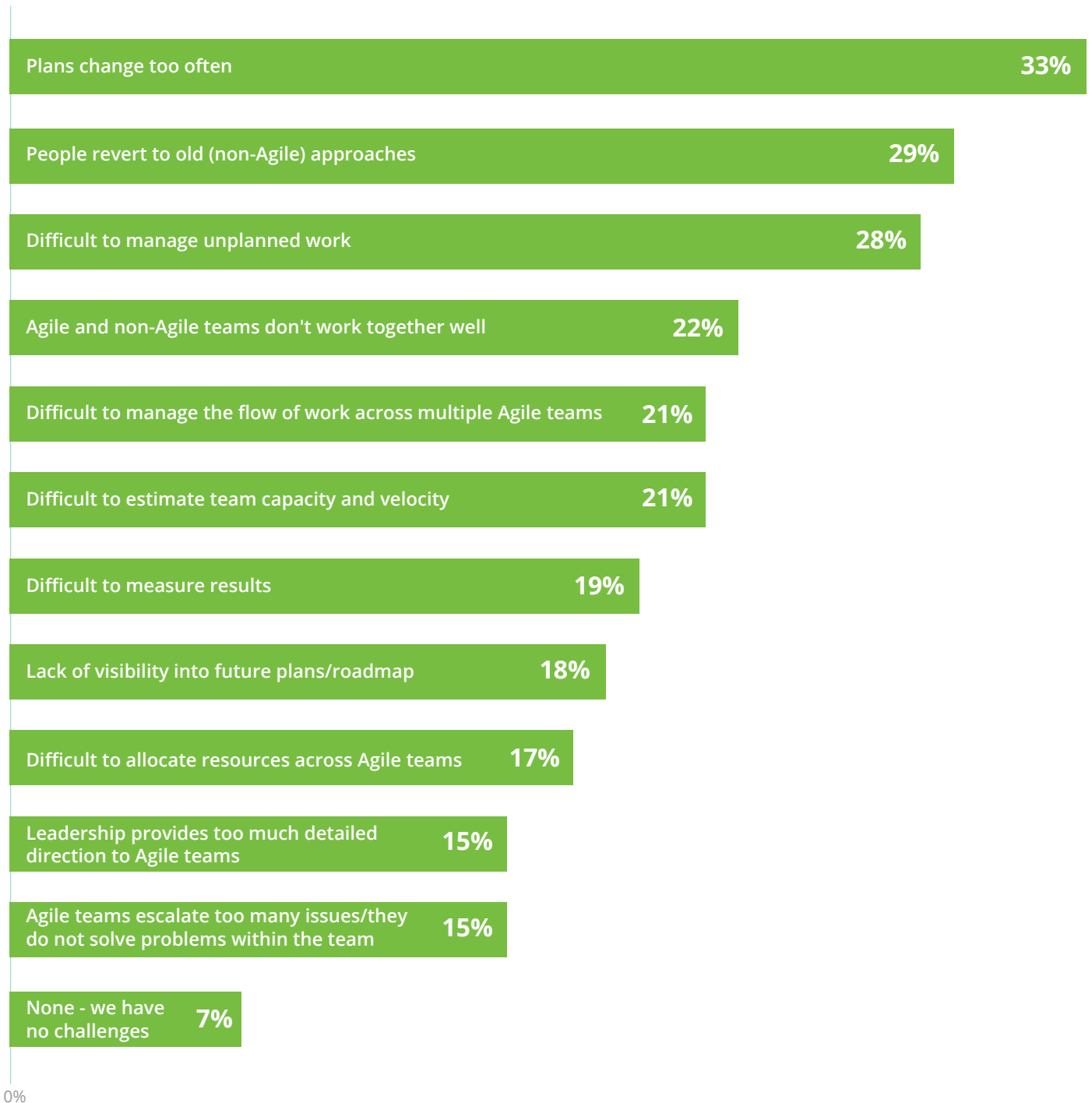
Still, while there are always going to be challenges, most are faced by a small minority of respondents. The benefits of Agile, by contrast, are experienced at much higher levels across the board. Nearly all respondents found that they could relate their daily activities to broader objectives and felt Agile had been implemented successfully.

In other words, Agile marketing implementations are clearly seeing a lot of success, and practitioners are unlocking a host of benefits. However, there's clearly room for improvement in how organizations provide ongoing support to help marketers face key challenges.

## SEEING CHALLENGES, BENEFITS, AND OPPORTUNITIES

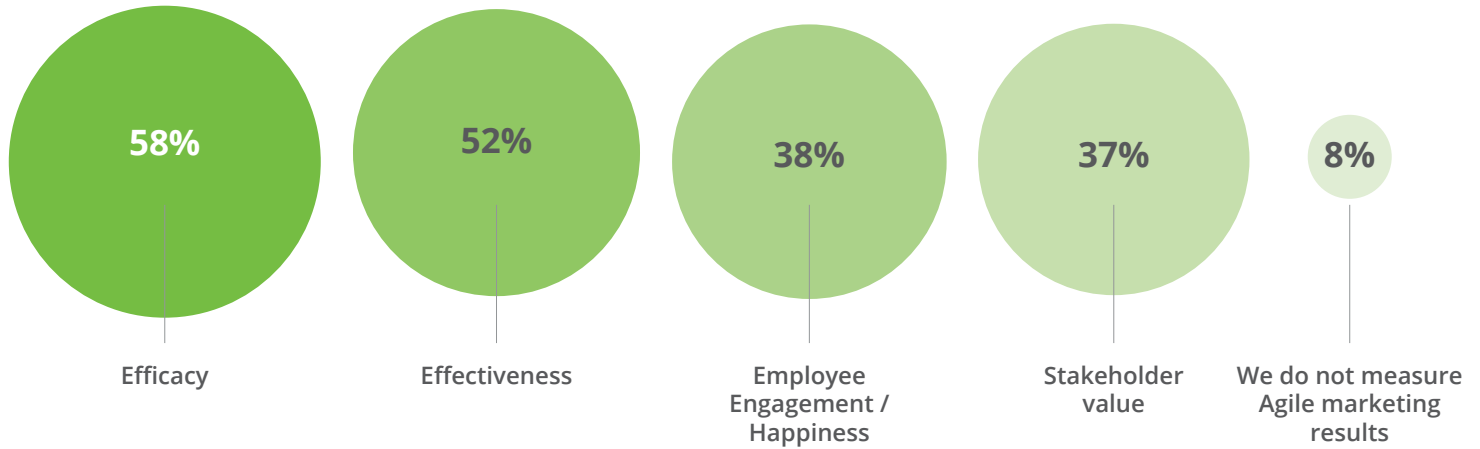
- ▶ The typical challenge, like difficulty managing unplanned work, is experienced by less than 22% of Agile marketers.
- ▶ 94% of Agile marketers reported not having difficulty connecting their daily activities with broader strategy and objectives, a major success for Agile's impact in marketing.
- ▶ The benefit Agile marketers desire most, better prioritization, is also the one they achieve most often.
- ▶ 97% of Agile marketers feel Agile has been implemented successfully in their team.

## What challenges, if any, has your team experienced as a result of using Agile?

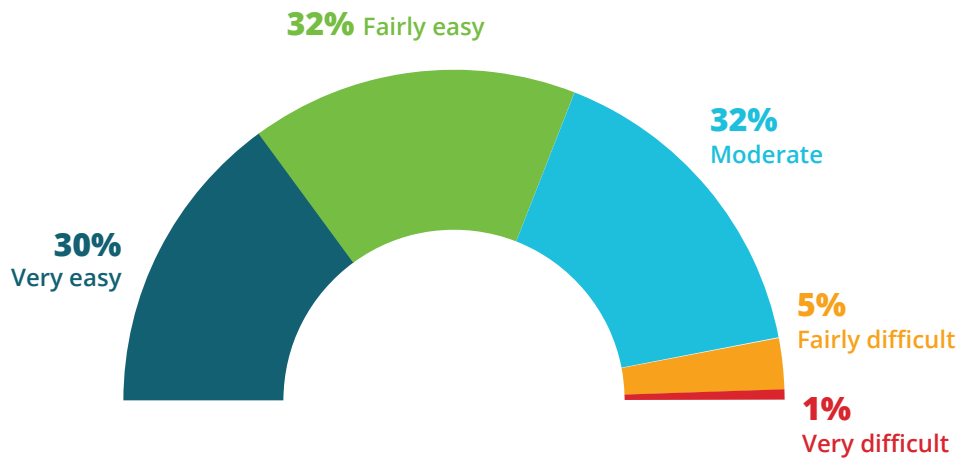


Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

## How are you measuring the impact of Agile marketing?



## How easy or difficult is it for your team to connect its daily activities to the corporate strategy and objectives?



Here we see the benefits of Agile marketing in action, as only 6% find it difficult to connect daily activities to broader objectives.

Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas

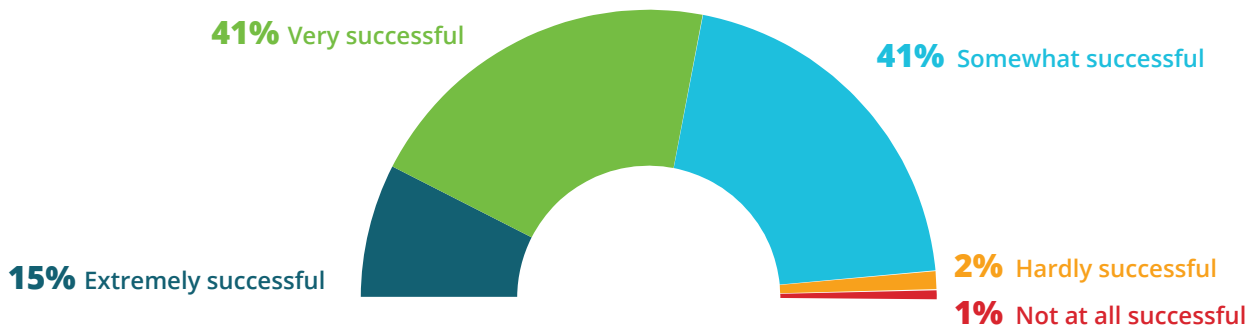
Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

## What benefits did you want to achieve by using Agile – and what did you achieve?

	Wanted benefit	Achieved benefit**
Prioritize work more effectively	66%	76%
Improve team productivity	65%	73%
Improve the quality of our marketing	58%	71%
Improve team morale	35%	64%
Better visibility into project status	51%	60%
Better align the team around business objectives	53%	58%
Better align with teams outside of marketing	42%	58%
Better manage remote/distributed teams	37%	57%
Identify roadblocks more quickly	42%	45%
Release marketing work more quickly	40%	55%
Improve predictability of project completion	40%	49%
Change direction more quickly based on feedback	38%	41%

\*\*This is based on the number of respondents who wanted each benefit, not the total sample.

## How successfully has Agile been implemented in your marketing team?



Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

### Those who have successfully implemented Agile are more likely to:

- ▶ Have undergone an Agile transformation: (i.e. they report all of their marketing teams use Agile)
- ▶ Use sprint/iteration planning
- ▶ Have used all types of training when adopting Agile, including Agile coaches, Agile certifications, and “train the trainer” programs
- ▶ Work for organizations that continually support Agile and offer things such as:
  - Ongoing training
  - Coaching
- ▶ Have standardized the way they measure results
- ▶ Have aligned their Agile ways of working with other parts of the organization
- ▶ Have changed the way they do marketing training in the past year
- ▶ Have changed the way they do marketing budgeting in the past year



## Which of the following will be a high priority for your marketing department in 2022?



Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

## Agile marketing’s impact on top priorities:

Marketers’ top priorities	Impact of Agile marketing
Produce higher-quality work	70% of Agile marketers who had a goal of improving the quality of their marketing met that goal
Prioritize the most important work	76% of Agile marketers who had a goal of prioritizing their work more effectively met that goal
Better align organizational goals and objectives	62% of Agile marketers report it is easy for them to connect their daily activities to the corporate strategy and objectives
Increase the productivity of their marketing department	72% of Agile marketers who had a goal of improving team productivity met that goal

Source: State of Agile Marketing 2023 | AgileSherpas, Agile Marketing Alliance

# WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

## STEP 1: GET SUPPORT.

Agile transformations with support from executives are more successful, so if you don't have buy-in from leadership, start working to get it. If you have executives who are driving Agile transformation across the organization, even better.

## STEP 2: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TOOLS AND TRAINING.

More than two-thirds of those who have used Agile project management tools, Agile certification courses, "train the trainer" programs, and consistent practices and processes across teams have found these to be valuable. However, fewer than half of Agile marketers report using these. Leverage the options around you; don't try to climb without any support.

## STEP 3: GET EVERYONE ON BOARD.

Once Agile has been implemented in one team, work to move other marketing teams to an Agile approach as well. Bonus: those who are successful at implementing Agile marketing are also more likely to say other departments are also practicing Agile.

## STEP 4: GIVE YOURSELF TIME.

Those who are more successful have been practicing Agile for 5+ years. Commit to the transformation as a long-term endeavor, not something that can be checked off in a single quarter.



# DEMOGRAPHICS & METHODOLOGY

The 6th annual State of Agile Marketing is published by AgileSherpas in partnership with Agile Marketing Alliance. This survey of 776 marketers worldwide was fielded in December 2022 through February 2023 via email and social media from AgileSherpas as well as a panel of marketers.

## How many years have you worked in marketing?

5 years or fewer	45%
6 to 10 years	28%
11 to 15 years	13%
Over 15 years	14%

## Which role below best describes your current marketing position?

Associate/individual contributor	33%
Manager	38%
Director	13%
Vice president/senior vice president	3%
CMO or other executive	4%
Business owner/general manager	3%
Other	6%

## What region do you live in?

North America	31%
Europe	55%
Latin America	14%

## What is the estimated annual revenue for your company (in US dollars)?

Under 1 million	14%
1 million to 9.9 million	27%
10 million to 99.9 million	21%
100 million to 499.9 million	17%
500 million to 999.9 million	9%
1 billion+	12%

## What best describes your company focus?

Business-to-consumer	31%
Business-to-business	24%
Mix of B2B and B2C	20%
Business-to-business-to-consumer	19%
Nonprofit	3%
Government	3%

## Which of the following most closely describes the industry you work in?

Consumer and retail	21%
Media and entertainment	17%
Business services	14%
Manufacturing	12%
Financial services	9%
Healthcare and life sciences	8%
Information technology	8%
Other	11%

## About AgileSherpas

AgileSherpas is the world's leading Agile training, consulting, and coaching organization for non-technical teams. We guide marketing departments, and those around them, toward high performance by translating successful Agile practices to work outside of software development.

Our highly-trained coaches take enterprise marketing organizations from zero to Agile in less than 18 months using the Marketing Agility Ascension<sup>®</sup>, our proprietary transformation model proven with over three thousand marketers at dozens of enterprises.

This journey blends AgileSherpas' coaching and consulting expertise with certifications from the International Consortium for Agile (ICAgile) and best-in-class asynchronous elearning solutions, so every member of the transforming organization can access the right knowledge at the right time and in the right format.

Visit [AgileSherpas.com](https://AgileSherpas.com) to start your own ascent toward marketing agility.

## About Agile Marketing Alliance

Founded in 2022, the Agile Marketing Alliance brings together a global community of people who are passionate about Agile marketing to learn, share, and grow together so that they can be better marketers, advance their careers, and rediscover the joy of marketing. They further their mission through events, community-building, and knowledge sharing, serving as the "front door" for the Agile marketing community. Learn more at [agilemarketingalliance.com](https://agilemarketingalliance.com).

