



FROM HERO TO SUPERHERO

MAXIMISING ROI IN B2B TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH

SAY.



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KNOWING THE BATTLEFIELD: THE STATE OF TECH RESEARCH IN B2B COMMS

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KNOWING THE BATTLEFIELD

If the Marvel Cinematic Universe taught us anything, it's that even the most iconic heroes lose their shine when overexposed and underdeveloped.

Stories once unmissable now echo as background noise, with audiences, weary, tuning out. The same fate is quietly befalling B2B tech research. In an industry that once thrived on data-driven storytelling, the sheer volume of surveys and reports flooding the market is now threatening to dilute their value.

In the cybersecurity sector alone, UK media coverage based on surveys has climbed steadily from 1,810 stories in 2022 to over 2,136 in 2024. The buzz around AI has driven even sharper increases, jumping more than 70% in a single year, from 9,468 mentions to over 16,000.

But while the volume of research is increasing, the quality often isn't. Tight timelines and content pressure often result in rushed, surface-level insights.

On top of that, the flood of conflicting statistics is creating confusion rather than clarity. Journalists are overloaded. Audiences are sceptical. And the tactic that once helped brands stand out is starting to blend into the noise.

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It's no longer enough to publish a stat-packed report and hope it cuts through. Instead, research needs to evolve from being a 'hero asset' into a superhero franchise.

That means thinking differently about research. It means breaking down internal silos, aligning outputs with business goals, and embracing a longer-term, integrated approach.

Geraldine Fernandez

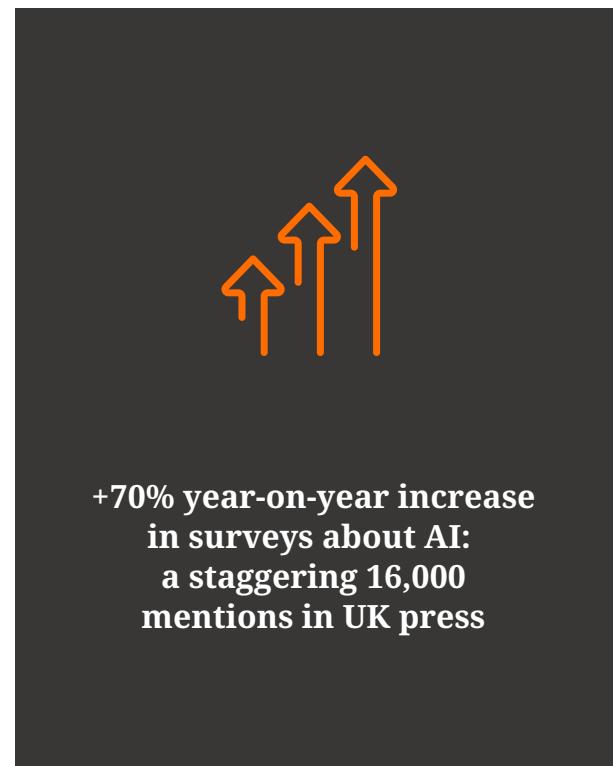
Cybersecurity Director - SAY Communications

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Maximising returns on research depends upon a combination of proven delivery expertise, specialist knowledge, and a rigorous, accountable process. Insights must be presented in a transparent, reliable, and accessible format to support stakeholder decision-making. When executed effectively, the value of each research engagement compounds over time, with legacy data retaining its relevance while simultaneously revealing new trends and true thought leadership.

Matt Reynolds

Fellow of the Market Research Society
Managing Director – Vitreous World Ltd



A black and white photograph of a man in a suit, seen from the back and side, looking out over a city skyline at night. The city lights are reflected in the water in the foreground. A large, stylized orange question mark graphic is overlaid on the image, centered over the man's shoulder and arm.

FROM ONE-SHOT TO SAGA: BUILDING RESEARCH THAT LASTS

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FROM ONE-SHOT TO SAGA: BUILDING RESEARCH THAT LASTS

Every superhero can carry a standalone film, but it's the franchise stories, the ones that build over time, evolve with the world around them, and bring together an ensemble, that leave a lasting mark. The same is true for research.

One-off surveys can deliver quick wins, but their value tends to fade fast. They often respond to arbitrary campaign timelines, rather than what really matters to the business or the market.

Long-lasting research, on the other hand, aligns with the big rocks of the company – the major business goals that guide strategy across the organisation. It ensures research efforts are connected to what the company is really trying to achieve, rather than simply reacting to short-term content needs.

By also considering what is happening in the wider market and news agenda, this approach helps avoid redundant topics and ensures the research speaks directly to current challenges and opportunities.

Taking the time to build a programme that goes deeper also improves quality. By researching and reaching the target audience properly, the resulting insights are more relevant, more thought-provoking, and far more credible. This is the difference between adding to the noise and saying something worth listening to.

When done well, the results extend far beyond the initial launch. They create an exponential effect, enabling the business to tell new stories, reach broader audiences, and drive long-term returns. This approach doesn't just benefit the external campaign.

Internally, long-term research gives teams across regions a reason to collaborate. It breaks down silos, creates a common narrative, and gives global and local markets a shared asset they can tailor and own.

FEATURE	ONE-OFF RESEARCH	LONG-LASTING RESEARCH
PURPOSE	Short-term campaign or content need	Sustained content and strategic planning
LIFESPAN	Typically weeks to a few months	9-12 months
CONTENT OUTPUT	One or two hero assets	Multiple assets: reports, blogs, webinars, infographics
ROI POTENTIAL	Limited, short-term spike	High, with compounding returns over time
MEDIA & PR VALUE	One-time media push	Multiple story angles and media hits
INTERNAL ALIGNMENT	Often siloed or tactical	Integrated with marketing, sales, and leadership goals
AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT	Single touchpoint	Ongoing engagement opportunities
BENCHMARKING CAPABILITY	None or minimal	Enables year-on-year comparisons
SALES ENABLEMENT	Limited use	Rich source of insights for sales conversations
CHANNEL ENABLEMENT	Rarely leveraged	Can be repurposed across partner channels
STRATEGIC VALUE	Tactical, reactive	Strategic, proactive
COST EFFICIENCY	Lower upfront cost, but high cost per asset	Higher upfront, but better cost-per-asset over time



THE SAY APPROACH: TURNING RESEARCH INTO SUPERHERO CONTENT

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TURNING RESEARCH INTO SUPERHERO CONTENT

At SAY, we treat research like a superhero origin story. It starts with the right foundations, builds momentum through collaboration, and ends with a launch that turns heads. Here's how we do it.

Designing the Right Questions: The Research Origin Story

Every powerful insight starts with the right question. That means designing surveys aligned with your business goals, your unique selling points, and the real-world challenges your customers face. This is where strategy meets structure. Vague or overly general questions lead to forgettable results. Precise, focused ones uncover the kind of intelligence that sparks headlines, thought leadership, and commercial conversations.

Who's Your Captain (America)? Mastering Internal Collaboration

Every good mission needs a Captain. Partnering with leaders within the corporate marketing or comms teams is essential to get internal buy-in and identify senior sponsors who will prioritise the research. They can help elevate the project internally, provide valuable commentary, and ensure the findings are used across marketing and commercial channels. Sharing the results with internal teams builds momentum, strengthens alignment, and ensures the research has a lasting impact beyond launch.

Find Your Tony Stark: Data, Targeting and Compliance

Behind every strong campaign is a data partner with Iron Man-level precision. That means working with fieldwork teams who truly understand the brand proposition, know who you're trying to reach, and can target respondents accurately by country, job title and seniority. Strong GDPR compliance is essential. High-quality data starts with clear targeting and responsible collection.

Do Your Magic, Doctor Strange: Design and Digital Execution

The way research looks and performs matters. Strong design helps insights land with impact.

A clean, accessible format makes data easier to digest and more shareable across channels. Web integration turns PDFs into interactive experiences that can be tracked and measured. With the right analytics in place, performance becomes part of the story too.

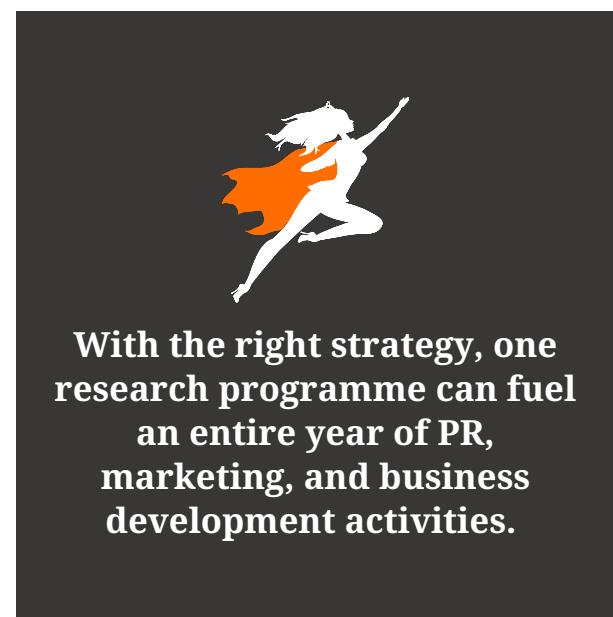
Avengers, Assemble! Why the Agency Should Lead

Every successful mission needs someone to bring it all together. That's where the agency comes in. SAY leads the entire process, using its intelligence in media and marketing to uncover unique angles and pull out narratives that stand out. We create a cohesive story across every asset, making sure the research feels consistent and compelling across all assets and channels. Acting as Guardians of the Data, we protect the integrity of the insights and ensure everything is presented with accuracy and credibility.

Endgame: Sustaining 12 Months of Continuous Impact

Research only delivers ROI when it's properly activated. A one-off launch won't cut it. To drive sustained value, it needs a plan that keeps the story alive and evolving across the year. We build 12-month activation programmes that turn a single research asset into a multi-channel campaign, reaching audiences at every touchpoint.

This includes tailored media outreach with multiple story angles, organic and paid social media, email marketing and webinar or event opportunities. We also equip sales and channel teams with research-led content that supports commercial conversations and drives engagement.



With the right strategy, one research programme can fuel an entire year of PR, marketing, and business development activities.

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CASE STUDY: GLOBAL INTEGRATED THOUGHT LEADERSHIP & LEAD GEN

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CASE STUDY: GIGAMON CLOSING THE CYBERSECURITY PREPAREDNESS GAP

THE CHALLENGE

Gigamon, a global leader in deep observability, needed a global campaign to raise awareness about hybrid cloud visibility challenges and position their offerings as essential to strengthening cybersecurity strategies.

The goal was to engage CISOs and senior IT leaders across six key markets (USA, UK, France, Germany, Singapore and Australia), generate qualified leads, and deliver tangible business outcomes in a highly saturated space.

THE APPROACH

SAY created a global research-led campaign, surveying over 1,000 security and IT leaders, including more than 230 CISOs.

Using social listening, the team identified underexplored areas in the cybersecurity narrative and designed questions to uncover blind spots in hybrid cloud security.

The findings revealed critical challenges, including the fact that more than one in three breaches go undetected and 65 percent of CISOs do not believe their tools are effective. These insights helped carve out a distinct space for Gigamon in the market.

To activate the results, SAY developed a full suite of assets: a global report, an infographic and a CISO-specific Executive Summary. Gigamon's own CISO became the face of the campaign, offering commentary and analysis to elevate the peer-to-peer tone. The campaign was fully localised, with translated assets and market-specific messaging across PR, social media, email and sales channels.

A second wave of activity was launched three months later, built around the CISO Executive Summary to re-engage media and audiences.

In total, the survey's insights were used for over 9 months, by leveraging specific data points for media commentary and rapid response.

THE IMPACT

The campaign surpassed all objectives. It secured 123 pieces of organic coverage, achieving a total PR reach of 845 million.

On social media, it generated 45,000 impressions and over 4,100 engagements, with a 9 percent engagement rate.

Web traffic exceeded 2,600 visits, driving 504 leads and a 19 percent conversion rate. The final cost per lead came in at £130, less than half the original target.

By focusing on the specific needs of security leaders and tailoring the message to each market, the campaign positioned Gigamon as a credible voice in the global cybersecurity conversation.

THE VERDICT

UK CONTENT AND PR AWARD JUDGES

“This campaign delivered an exceptionally well-structured and regionally nuanced research study that tackled a highly relevant and complex issue in the cybersecurity space.”

“The strategic thinking behind aligning data-led storytelling with a peer-to-peer content strategy paid off, as seen in the high volume of international coverage and impressive reach metrics.”

“It’s impressive how the research directly shaped every piece of the campaign, it wasn’t an afterthought. The double media hits by staggering key story moments were a smart way to stretch buzz and deliver very strong commercial outcomes - especially cost per lead and conversion rate.”

ABOUT US

SAY is a PR-led marketing agency specialising in B2B technology.

We are guided by deep sector expertise and sharp insight, enabling us to craft strategic, creative comms programmes that do more than make noise, they solve real business challenges.

We activate the communities that matter most, driving measurable commercial impact through campaigns that connect, resonate and deliver.

Our integrated approach delivers clarity, standout visibility and measurable impact. Through our global agency network Plexus PR, we offer curious, bold and experienced consultants who deliver programmes tailored to local market dynamics and cultural nuances, ensuring relevance, resonance and business outcomes.

OUR SERVICES

We offer a full range of PR-led marketing services designed to support every stage of the sales funnel, engaging prospects from awareness through to decision-making.

- Public Relations
- Digital Marketing
- Lead Generation
- Influencer Marketing
- Channel Partner Marketing
- Public Affairs & Policy
- Content Creation
- Brand Positioning & Messaging
- Fractional CMO Services

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