GutCheck

IT'S NOT A GAME-CHANGER IF THE GAME HAS ALREADY CHANGED

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Although it is seen either as a game-changer or interesting trend by almost 70% of clients and 75% of providers in the GRIT report, automation is already considered standard in innovative research methodologies like agile market research, invented about a decade ago. An enabler and proxy for agile market research, automation begets speed and affordability, timeless currencies important to market researchers across industries. Previous research tells us that 78% of marketers and researchers globally plan to adopt agile research methods more within the next year (winter 2015 study). It's no surprise that when you experience a game-changer that essentially bucks the norms of an encumbered industry, new and impressive things happen—and more people use it.

By thinking differently about where the industry is going, you can see opportunities for adding more value for your clients by challenging that which is known. When you've earned lasting, large-scale partnerships with clients, they ask you to do more for that research dollar they're spending with you. In order to rise to that occasion, you can't just automate existing methodologies already out there. Automation is only part of the story; it will be the combination of technologies and methodology that derives the most value for clients.

As an example, let's take concept testing, which hasn't changed much in decades. Concept testing tends to be very standardized, driven off of opaque, historical concepts tested against mass media audiences—a ripe area for automation. However, just making this process more efficient isn't going to put a large dent in the paltry success rates consumer product companies are used to.

What if you were able to start with transparent benchmarks, combining automation with big data that shows you how you compare to the current top competing products instead of comparing to historical databases that are black box and perhaps not relevant anymore? You'd be able to drive your research and development based on how you can be better than your competition.

What if you could also identify who your early adopters of your new product are going to be and focus your advertising and promotion on this critical market? By identifying your top-box concept acceptors, you can leverage modeling and big data to identify look-alikes in the programmatic advertising ecosystem who can be targeted to increase the conversion rate of early usage, which can make or break the success of your product.

Wouldn't your new product launches have a better chance of success with such an approach versus more traditional methods? I think so.

Today, we are seeing step-change value in technologies that allow us to find answers to specific problems more efficiently. You can have the technology that enables automation, which leads to affordability; but if you don't have the specificity around the problem you're trying to solve, these innovations are meaningless. True innovation comes from being able to solve real business problems. When you combine several innovative technologies versus being reliant on any given one, you're able to focus that synergistic combination on solving problems, which can in turn provide something truly game-changing, something that will deliver on what clients are really asking for. You can become a problem solver who knows how to harness all of the enabling technologies available, giving your clients unprecedented understanding.