

3 Strategies

for Leading Confidently
through Uncertain Times

CATALANT



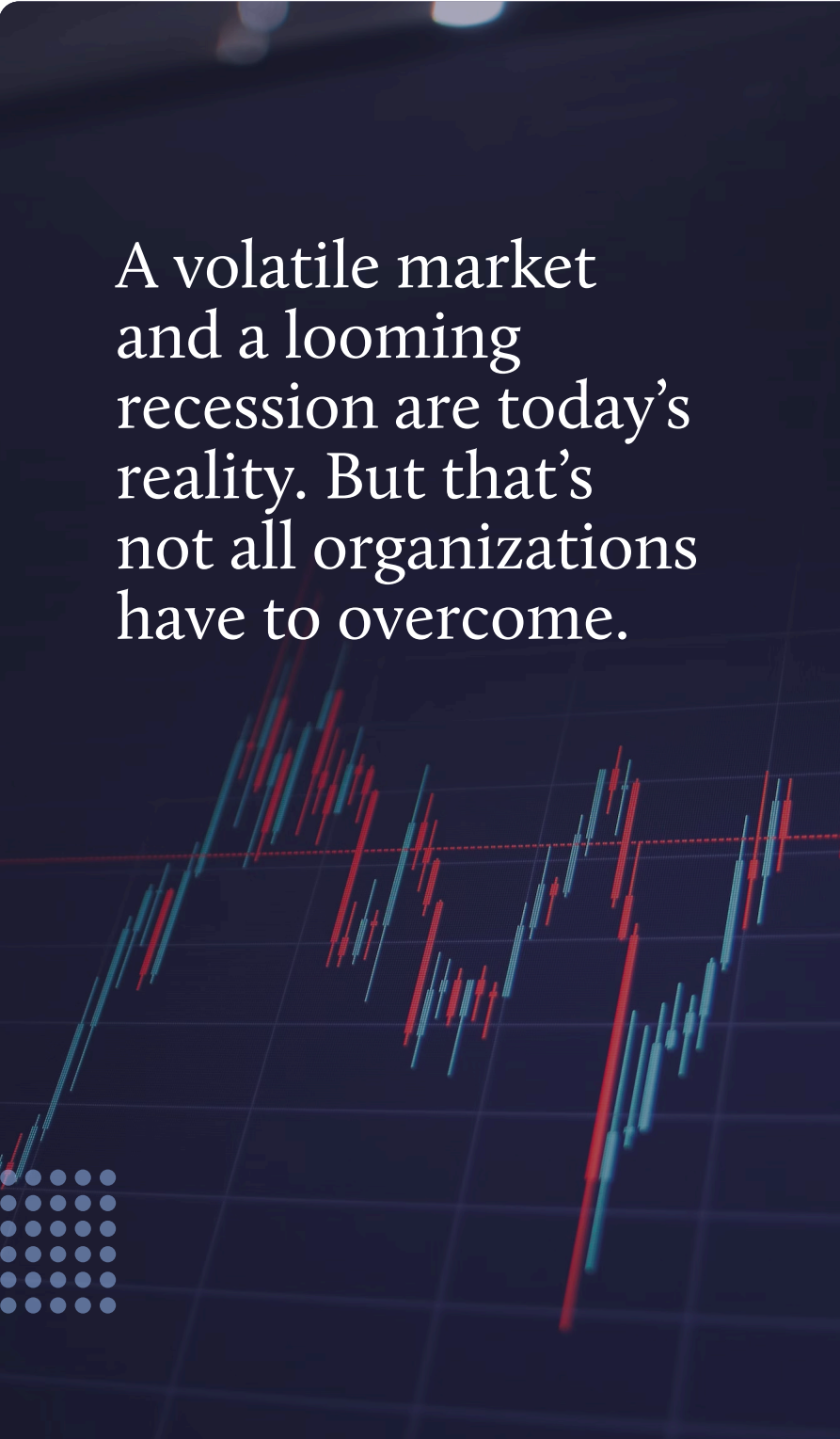
Introduction

If you've learned anything over the last two years, it's that you need to be prepared for the unpredictable.

A volatile market and a looming recession are today's reality. But that's not all organizations have to overcome.

- Shifting power dynamics between employers and employees have forced leaders to rethink how they can attract top-tier talent.
- A range of new consumer behaviors and expectations have expedited digital transformations and the move to direct-to-consumer models.
- Continued supply chain disruption has caused companies to reevaluate their dependence on them and seek less brittle and more sustainable solutions.
- Standard long-term planning cycles have proven too rigid to withstand current market pressures.

Unanticipated challenges call for swift reactions. **Read on to learn three ways to navigate today's climate while improving the resiliency of your business.**

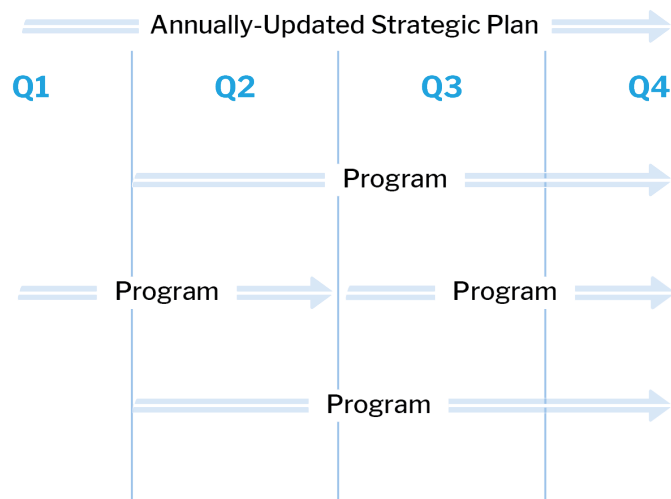


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1 Reorient your business around agility.

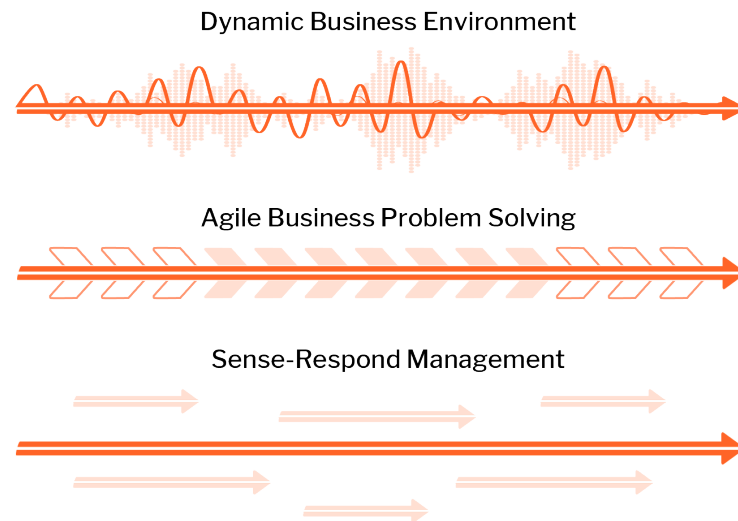
When it comes to company priorities, [growth is always top of mind for leadership teams](#). But when navigating instability, it's important to reorient success in terms of your organization's ability to maintain agility and "weather the storm." How quickly and effectively can your company pivot and adapt to changing market conditions, supply chain disruptions, and new consumer demands, all while completing the bread-and-butter work that never goes away?

— Conventional Strategic Planning and Execution —



To adapt to and manage your enterprise in a turbulent environment, "develop and use agile strategic operational management," [says Andrew Karpie](#), an independent analyst and consultant in the contingent talent industry. Due to today's economic landscape, "long-cycle planning and execution are not well-matched solutions." On the other hand, agile management addresses these challenges by orienting your business around short-term flexibility which drives growth and success.

— Agile Strategic Operational Management —



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Adopt **strategic flexibility** as a talent operating model.

COVID-19 drove over [47 million Americans](#) to voluntarily quit their jobs in 2021. In 2022, [21% of employees](#) say they are “quiet-quitting.” Meanwhile, organizations are looking for ways to cut costs due to market volatility, rising inflation, and a possible recession. In fact, [85% of U.S. companies](#) plan to implement a hiring freeze during the current downturn. Goldman Sachs cut [several hundred jobs](#) in September 2022, and tech companies including [Meta, Netflix, and Salesforce](#) began their layoffs and hiring freezes in late Spring.

Enterprises are reconsidering their talent models and turning to [a “mixed bag” of tools and talent resources](#). They’re supplementing the skill sets of their full-time talent and the traditional consultants they work with through agile consulting (or strategic flexibility).

As Joe Fuller, Professor of Management Practice and co-head of the Managing the Future of Work Project at Harvard Business School, says, “[strategic flexibility as an operating model](#) allows you to regularly reassess and sculpt your demonstrated and permanent ongoing needs augmented by the talent that you 1) didn’t anticipate needing, 2) can’t find enough of, and 3) can’t or shouldn’t hire full-time.” That’s why [78% of business leaders](#) are more likely to hire freelancers than full-time employees while economic conditions remain uncertain.

Agile consulting sits between full-time employees and traditional consulting firms, mitigates the risk of over-relying on one or two talent models, represents the capacity for getting critical work done at your organization, and has a low barrier to entry.

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[Andrew Karpie,](#)
[Analyst and Executive Advisor](#)

2

Adopt **strategic flexibility** as a talent operating model.

[Here's a look](#) at how you can use agile consulting to bridge skills and experience gaps across commonly-used talent models:

	Freelance/Gig Worker	Agile/Dynamic Consulting	Full-Time Employee	Traditional Consulting
Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-strategic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific capabilities and expertise needed for strategic work • Increased flexibility and agility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term investment in employee growth and the value they can potentially bring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large-scale strategic development
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • >6 Months • Low-value activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always flexible and customized • Long or short-term engagements with the option of extension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term role • Work that relates to the job description 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed period • High-value strategy
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low specialization • Highly commoditized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant and specific expertise • Highly-skilled and experienced talent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill set and experience that meet job description criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic and industry experience
Internal Stakeholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C-suite • Executive leaders • Director and VP roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executives

3 Get to know your customers — again.

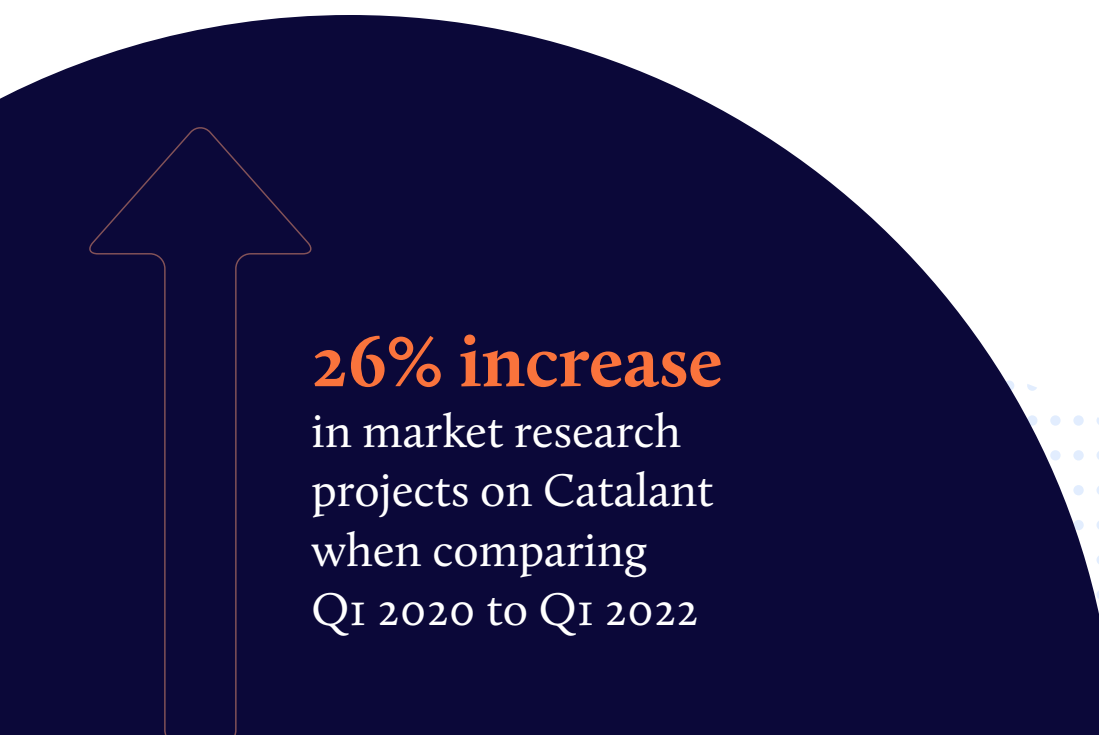
Customer retention can mean the difference between success and failure, especially during times of uncertainty. Acquiring a new customer costs your business [five times more](#) than nurturing and retaining an existing customer. Throughout periods of constant change, it's critical to understand how your customers have changed, too — then reshape your strategies accordingly.

COVID-19 dramatically influenced consumer purchasing behavior including what, when, and how they buy. Many of these behaviors have staying power beyond the pandemic, forcing entire industries to re-evaluate their go-to-market strategies.

Aligned with these trends, Catalant has seen a steady uptick in market research projects that companies have posted to the [Expert Marketplace](#) over the last couple of years. In fact, market research has remained one of the two most common project types on the platform since 2020. When comparing Q1 2020 to Q1 2022, there was a 26% increase in market research projects.

This tells us that forward-looking businesses — even, or perhaps especially, during times of crisis — want to understand the needs and behaviors of their [customers](#) and prospects, stay ahead of the market and competitive landscape, pursue opportunities for scaling up or divesting from unprofitable activities, and perform due diligence before making big moves.

Learn more about how Catalant can help. ➡



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