



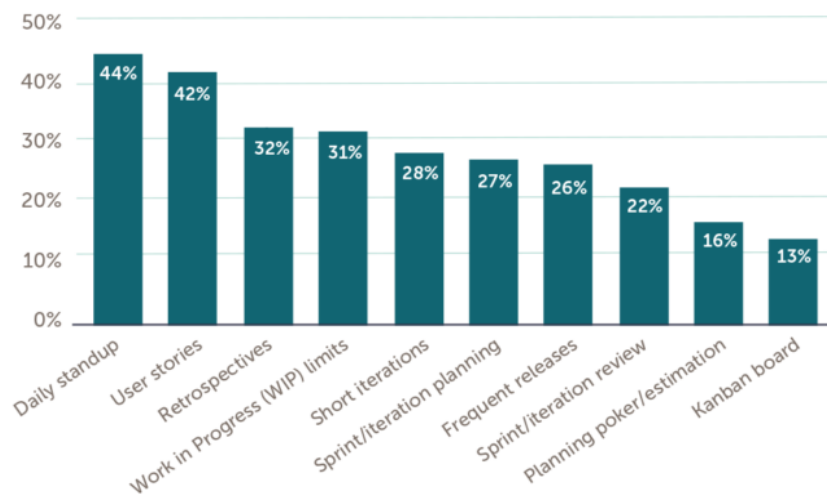
By Andrea Fryrear on May 8, 2019 in Content Marketing

State of Agile Marketing Report > How Agile Marketing Works

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

CONTENT MARKETING

Source: State of Agile Marketing 2019 | AgileSherpas and CoSchedule



I'm often leery about starting Agile marketing discussions with practices, because it's all too easy to slap together some meeting and artifacts without *really* changing the way you work and say you're Agile.

Teams that do that are usually the ones who say [Agile marketing doesn't work](#).

But just cobbling together a couple of new meetings doesn't mean you've fundamentally changed the way you work. You need to start by adopting an Agile mindset — working out what it means to *be* Agile — before you jump into adopting practices.

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Now that we've got the requisite Agile coach caveat out of the way, let's get down to business. ▼

As part of our annual [State of Agile Marketing Report](#), we ask Agile marketing teams to tell us how they're making Agile work. More specifically, we ask them about the particular techniques and practices they're using.

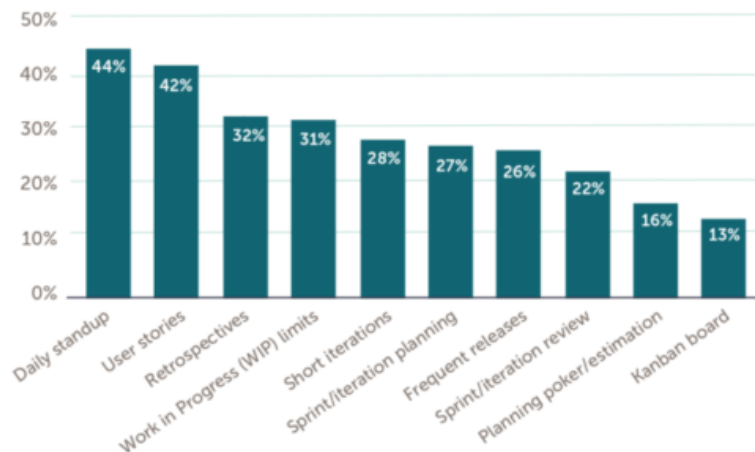
### This year's top three Agile marketing practices are:

1. *Daily standup* (44% of respondents)
2. *User stories* (42%)
3. *Retrospectives* (32%)

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(Squeaking into a close fourth place was Work in Progress (WIP) limits at 31%.)

Since these are the most commonly used practices among Agile marketers, I want to walk you through the best way to make use of each of them on your own Agile marketing team(s).

(Assuming, of course, that you already understand Agile values and principles and have adopted the right Agile mindset.)

### Daily Standup for Agile Marketing

These quick [daily strategy sessions](#) are one of the most important Agile meetings, so it's no surprise that they topped the list of practices for Agile marketers.

For those unfamiliar with the basics, here's a quick run down of how daily standup works:

- An Agile team gets together for 15 minutes every morning to discuss their progress, as well as any is or impediments that have come up since the previous meeting.
- Standups usually take place first thing in the morning so they can guide the team's activity for the day.
- Everybody stands to encourage brevity.
- Standups are for providing information, not for problem solving.



**How not to do a daily standup:** While many teams consider standup a time for providing status updates, you want to avoid falling into a rote, boring routine that renders the meeting useless.

I encourage the teams I coach to think about it like a football huddle (American version), i.e. the team gets together to call the next play.

They're thinking about what they can do as a unit to move themselves closer to their ultimate objective.

For Scrum teams this would be completing the work they've committed to for the sprint, while Kanban teams would be discussing ways to maintain the smooth flow of work through their board.

In a football huddle the linebackers aren't talking in detail about precisely what they did in the last play, nor are the wide receivers. They may have vital information to share that they learned while executing their functional role, but the focus is on what the team will be doing next to move the ball down the field.

There are three questions that are commonly used to **provide structure to the daily standup**:

1. What did you do yesterday?
2. What will you do today?
3. What impediments are in your way?

The problem on marketing teams is that we're often working on disparate, yet complementary, aspects of a project or campaign.

This means, to put it bluntly, that nobody really cares what we did yesterday unless it has immediate bearing on what they're going to be asked to do today. ▼

If that's the case on your team, consider moving the focus of your standup to the team's board rather than its members. Talk about the work instead of those doing it.

This slight shift in focus, along with treating the meeting like a huddle rather than a status update, can go a long way toward making Agile marketing standup more effective.

### User Stories for Agile Marketing

The second most commonly reported practice was user stories, simple methods of documenting work that keep the focus on the end user.

User stories are typically written in a standardized format:

As a \_\_\_\_\_

I would like \_\_\_\_\_

So I can \_\_\_\_\_

As a content marketer, I'd like to attend a webinar about skills I need to advance my career so I can take the next step in my next professional development .

These simple items become enormously powerful when used correctly, because they force us to think not only about the **specific audience member we're providing value for**, but how they'll be able to use the marketing collateral that we're creating.

If, like the team I was coaching this week, you get lots of requests to "make a flyer," embracing user stories can help.

Let's say a sales rep comes to you asking for a flyer. You ask them to write their request as a user story. ▼

Chances are they'll give you something like this:

"As a VP of marketing, I would like a one-sheet about the features of a content management platform."

They, like so many others, are likely to forget the third and most important part of the user story: what will someone be able to do after they engage with this thing that they couldn't do before?

For developers, how originally began using this tool, it forced them to deliver value to end users rather than internal business partners who thought features were cool.

For marketing, it forces us to focus on creating things that help our customers/audience members instead of just creating things our stakeholders think would be cool.

### **Does everything need to be a user story?**

In my pre-Agile coach days I ran a content team at a mid-sized SaaS company, where I forced every one of my creators to provide a user story for their content.

But when it came to backlog refinement, my fellow Product Owner and I didn't get hung up on forcing every single piece of work into this format.

There will be some items that are simple and straightforward and [don't need to be documented this way](#).

Others types of work will benefit greatly from your team taking just a few moments to jot down a user story and make sure there's value in the work being done.

Long story short (see what I did there?), focus on the job that user stories are meant to do, rather than their strict, universal application.

### **Agile Marketing Retrospectives**

The third and final of our Agile marketing practices is the retrospective meeting.

As with daily standup, this meeting can provide enormous value to the team when done right.

This meeting essentially provides dedicated time for the team members (and only the team members) to discuss their process (and only their process).

From the retrospective (often abbreviated retro) will come the action items that will keep y team marching towards ever greater agility. Without it, things will stagnate quickly. ▼

Scrum teams hold their retros at the end of every single Sprint (yes, every single Sprint).

Kanban teams can hold them at whatever recurring intervals make sense (e.g. every 2 weeks), and/or whenever certain criteria are met (e.g. they've released 3 campaigns). But don't let too much time pass between retros, or you won't remember all things you need to act on.

### How to run a retro:

If you're intrigued by retrospectives but aren't sure how to begin, here are a few ideas for running this meeting.

The basic steps are the same:

1. Create categories, with sticky notes, by writing on a white board, creating columns in a shared spreadsheet, etc.
2. Allow individuals time to consider and provide individual input around those categories. This ensures both introverts and extroverts will be heard in the meeting.
3. Discuss the shared input and determine future action items.

While the steps are similar, there are lots of different categories you can use to keep the retro from becoming repetitive:

- Stop, Start, Continue
- Liked, Lacked, Learned, Longed For
- Mad, Sad, Glad

If you're feeling creative, you can branch out with some of the exercises [outlined in this post](#). You should also get the amazing book *Agile Retrospectives*, which includes dozens of different activities for accessing your team's intelligence for process improvement.

### Are You Using Agile Marketing Practices?

Nothing to it, right?

Three simple ways to put Agile to work for you tomorrow.

If you give one (or all) of them a try I'd love to hear how it goes. Give me a shout in the comments. Also, let us all know if you're currently using one (or all) of these — which are you getting the most benefit from, and which ones could be working harder for you?

The post [How to Use the 3 Most Popular Agile Marketing Practices](#) appeared first on [AgileSherpas.com](#).



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About Andrea Fryrear