



THE TOP 50 MOST INNOVATIVE SUPPLIER COMPANIES IN MARKET RESEARCH

Beginning in 2010, we decided to start tracking which supplier firms were perceived as most innovative within the global market research industry. This has evolved into the GRIT Top 50 Most Innovative list, which at its core is a brand tracker using the attribute of “innovation” as the key metric. Now, each year we measure how market research suppliers are leveraging this brand element through a simple question series:

1. Using an unaided awareness verbatim question, we ask respondents to list the research companies they considered to be most innovative.
2. We then ask them to rank those firms from most to least innovative.
3. Finally, we ask another verbatim as to why they consider their number one ranked firm to be most innovative.

For this wave, using the aggregate of the ranking question, we developed a list of 727 unique companies from 3,565 total responses. From that list, we have narrowed it down to the Top 50 (60 actually due to ties in mentions, but we will keep referring to it as the GRIT Top 50 for the sake of consistency) for additional analysis.

Only brands that received five or more mentions made it on to the list, which is a lower threshold than in the past. This is a reflection of the vast number of companies mentioned and the competitiveness now in play for companies vying to be identified with the “innovative” brand attribute.

We’ve set out to glean insight on the drivers of perception in regards to what makes a firm innovative. From this, our ultimate goal is to better understand how MR firms are capitalizing on the idea of “innovation” to grow their businesses. We believe that this list, developed by our peers within the industry, is a true measure of how successful these companies are at using “innovation” to help drive brand awareness.

Due to issues around consolidation and multiple brands within a single entity (Kantar for instance with Millward Brown, TNS, Added Value, etc...) we are presenting the Top 50 in two ways: *without* brand rollups, which is based solely on the number of times a company was mentioned with no consideration given to parent company ownership or affiliation, and *with* brand rollups, where we have consolidated all appropriate business entities under the parent brand. As you’ll see this doesn’t change things significantly, but there is a reshuffling of the higher ranked companies, most notably for Kantar-owned companies.

For our purposes, we consider the “without rollups” list to be the definitive GRIT Top 50 and all mentions of the list will be in reference to the list that omits rollups.

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WITHOUT ROLLUPS

2015 Rank	2014 Rank	Change	Company	Count
1	1	0	BrainJuicer	178
2	3	1	Ipsos	95
3	2	-1	Vision Critical	86
4	9	5	Insites Consulting	56
5	6	1	TNS	55
6	4	-2	GfK	54
7	5	-2	Google	54
8	12	4	LRW	48
9	7	-2	Nielsen	46
10	8	-2	Millward Brown	36
11	13	2	20/20 Research	31
12	10	-2	Research Now	30
13	40	27	RIWI	28
14	15	1	Qualtrics	27
15	16	1	Hotspex	25
16	0	Debut	BVA	24
17	19	2	Toluna	17
18	33	15	Gutcheck	17
19	18	-1	iTracks	16
20	27	7	Decipher	16
21	38	17	Hall & Partners	14
22	0	Debut	Yougov	14
23	35	12	Surveymonkey	14
24	37	13	iModerate	14
25	0	Debut	Zappistore	14
26	17	-9	Lightspeed GMI	13
27	11	-16	Communispace	13
28	23	-5	Kantar	13
29	0	Debut	Join The Dots	12
30	14	-16	Affinnova	11
31	25	-6	Revelation	9

2015 Rank	2014 Rank	Change	Company	Count
32	21	-11	uSamp	9
33	49	16	Added Value	9
34	24	-10	Mesh Planning	8
35	0	Debut	Incrowd	8
36	0	Debut	Discuss.IO	8
37	0	Debut	Focus Vision	8
38	34	-4	Dub	7
39	42	3	Affectiva	7
40	0	Debut	Happy Thinking People	7
41	0	Debut	Metrixlab	7
42	28	-14	Face	7
43	26	-17	Gongos	7
44	0	Debut	SSI	6
45	41	-4	Harris Interactive	6
46	44	-2	Schlesinger Associates	6
47	0	Debut	Infotools	6
48	45	-3	IBM	5
49	0	Debut	MMR	5
50	0	Debut	Buzzback	5
51	0	Debut	Facebook	5
52	0	Debut	C&R Research	5
53	0	Debut	Federated Sample	5
54	0	Debut	Flamingo	5
55	0	Debut	Peanut Labs	5
56	0	Debut	24tru	5
57	0	Debut	Incite	5
58	0	Debut	Antedote	5
59	48	-11	Comscore	5
60	0	Debut	Forbes Consulting	5
61	0	Debut	Confirmit	5

WITH ROLLUPS

2015 Rank	2014 Rank	Change	Company	Count
1	1	0	BrainJuicer	178
2	2	0	Kantar (Kantar, TNS, Millward Brown, Added Value, Light-speed GMI, Firefly)	126
3	3	0	Ipsos	95
4	4	0	Vision Critical	86
5	7	2	Nielsen (Nielsen, Harris Interactive, Affinova)	63
6	8	2	Insites Consulting	56
7	5	-2	GfK	54
8	6	-2	Google	54
9	11	2	LRW	48
10	9	-1	Research Now (Research Now, Peanut Labs)	35
11	47	36	Focus Vision (Focus Vision, Revelation, Decipher)	33
12	12	0	20/20 Research	31
13	37	24	RIWI	28
14	14	0	Qualtrics	27
15	0	Debut	Omnicom (Communispace, Hall & Partners)	27
16	15	-1	Hotspex	25
17	0	Debut	BVA	24
18	18	0	Toluna	17
19	30	11	Gutcheck	17
20	17	-3	iTracks	16
21	0	Debut	Yougov	14
22	32	10	SurveyMonkey	14
23	34	11	iModerate	14
24	0	Debut	Zappistore	14

2015 Rank	2014 Rank	Change	Company	Count
25	0	Debut	Join The Dots	12
26	0	Debut	Macromill (Metrix-Lab, Macromill)	11
27	20	-7	uSamp	9
28	23	-5	Mesh Planning	8
29	0	Debut	Incrowd	8
30	0	Debut	Discuss.IO	8
31	27	-4	Qualvu	8
32	31	-1	Dub	7
33	39	6	Affectiva	7
34	48	14	Happy Thinking People	7
35	22	-13	Cello Group	7
36	25	-11	Gongos	7
37	47	10	SSI	6
38	41	3	Schlesinger Associates	6
39	0	Debut	Infotoools	6
40	36	-4	Anderson Analytics/Odin Text	6
41	42	1	IBM	5
42	0	Debut	MMR	5
43	0	Debut	Buzzback	5
44	49	5	Facebook	5
45	0	Debut	C&R Research	5
46	0	Debut	Federated Sample	5
47	0	Debut	Flamingo	5
48	0	Debut	Incite	5
49	0	Debut	Antedote	5
50	45	-5	Comscore	5
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For the fourth consecutive year, BrainJuicer is unequivocally considered the most innovative company



Most surprising was the number of startups— at least 6 companies that made the list are less than 3 years old



The perfect “innovative supplier” combines new methods and technology with future-forward thinking and enhanced deliverables



For the fourth consecutive year, BrainJuicer is unequivocally considered the most innovative company by GRIT respondents, a testament to their discipline, creativity, and focus when it comes to branding and marketing. They remain the “ones to beat” regarding innovative brand identification, and for the past four years no other supplier has come close to usurping this position. The strong lesson here is that any company who wants to be considered “most innovative” has a significant amount of work to do to achieve a comparable level of brand identification.

Other perennial leaders saw some position shuffling within the Top 10, but the real surprise was the number of debuts on the list. An unprecedented 23 companies debuted on the GRIT Top 50 list in this round, knocking out some previous favorites and

sending a clear message that new companies are working aggressively to embrace innovation in their marketing and branding efforts. Most surprising was the number of startups— at least 6 companies that made the list are less than 3 years old.

16 brands increased their position by moving up the ranks, with the single greatest gain being made by RIWI Corporation with a jump of 27 spots. 21 brands declined in the ranks.

So what does this tell us? For firms that debuted or moved up in the ranks in 2014, their branding efforts paid dividends for them in the minds of the industry. With each iteration of the GRIT Top 50, we are witnessing how brands are leveraging various marketing channels (social media, conferences, advertising) focusing on the broad idea of “innovation”.

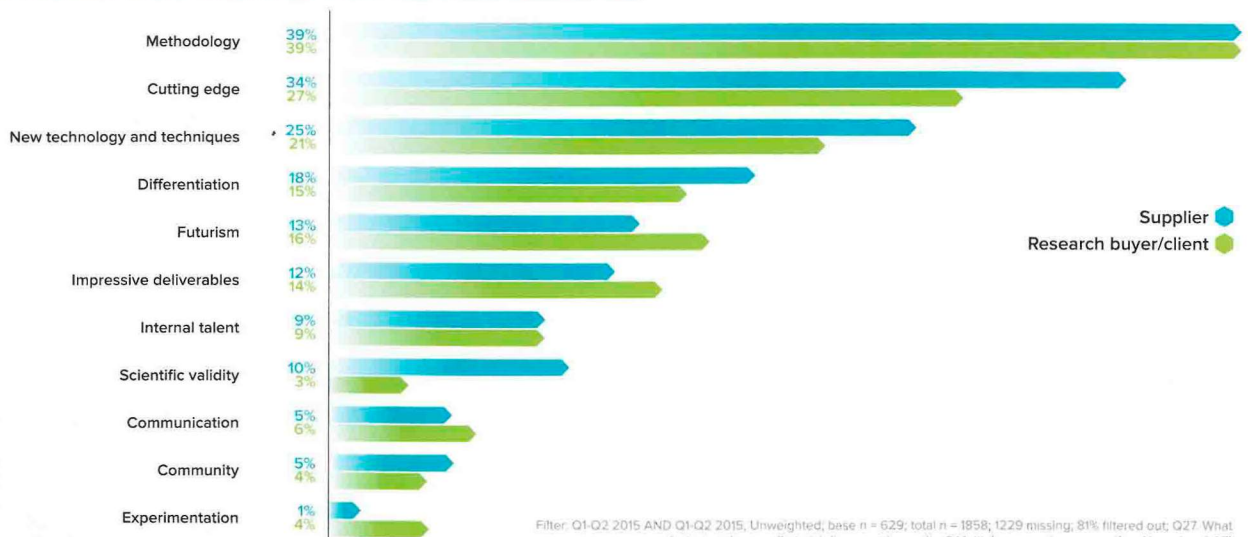
WHAT MAKES A COMPANY INNOVATIVE?

While watching the movement of the brands and correlating that to more anecdotal data such as event participation, advertising levels and social media activity is instructive, additional digging in to the verbatim question of why a firm is considered innovative yields compelling insights on how firms are perceived in the marketplace.

By using advanced text analytics to decode the responses further, we clustered the responses into 11 categories based on context and content.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Methodology, Cutting Edge, and New Technology account for the majority of the perception of innovation across both clients and suppliers with some disparity between the two segments, although interestingly, Clients give greater weight to Futurism and Impressive Deliverables than suppliers do. This would seem to indicate that the perfect “Innovative Supplier” combines new methods and technology with future-forward thinking and enhanced deliverables.

WHAT FACTORS MAKE YOUR FIRST PICK FIRM MOST INNOVATIVE?



The most prevalent feature of innovative suppliers is their ability to offer new techniques for analyzing data



A Deeper Dive Into the Driving Features of Innovation

After respondents ranked the companies, they were then asked to explain why they perceive the first company to be most innovative. We conducted an exploratory analysis using text analysis on the responses to this question to uncover the features of these companies that caused them to be perceived as innovative. Our analysis revealed that the uniting features that these suppliers share are:

- Using novel methodologies, particularly in the realm of social media
- Being a leader in data interpretation and insights
- Enhancing community and communication

Novel Technologies, Methodologies, and Techniques

The most prevalent feature of innovative suppliers in this analysis is their ability to offer new and exciting techniques for analyzing data, particularly in social media and other types of big data. The most valued suppliers are the ones who blend novel and experimental methodologies with scientifically valid and credible results. A few verbatims along these lines illustrate the sentiment:

[This company is using the] newest methodologies and techniques but still scientifically valid. – In reference to Insites Consulting

Multi-method research utilizing social media as qualitative, quantitative as validation and IDIs to gain even deeper insights into the quantitative answers. – In reference to Curiosity InsightStream

[They use a] novelty of methodologies, incorporating of learnings from other fields such as psychology – In reference to BrainJuicer

They have the best real-time text based focus group software (with media). Their mobile app for asynchronous qual is the leader in that space as well. They are also one of the top bulletin board focus group developers. They offer quant as well, and the integration between quant and qual is probably the best in the industry. Overall they have the greatest breadth of cutting edge technology for market research (ihut, video, concept markup etc...) – In reference to iTracks

Many companies were recognized for their excellent insights, with a particular focus on their ability to interpret the data



Insights and interpretation

Many companies who made the list were recognized for their excellent insights, with a particular focus on their ability to interpret the data. Respondents reported that they often receive data output and experience the “now what?” factor; they simply don’t know how to make actionable decisions based on the data alone. Therefore, suppliers who are capable of interpreting the data quickly and accurately were highly prized.

[They] provide real help to design initiatives which generate insights that actually drive consumer behaviour (unlike most of traditional survey-based market research) – In reference to Shift Consultancy

Delivers provocative marketing research insights that help clients confidently make informed and inspired decisions through consumer engagement and client engagement and business focused analysis involved in three areas client, JP & technology and culture. – In reference to HotspeX

Bring new tools to the marketplace, able to think outside the box, use techniques to ensure results are more actionable (take rate weighting, etc.), innovative brand measuring, etc. – In reference to Yougov

Community and Communication

Innovative suppliers were also those who were perceived as helping to establish a research community where ideas are exchanged, insights are shared, and growth can occur. Especially admired were those suppliers who have begun to establish online communities, especially for hosting panels.

... including setting up specific innovations and consumer trends teams, developing behavioural frameworks incorporating modern psychology to better understand consumer journeys, developing happiness and trends frameworks. – In reference to Join the Dots

Interest to go deep in the new research boundaries, such as mobile, internet, Social listening, social communities. – In reference to IPSOS

They think along with their clients and will create a solution based on their needs. They were one of the first to conduct research communities on the scale that they are using it, they have a unique way to conduct them, keep innovating each day. – In reference to Insites

Key Features of Innovative Suppliers

In this section, we shine a spotlight on five of the GRIT Top 50 suppliers and unveil the reasons why they were cited as worthy of inclusion by respondents.

BrainJuicer

BrainJuicer was best recognized for its cutting-edge methodologies and techniques, and its commitment to considering humanistic elements like psychology and emotion. Many respondents applauded BrainJuicer's recognition that you can't tell the whole story by using a person's rational thought alone. In order to get the full picture of an individual, you have to understand how they think, how they emote, and how they express themselves.

Vision Critical

Vision Critical was recognized for using innovative and novel technologies. Perhaps more importantly, this supplier was highly recognized for its ability to engage the community. Indeed, Vision Critical received the most acknowledgements about their community involvement out of all of the GRIT 50 suppliers. This company is appreciated for bringing communities together in order to improve market research.

Insites Consulting

Insites Consulting was applauded for its ability to set itself apart from its competitors by being highly differentiated, novel, and creative. They were described as offering services that cannot be found anywhere else, which makes them a leader in their domain. This company was also recognized for having excellent, useful insights that are applicable and scalable.

IPSOS

IPSOS was described as being highly adaptive, innovative, creative, and credible. Respondents reported that IPSOS is known for working hard and making sure that insights are delivered faster, cheaper, and more reliably. Although many of these descriptors might cause IPSOS to sound like a very pragmatic and calculated organization that might not take many risks, respondents also highly praised IPSOS for being out of the box, extremely creative, and fun.

Hotspx

Respondents reported that Hotspx is best known for its adaptability and flexibility, particularly in the area of emotion measurement. This company was applauded for being a pioneer in the area of human emotion. Respondents also reported that Hotspx is an excellent provider for helping clients interpret their data, which many clients reported as a sticking point for them.

Congratulations to all of the companies on this year's list!

Vision Critical is appreciated for bringing communities together

