

How Google's Product Team Uses Agile Research to Incorporate User Feedback and Stay Innovative



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Always be curious and assume you are wrong; innovation requires humility and an open mind.”

Justin Oliver,

Product Marketing Manager at Google

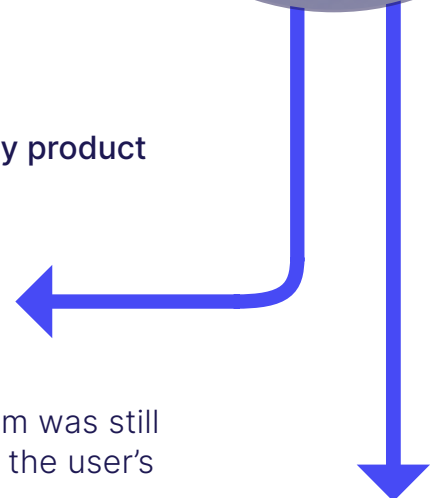
The Challenge

The nature of technology requires speed. And to be innovative in the technology space requires even more speed. For one Google product team in particular, working on experimental social apps and pursuing better experiences for users means regular research and product iteration; it's necessary to fail fast in order to find the big wins. However, traditional research typically isn't famous for laser-fast results, and users expect quick product development from Google. In a culture that moves as fast as Google does, it's hard to find market research solutions that can keep up.

So, as product marketers, how do they get in front of weekly product releases while driving each product's strategy?

- By building the right toolkit, which includes the right vendor and methodology for each research need.
- By getting to know their audience and grounding their research process in that distinct audience.

Even with as much big data as Google has, this product team was still looking for faster insights and a qualitative solution to bring the user's voice and empathy into app creation.



The Solution

To put users first and meet their needs and expectations during the app development process, the team shifted its product strategy to include user insights earlier on—instead of incorporating feedback toward the end of development. The team decided to use agile research as a compass to shape the branding for a user-driven product and complement existing brand knowledge to better see the big picture and stay on track during the innovation process.

The Research

The GutCheck research team conducted three phases of research to identify which app name and logo would be best for Google's new app centered around making plans and hanging out with friends.

First, a quantitative Concept Prioritizer™ was used to narrow down a set of app names based on several key metrics including fit with product, uniqueness, and relevancy.

Phase 1: Concept Prioritizer



A second quantitative Agile Screen was launched to determine which app names resonated the most with the target audience based on product function so that the Google team could move forward with development, trademark viability, and branding production.

Phase 2: Concept Prioritizer



Phase three, which consisted of both qualitative and quantitative research, was used to help the team determine which logo was preferred and how each could be optimized for future success.

Phase 3: Concept Refiner™



Phase 3: Concept Prioritizer



The Results

The Google team gained several key insights from all three phases of research.

- Determined which logo and name fit best with the product and why respondents liked each over other options.
- Provided the confidence to move forward with a logo that users could relate to—one that was a good fit with the product name.
- Identified strengths and weaknesses for each logo to determine areas for optimization; gauged interest in the new app and learned respondents found the app to be valuable to their life and unique compared to what was already on the market.
- By doing both quant and qual, Google was able to see the statistical significance of the ranked logos and names along with the qualitative feedback to understand the whys.

The Results

By adding agile research to their toolkit, this Google product team was able to incorporate targeted user feedback early and often throughout the innovation process. The rich qualitative feedback paired with several phases of quick quantitative research enabled the team to gain a deeper understanding of the users they are trying to solve for, which was essential in building an app tailored toward them. Prioritizing external user feedback for product development helped the team make user-led decisions along the funnel of product and marketing development, creating a better experience for users overall.

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Great ideas can come from anywhere, and you must build an environment where everyone has the resources to try new things.

Justin Oliver,

Product Marketing Manager at Google





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