# Brand **Resilience** Index

Explore the factors that make up business resilience and enable brands to survive and thrive through these times of rapid change.

2020

KIN + CARTA

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# Introduction

It's the question on the lips of most boards and businesses - what defines resilience and how can we become more resilient as the pace of digital, societal, environmental and economic change accelerates?

Just because a business has survived (or even thrived through) the impact of Covid does not mean it is truly resilient - would it survive a different crisis?

Our premise and central question for creating this Index is: how can we build businesses ready to face the next high impact event? And going beyond a 'protective' mindset into a generative mode - how can we build 'Green Swans' (initiatives which deliver exponential progress across economic, social and environmental wealth creation) into business design and practice?[1]

At **Kin + Carta** we believe that investing in resilience supports business longevity - we're firm advocates of a long-term strategic outlook beyond a myopic focus on Quarterly Sales Reports.

We are also firm believers in the power of data - and that if you can measure something, you can improve upon it. So we set out on a journey to identify key outward signifiers of resilience - creating an initial benchmark for an index of brands. Our intention is to open up a conversation about what constitutes resilience with the aim of supporting businesses to improve theirs.

We wanted to look at a broad spectrum of businesses to understand how they are faring against our markers of resilience. We chose a selection of FTSE 100 businesses, B Corp businesses, our clients and ourselves, to understand our position in 2020, analyse interesting resilience initiatives and monitor improvements over time.

Rather tellingly, no brand we assessed reached the highest score across all four of the dimensions we measured - demonstrating that even the most forward-thinking businesses have the scope to further build resilience.

**Claire Robinson**
Customer Experience Director
Kin + Carta Connect

# Why are we talking about this?

The topic of resilience is of existential importance to us as well as being an integral part of the services we offer. **Kin + Carta** is positioned at the intersection of change - we're a commercially focused digital transformation business in the process of becoming B Corp accredited (an independent, comprehensive assessment and certification process which helps businesses identify and improve in many areas of Responsibility).

Our purpose is to make the world work better, which we do every day by delivering digital products and experiences that make customer and employee lives easier. Beyond this, we're pursuing becoming a Triple Bottom Line business - which means making decisions to balance benefits to people and the planet with profit - moving away from the short-termism of the quarterly sales report and into much longer-term holistic actions.

We offer consultancy to clients to transform their businesses - from acquisition to business model transformation through strategic planning and proposition development services.

By bringing 'Agility' and 'Maturity' lenses to the process, we ensure Resilience is at the forefront of business strategy. We work hand-in-hand with internal teams to deliver measurable business value, through operating model development across people, processes and technology.

We work with clients to realise transformation by delivering inclusive, human-centred digital products and experiences. We ensure customer transformations are supported with the right employee experience initiatives and digital Maturity acceleration services - ensuring we're making the world work better for all humans who'll engage with our experiences.

# Defining Resilience

We believe there are four measurable dimensions to resilience:

Agility, Maturity, Responsibility and Humanity.

## Agility

The best way to thrive in a constantly changing world is **radical reinvention** according to Yuval Noah Harari in his book '21 lessons for the 21st century'.[2]

In this he looks into the ability to learn new things, adapt quickly and reframe value in the changed context. We call this 'Agility'.

But how can we measure which businesses are the most Agile? There are many indicators – from the security of a diversified offering across markets, products and services to embracing the latest Agile delivery techniques.

To do this, we created a composite metric from five indicators to measure Agility. It's not a perfect measurement but one that offers credible results.

> "The best skill to teach children is reinvention"

**Yuval Noah Harari**
Historian & Author

## Maturity

In business, Maturity is a clear sense of brand and purpose – the sense to always listen to and respond to changes, but not be over reliant on short-term activities. Mature businesses have empowered teams with swift access to the right data to enable them to act with confidence, led by reliable and robust insight.

Digital Maturity can be signified by the presence of Cloud-enabled, flexible and connected digital platforms. Multiple customer listening techniques, sophisticated analytics and the ability to rapidly deploy changes also mark Maturity. A multi-faceted channel strategy that incorporates an investment in Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is also a key indicator of a long-term focus and ensures website traffic would continue even if paid media efforts are interrupted.

# Responsibility

Being a socially and environmentally responsible business is becoming fundamental to the success of a company.

Placing purpose front and centre is now a survival mechanism rather than a nice-to-have, and Responsibility towards people and the planet is a significant factor in future resilience. For some companies, this has meant a total, successful transformation of their supply chains, proposition and customer appeal. Take, for example, global flooring manufacturer, **Interface** whose mission, 'Climate Take Back', invites other companies to "join them and commit to running their businesses in a way that restores the planet and creates a climate fit for life."[3]

In the Index, we have included metrics like alignment to The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, an impactful charity programme as evidence of stakeholder thinking over shareholder primacy and the website's carbon footprint as a proxy for the energy efficiency of its digital estate.

# Humanity

Engaging on a human level is to make an emotional connection with your audience - creating a relationship that triggers responses such as reciprocity, commitment, belief through social proof, respect for authority and simply being liked.[4]

Brands that connect on this human level are far more likely to survive high impact events - because the relationships they engender can survive the bumps in the road.

There are many ways that a brand can embrace being human - from treating all customers equally with empathy, thoughtfulness and respect, to ensuring that employees are inspired and empowered. Our Index reflects three core areas of Humanity - great customer experience (CX), great employee experience (EX) and evidence of accessibility, something we call Designing with Empathy (DwE). We incorporated a cross section of these when building our methodology.

# The Index

## A short note on our methodology

Our intention is to blend a previously unseen set of metrics (each of which indicate resilience) assessed objectively from the outside of an organisation. Businesses clearly aren't uniform, so 'calculating' resilience is as much an art as it is a science and will vary by sector.

We fully acknowledge that whatever valuation we attribute to a business from the outside will be an imperfect score. For example, a deeper survey of employees could reveal connectedness and collaboration over and above what can be measured from the outside.

Having said this, the Index does enable us to understand current performance, identify trends and discuss similarities and disparity in the context of the changing world – and crucially empowers businesses with a benchmark against which to improve.

We acknowledge that we're standing on the shoulders of giants to build this Index. Where we feel there's a perfectly suitable metric (thanks to **Morningstar** for data on cash position and **SEMRush** for data on visibility), we have used this and credit the creators as part of the whole.

| Resilience Area | Specific Characteristics |
|---|---|
| Agility: 30% | Ability to pivot |
| | Agile ways of working |
| | Breadth and diversified reach |
| | Experimentation mindset |
| | Continuous listening & learning |
| Maturity: 10% | Speed of experience |
| | Visibility of experience |
| | Maturity of analytics |
| Responsibility: 30% | Leading on climate change (transparency + performance) |
| | Using business as a force for good |
| | Alignment to Sustainable Development Goals |
| | Stated Triple Bottom Line or social purpose |
| | Impactful charity programme |
| | Energy efficiency of digital estate |
| Humanity: 30% | Human, connected leadership |
| | Inclusivity and accessibility |
| | Respect for users' time |
| | Design simplicity |
| | Human tone of voice |
| | Employee experience |

| | |
|---|---|
| **5. Resilient:** | Scores very well across all the factors in the specific resilience dimension |
| **4. Robust :** | Scores well across most factors in the specific resilience dimension |
| **3. Moderate:** | Median scores across most factors in the specific resilience dimension |
| **2. Some Exposure:** | Lower band scores across some factors in the specific resilience dimension |
| **1. Vulnerable:** | Lower band scores across most factors in the specific resilience dimension |

# Brand Resilience Index 2020

KIN+CARTA

| Business | Agility | Maturity | Responsibility | Humanity | Overall Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Abel & Cole | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | Robust |
| Aviva | 5 | 4 | 3 | 4 | Robust |
| The Body Shop | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | Robust |
| Brew Tea Company | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | Moderate |
| Café Direct | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 | Moderate |
| Danone UK | 3 | 5 | 5 | 4 | Robust |
| Ella's Kitchen | 3 | 3 | 5 | 2 | Moderate |
| Guardian Media Group | 4 | 5 | 3 | 2 | Moderate |
| Harrogate Spring Water | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | Moderate |
| Innocent | 3 | 5 | 5 | 4 | Robust |
| INTCNTL Hotels Group | 4 | 5 | 2 | 3 | Moderate |
| JD Sports | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | Moderate |
| JoJo Maman Bébé | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | Moderate |
| Kin + Carta | 5 | 5 | 1 | 3 | Moderate |
| Kingfisher | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | Moderate |
| Lily's Kitchen | 3 | 5 | 4 | 4 | Robust |
| Lloyds | 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | Robust |
| M&G | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | Moderate |
| Next | 5 | 3 | 1 | 2 | Moderate |
| Ocado Group | 5 | 3 | 1 | 2 | Moderate |
| Pip & Nut | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | Moderate |
| PROPER | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | Moderate |
| Pukka Herbs | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 | Moderate |
| RBS | 5 | 4 | 2 | 3 | Moderate |
| Reckitt Benckiser | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | Robust |
| Sawdays | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | Robust |
| Severn Trent | 5 | 5 | 2 | 4 | Moderate |
| Smith & Nephew | 4 | 5 | 2 | 3 | Moderate |
| Teapigs | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | Robust |
| Tesco | 4 | 5 | 2 | 3 | Moderate |
| Unilever | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | Robust |
| Vitacoco | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | Moderate |
| Vodafone | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | Robust |
| Whitbread | 4 | 5 | 2 | 3 | Moderate |

Business | Agility | Maturity | Responsibility | Humanity | Overall Rating

## Key

5. Resilient 4. Robust 3. Moderate 2. Some Exposure 1. Vulnerable

# Executive Summary

Encouragingly, the vast majority of businesses analysed showed positive indicators of resilience across all dimensions – all rated moderate or above (including a third scoring ROBUST). No businesses scored top marks for overall resilience (scoring five across all four dimensions).

We can see from the broad range of scores across dimensions that the businesses we reviewed have very different positions across Agility, Maturity, Responsibility and Humanity – often a function of strategy, size and established infrastructure (more on this in the detailed analysis). Each business is on its own journey towards resilience, but our benchmark enables us to review these businesses each year for changes.

## Agility leads with learnings from 2008

63% of the businesses we assessed rated ROBUST or above in the Agility dimension, suggesting businesses are focusing on baking Agility into their business model and adopting Agile working practices. The three most Agile brands – **Vodafone, RBS** and **Ocado** – are traditional corporates, with B Corps scoring lower in this dimension, often due to their single brand, single market, single sales channel approach. 4 out of 10 brands rated most Agile are in Financial Services – largely due to the diversity and breadth of their product offering and having implemented significant change since the 2008 financial crisis. We ask: should it take a crisis to invest in resilience?

## Responsible businesses are better places to work

Although just 41% of our brands scored well or very well in Responsibility, we can see there's a statistically significant relationship between obtaining a best place to work nomination and Responsibility factors 'using business as a force for good' and 'alignment to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[5] Given the changing attitudes of younger audiences towards valuing purpose over profit, we believe this should become the central focus for businesses once business models and operating practices are considered robust.

## B Corp FMCGs lead the Responsibility charge

The standout industry within Responsibility is FMCG (**Innocent, Pukka Herbs** and **Ella's Kitchen**, all of which are B Corps) - these brands are differentiating through responsible and sustainable business practices. This success is reflected across the wider Index with 5 out of 12 brands rated ROBUST overall (the top score) being FMCG. This reflects their ability to be transparent across the end-to-end supply chain and the speed at which these brands must respond to their customers' needs in real time (more on this in the detailed analysis).

## The biggest opportunity? More inclusive human brand experiences

The area with the greatest need of improvement overall is Humanity - 33% of our brands showed some exposure to risk in this dimension, with factors like accessibility, inclusivity and tone of voice across channels bringing down the overall scores. These are some of the simplest yet most impactful fixes to begin with, as we outline in our detailed analysis.

# Digging more deeply into the resilience dimensions

## Detailed analysis

For each of the four dimensions of resilience our subject matter experts have defined their specialist topic area, providing some broader context and real-world examples of that dimension in action.

Each expert has outlined the factors we've measured (and the limitations of those factors) to reach the Index score, then provided thoughts and predictions on the impact of that resilience dimension to brands in 2020 and beyond.

We're not in the business of predicting winners and losers, but we've shared a number of valuable approaches to bolstering resilience, directly from our client base and from broader industry knowledge.

Interesting lessons come from comparing B Corp businesses to traditional FTSE corporates, smaller to larger businesses and contextualising this within the idiosyncrasies (e.g. regulatory context) of specific industries. Authors have provided analysis both on the brands contained within the Index and on examples of resilience from the wider business world to create rich commentary on measuring and maintaining healthy brands beyond 2020.

Each section contains clear takeouts and actions to support your brand in becoming more resilient - plus our authors are available for conversation and debate on the topic.

# Agility

The ability for a business to adapt quickly to market changes has never been more important. In a fluid and uncertain world, our Index considers business Agility across two areas: business models and operating practices.

Our Agility Experts:

**Ruth-Louise Scholefield**
Senior Agile Delivery Lead
Kin + Carta Create

**Jacob Gascoine-Becker**
Director of Consulting
Kin + Carta Advise

# Business models

Building an Agile business starts with the strategic choices made at the highest level.

For the purposes of our Index we have considered three outside-in indicators of an Agile business model:

> "Agile is more than a process, it's a mindset that filters through an organisation's culture, strategy and decisions"

**Ruth-Louise Scholefield**
Senior Agile Delivery Lead
Kin + Carta Create

## 1. Ability to pivot

It goes without saying, that a healthy cash reserve can service operating expenditures for longer during periods of reduced income. Conversely, those with thin cash reserves and high levels of debt to service are highly exposed to downturns in demand and have little room to pivot and respond to disruption.

There have been some amazing examples of effective pivots during the pandemic in the tech sector, where businesses are more likely to have significant cash on hand and lower overheads. For example, **Ocado's** deep cash reserves allowed it to add more than 1,800 electric vans to meet soaring demand and open two new robot-operated overseas warehouses, on-time and in the middle of a pandemic, and **Tesco** (whose accessible ecommerce infrastructure already enabled millions to shop online) invested in 45,000 new employees in April 2020 to meet the surge in at-home grocery demand.

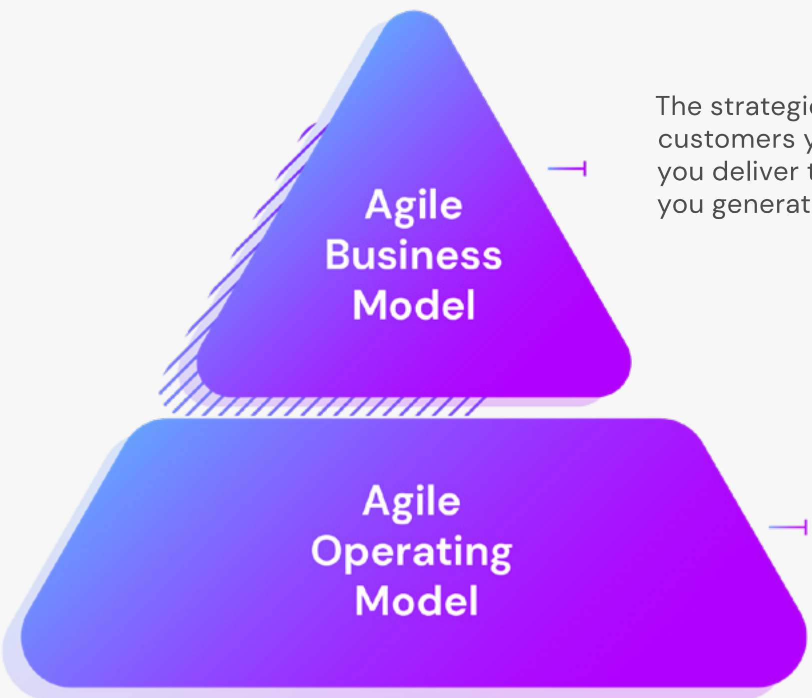
After a shaky first few weeks during lockdown, **B&Q** owner **Kingfisher** has been able to adapt quickly, benefitting from the investments made in digital and ruthlessly prioritising focus to find a balance between store and digital demand, and has since experienced phenomenal growth, enabling it to hand back £23m in furlough cash.

## 2. Breadth of offer

Businesses with a diversified offer are less exposed to volatility in any given market or segment. Diversification could be as simple as serving value and premium segments of the same sector with alternative propositions. It could also be as complex as a portfolio of products and services spanning multiple industries.

A longstanding **Kin + Carta** client offers a range of sanitisation products not typically considered a core part of its proposition. It suddenly found demand soaring for these products, just as its core business began to ebb during lockdown. This diversity of offer insulated the business from some of the effects of Covid and it was subsequently able to pivot sales and marketing efforts towards these critical products to foster and meet this demand.

## Business Agility Layers




The strategic choice of the customers you target, the value you deliver to them, and how you generate profit from this.

How your business is configured to execute this strategy, including your people, processes and technology.

## 3. Breadth of distribution

While international diversification ordinarily offers some protection from the macro-instability of any given market, no country has been left untouched by Covid. However, some have responded faster, and more effectively, than others. Businesses serving a single market have been at the mercy of that market's recovery from Covid.

We also consider diversity of distribution as another key indicator of business Agility. Digitally-mature, multi-channel retailers have been best placed to minimise exposure to (or sometimes benefit from) the dystopian shift in 2020. Those reliant on physical retail channels or service delivery have suffered.

Although the growth of UK ecommerce sales had been slowing (last year was at an all-time low of 6.7%), Covid has seen the migration to online shopping and take-up of digital services accelerate rapidly, with several years of growth in just a few months.

The UK furniture sector is perhaps the best example of an industry left exposed on both fronts. Some of the leading brands such as **Bensons, Harveys** and **Oak Furnitureland** have all fallen into administration in the past few months.

## Four key Agile learnings from our Index:

**1**

Empower Agile ways of working to be Agile

**2**

Put experimentation at the heart of what you do

**3**

Ensure your business can commercially support a pivot

**4**

Never stop listening and learning

# Operating practices

Whilst an Agile business model offers structural resilience to changing market dynamics, the ability to successfully pivot in response to those dynamics depends on the culture of a business and its operating practices.

## Agile ways of working

Agile is more than a process, it's a mindset that filters through an organisation's culture, strategy and decisions. How Agile an organisation's ways of working are demonstrates how open and able it is to adapt to change. This centres around its commitment to processes that enable transparency, fast feedback and value-driven customer-centric decision making.

At **Kin + Carta**, we put Agile at the heart of everything we do and understand what can be achieved when Agility is maximised. As part of our recent work for **RBS**, we built an award-winning business banking app, but at the same time identified waste within working processes that led to improved efficiency and cost savings. This was due to Agile thinking; using value stream mapping[6] and reflecting on the seven deadly wastes of Agile software development[7], we found ways to save time and money while becoming more efficient in delivering and still meeting governance requirements.

## Experimental mindset

Product and proposition development hugely benefit from a test-and-learn approach, rather than intuitive directives coming from 'the top'. Informed decisions using data, insights and research protects against wasted investment and sub-par experiences for the end user.

Take **Juicero** for example. This Silicon Valley start-up crashed in only 16 months, after creating $400 machines that were criticised for being the "equivalent of two hands squeezing a juice box…[a] solution to a non-problem"[8]. Some simple experimentation to test if the product had a hint of success, would have saved $120m of investment.

The Index shows **RBS** benefitting from a compound effect - embedding experimentation into its customer experience in addition to its Agile way of working. Gathering data provides customer-led insight into the most valuable feature or piece of work to complete next. This uses investment in the smartest way to benefit the end user and ultimately the bottom line.

73%

of orgs rated 5 (RESILIENT) embrace experimentation

(Where data is available)

To determine the best additions, personalisations and pivots of a proposition, the people to ask are the people who use it. Rapid experimentation is an indispensable way to quickly test new concepts with the users being targeted. This Agile approach to development can range from testing paper prototypes and conducting interviews, to implementing analytics tracking across the experience.

We believe a user experience approach to solving business problems safeguards the needs of the end user by working with them to understand their true needs, rapidly, through various forms of experimentation.

## Continuous listening and learning

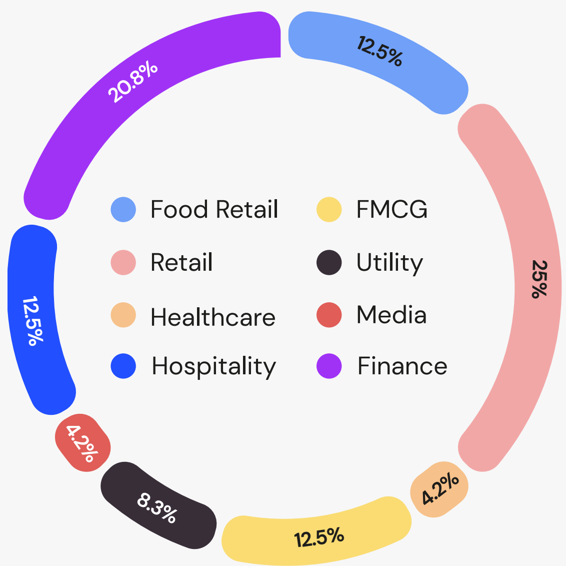
Whether B2B or B2C, the end user holds the key to revenue gain. Their use, influence and feedback can make or break a product, service, or organisation. Our indexed Financial Services brands came top on this factor with an average 60% score for A/B testing technologies against an overall average of just 28%. So there's clearly some way to go for most sectors to benefit from continuous listening and learning to improve propositions and market position.

Feedback can be collected through a variety of methods beyond A/B testing: surveys, focus groups, trend following, experimentation or social interaction. The latter is done extremely well by **Innocent's** social media team, evidenced by its high score for this characteristic. The real key here is ensuring the feedback successfully reaches the right people.

**Cadbury's** recent inventor campaign saw three versions of a chocolate bar open for the public vote. Experimenting in this way reduces the risk, increases engagement and shortens the feedback loop.

Using data and experiments enables businesses to make the right decisions based on research directly from end users - building analytics into products, tracking metrics throughout delivery and ensuring a discourse with the target demographic (to ensure the proposition being developed is what they actually need) supports a robust product and proposition process.

## Indexed industries currently implementing Agile ways of working




Agile can be implemented and is successful across all industries, both from a cultural, operational and business model perspective.

# Maturity

Maturity - of brand, tech, data and processes is the platform from which businesses can adapt and thrive. Organisations can benchmark Maturity and measure progress over time.

Our Maturity Experts:

**Claire Robinson**
Customer Experience Director
Kin + Carta Connect

**Tom Murdoch**
Director of Intelligence
Kin + Carta Connect

# Maturity

What defines Maturity? In a person, Maturity is the wisdom to listen and respond, making considered decisions to evolving scenarios without being swayed off course by short-term thinking. It's the ability to authentically pursue long-term goals while adapting to changing circumstances in the present. It's knowing who you are and being true to yourself.

How does Maturity translate in a business context? We believe it's a delicate balancing act - the ability to act as one unified and cohesive brand globally while meeting the specific needs of customers and employees locally. True Maturity comes when employees feel connected to their own purpose in the context of the businesses purpose and are united by a common 'can do' culture. It's how resourceful, connected and collaborative employees are when solving customer problems. This connectedness truly empowers employees to act as the brand - to make authentic and intuitive decisions relating to customer service, design or financials.

Maturity is deeper than simply employing the latest tool or piece of software. Technology acts as an enabler for Maturity and can connect employees through collaborative tools and real time knowledge sharing. Smart technology and data solutions can unlock barriers between customer feedback, employee experience, and senior leadership - speeding up an organisation's learning process.

However, the human element - employee knowledge, mindset and their willingness to share best practice and moments of failure - is a crucial factor to consider in measuring Maturity. Businesses that harbour this mindset of continuous improvement are often the ones that stand out as differentiators and disruptors in their market.

That's why we don't believe Maturity can be fully assessed from outside an organisation. No external assessment of digital channels reveals a complete enough picture of digital capabilities and Maturity. You can buy the tech and build the data system but you need the right individuals in your business to collaborate, share and differentiate your offering to stand out. Simply put, it's a very difficult element to measure without input from the business itself, which is the reason we created an 'insider view' Maturity survey to sit alongside the Index.

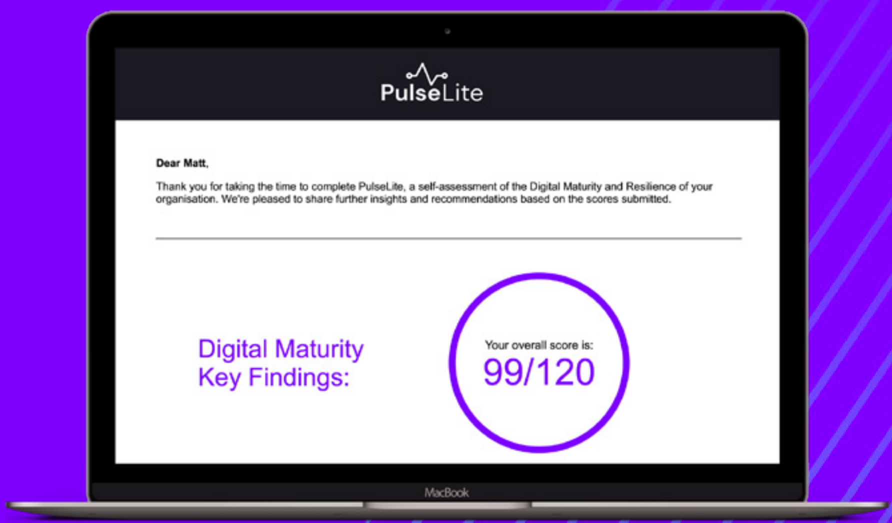
# Test your organisation's Maturity

Are you on the right path towards becoming a digitally Mature business? How advanced are your employees and processes today? How do you know what's working well? What should be prioritised going forwards?

It's important to measure and regularly assess the digital Maturity of your organisation, giving context to any transformation efforts and informing any actions to pivot or adapt.

We have created a short survey to assess the Maturity of your organisation today, the results of which will enable you to prioritise activities to improve.

**Take the Survey**



# Maturity factors

Our Index is made up of three measurable Maturity factors:

## 1 Presence of multiple listening tools

An indicator that a business has developed a broad, mature 'sense-and-respond' mechanism to the happenings in the world and customers' changing behaviours beyond simple core analytics.

## 2 Organic visibility

A good organic position for relevant keywords suggests there isn't an over-reliance on paid media for traffic; in times of crisis, being able to divert advertising budget towards more critical business activities without experiencing a complete nosedive in traffic is incredibly valuable.

## 3 Speed is a great indicator of effective collaboration

A good site speed across desktop and mobile infers that the right technologies are being blended to ensure a smooth customer experience.

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As outlined in our 'methodology' section, we feel there are significant elements missing from this external, 'outside-in' assessment, including technical stack connectivity, the communications and connections within the business, and access to leadership and business strategy. This is why we've weighted this section at just 10% of the overall score, and created an 'inside-out' survey with PULSELITE to bolster our findings.

# Themes from the Index

It's clear from our assessment that larger multi-brand organisations (e.g. **Unilever**) and large retailers (e.g. **Next**) often have more mature customer-listening infrastructure and broader search authority than smaller single-brand organisations.

Investing in long-term brand-building and customer loyalty initiatives pays off - **The Body Shop** has a high proportion of organic brand traffic from people searching specifically for its brand name - they understand what **The Body Shop** stands for and are loyal to the brand. This is clearly the strategy of the indexed single-brand businesses (**Lily's Kitchen, PROPER, Pip & Nut**) that also have a proportionally high amount of brand traffic. Although this shows strong brand recognition, arguably they should focus on broadening their content offering to improve their authority scores, which would thereby increase traffic from non-brand terms.

This is also true of the Financial Services players (**RBS, Standard Life, M&G, Aviva, Lloyds Banking Group**) which have the lowest average non-brand traffic of all our sectors at just 14.7%. Content strategy is an area where many banks falter and rely heavily on brand visibility or paid channels to drive traffic.

Standout performer in terms of search authority and traffic from non-brand terms is rather obviously the **Guardian Media Group**, but we can see brands adopting similar publishing techniques benefitting from the long-term effects of a robust content programme.

There were big gaps between the average load speed on desktop vs mobile with most sectors bar Retail faring well on desktop speed. Mobile performance was half the speed, indicating that many brands are not taking a mobile-first approach to their experiences.

Hospitality and Financial Services were our highest performing sectors in terms of the mobile experience speed, although there's clearly a long way to go with the average being just 28% (special mention to **Innocent** with the highest score in this category at 72%), with Retail (**Next, JoJo Maman Bébé, JD Sports, The Body Shop**) having the biggest average disparity between desktop and mobile experience speed. These retailers may benefit from driving consistency of experience across channels.

## Digital Maturity supports the ability to adapt

A brand's Maturity is evidenced in how it adapts products, services and marketing at pace parallel to the swings in market conditions, without losing sight of its purpose. Consider **AirBnB's** now famous pivot towards digital experiences over travel in the initial stages of Covid - without a modern cloud web platform and a clear understanding of brand purpose ('Belong Anywhere'[9]) by customers and employees - this shift would have been impossible within the timeframe it achieved.

Maturity (in channels, practices and people) gives the ability to do this time and again, pushing a business forward and riding each wave without being engulfed.

In this way, Maturity and Agility go hand-in-hand and are key to defining and measuring a brand's resilience.

## Data Maturity enables brands to get closer to customers

Mature businesses ensure information goes directly from customers to decision makers, without being consolidated or tangled up in internal communication channels. Combining this flow of information with a complete view of customers' journeys and how they are interacting with your business enables customer needs to be anticipated and real-time relevance to be delivered. This is a key differentiator at a time when businesses can no longer expect people to make an effort to discover what's relevant.

Mature organisations recognise this, and are using digital to move towards customers and engage them directly, on their terms. And it's working. Companies with the highest levels of digital Maturity that can deliver personalised content at multiple moments across the customer journey are seeing increases in revenue of 20% and efficiencies of 30%.[10]

**Companies that have achieved multimoment Maturity reported cost savings of up to 30% and revenue increases of as much as 20%**

**BCG & Google**

# How Maturity tech enables a cohesive brand experience across markets

We work with **Lexus** and **Toyota** to increase the organisation's digital marketing Maturity across all of its European markets.

We run a continuous improvement and transformational programme focused on identifying the quality and consistency of brand execution across channels, technical deployment, and supporting teams who utilise the digital estate and assets day to day.

A large-scale assessment consolidates market-level data and customer feedback, highlighting gaps and enabling precise targeting of specific asset production, as well as training and development initiatives to support teams to become more digitally mature and utilise customer data to make the right decisions.

Why is this important? This programme recognises the value and the Agility required to 'Think Global, Act Local' enabling **Lexus** and **Toyota** to prioritise local vs central initiatives. It can ensure a consistently excellent brand experience across multiple markets with varying needs, while delivering precision training so their people become best-in-class operators in a digital world.

# Responsibility

Activist generations and depleting planetary resources means that only the Responsible will survive - are we doing enough to secure our organisations' future?

Our Responsibility Experts:

**Jennifer Crowley**
Client Partner
Kin + Carta Connect

**Nick Zinzan**
Head of Responsible Business
Kin + Carta

# Responsibility

Perhaps one of the most helpful definitions of resilience is by author and business leader Margaret Heffernan[11]:

> **"Preparedness, coalition-building, bravery, experimentation."**

**Margaret Heffernan**
Entrepreneur, CEO, writer and keynote speaker

These descriptors are particularly apt for what we believe is a core component of resilience: Responsibility. They embody the shift to acknowledge and incorporate the needs and desires of multiple stakeholders (employees, clients, society and the environment) away from the single obsession with shareholders.

As events around the globe over the past months have underlined, economic and business performance is reliant on a healthy, functioning society plus a stable environment and climate.

Activist generations are rapidly increasing their purchasing power and Millennials are now beginning to assume leadership positions within corporates. A B Lab UK national poll[12] revealed that 72% of the UK public believe that business should have a legal Responsibility to people and the planet, alongside maximising profits; while 76% believe that the current system either isn't working properly or is harmful. Is the corporate ship finally turning towards the protection of our greatest asset, the planet?

## Start close in

Engaging with a sense of Responsibility is quite a personal endeavour. It is critical that each of us develops an individual environmental and societal ethic through dialogue, interaction, systems thinking, experiential learning and critical thinking.

It can be both exciting and terrifying to understand, accept and then act upon our Responsibility in three specific spheres:

1. As individual activist citizens and consumers
2. As professionals and colleagues with influence and power
3. As communities, both physical and virtual, to help effect change in and across our businesses, industries and institutional systems

> **"What I've realised is that climate change is no longer a scientist's problem...it is a salesperson's problem."**

**Solitaire Townsend**
co-founder of Futerra

## How did we measure Responsibility?

Being a socially and environmentally responsible business is becoming fundamental to the success of a company, and we look to represent that in our Index by giving the Responsibility area equal importance with Agility and Humanity.

Within this area, we wanted to recognise most strongly those companies that had undertaken a comprehensive, independently-validated process, which is why B Corp certification is our highest weighted characteristic.

Having a clear socially responsible purpose or mission statement, alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and committing to a strong community involvement/charity programme through the donation of a percentage of revenue or profits each year, are generally also good indicators of a company's desire and focus on social and environmental Responsibility.

We also wanted to emphasise that climate change should be seen as a fundamental risk and threat to most businesses, and so also give strong weighting to corporate performance and transparency in this area (as well as including a measure on digital estate energy efficiency).

## Our commitment to Responsibility

1

At **Kin + Carta** we will challenge why 'end-of-life' is so rarely in the client brief as our way of helping us all transition to circularity thinking

2

We communicate our expertise in creating digital twins[13] with pride and are now humbly sharing what we are learning as we evolve to a 'sustainable, digital organisation with Responsibility at the heart of both our talent and client appeal'

3

We will do better by baking sustainable principles into our products and services

# Key themes from our Index analysis

## 1. Working with the right framework

While **Innocent, Pukka Herbs**, and **Danone** are our top scoring brands in this dimension, further analysis reveals that the type and size of organisation informs the external framework that is most conducive to planning for and tracking responsible business activities.

Our study highlights the particular compatibility of the B Corp framework for founder-led, smaller companies often starting from a single geographical footprint. Further, aligning with the SDGs appears to be a more relevant and feasible commitment for the large multinational companies, like **RBS**, a founding signatory of the Principles of Responsible Banking[14].

A small number of the largest companies are striving for 'pioneer' status on indices like the CPD disclosure rating, including **Unilever** which is uniquely also striving for B Corp status through brand divestment and acquisition in parallel.

As the stars of B Corps, like **Pip & Nut, Lily's Kitchen** and **Abel & Cole** continue to rise, can every company type regardless of sector or offering get on board? Christopher Marquis, Cornell professor, Forbes contributor and author of How the B Corp movement is remaking capitalism[15], firmly believes so.

We should next engage in constructive discussions about how far into and across the organisation these supportive commitments to the SDGs reach. For example, is each organisation collaborating on the relevant NDCs (nationally determined contributions) of the countries in which it operates? It's worth noting that now the UK has left the EU, which uses a bloc commitment, it has yet to submit a national NDC[16].

## 2. Delivering efficiency

Our standout sector in energy efficiency was Financial Services, with an average 62% efficiency score across corporate websites – compared to just 22% average score across our FMCG brands. Could this be a lesson learned from the previous (financial) crisis? Measuring the carbon energy efficiency of those companies listed acts as a prompt for us all to develop wider digital sustainability thinking. If digital sustainability is the next expression of digital transformation what types of skills and work do leaders and their agency counterparts need to foster?

Starting points to consider, as put forward at the BIMA (British Interactive Media Association) roundtable on digital sustainability, include:

1. Design experiences that temper content consumption
2. Source a more diverse energy supply
3. Make connecting infrastructures more efficient
4. Advance regulations for both the digital industry and consumers alike

## What next?

**1**

Start a conversation, with us or anyone who can help. Relationships happen at the speed of trust. Change happens at the speed of relationships

**2**

Start close in: the stuff of head, heart and feelings are fuel for action

**3**

Progress with experiments and foster collaborations, even with your industry peers and rivals, as The Purpose Disruptors[17] coalition has done

# Humanity

A core part of resilience is the way humans interact with businesses. The more connected customers feel to a business the more likely they are to remain loyal when times are tough.

Our Humanity Experts:

**Paul Carysforth**
Head of Data Intelligence
Kin + Carta Connect

**Eloise Maslewski**
Group Account Director
Kin + Carta Connect

# Humanity

We believe that employee experience (EX) and customer experience (CX) are of equal importance in resilience. Great CX enables a business to engender loyalty from customers through emotional connection. Great EX empowers employees to deliver that superior experience: lowering turnover, ensuring businesses retail knowledge and driving efficiency.

## The case for customer centricity

Customer centricity is no longer a nice-to-have. It's not a strategic choice but a survival technique.

Global studies from organisations such as Forrester have proven that customer experience drives ROI. CX leaders have 17% average revenue growth over five years vs just 3% for CX laggards.[18]

A key standout from the research has shown that 'emotion' is the main ingredient to become a CX leader. Organisations that make a customer feel happy, confident and valued drive loyalty. Those that annoy, disappoint or frustrate will lose. This has only been amplified by Covid. Companies that are not empathetic will be, and are being, abandoned.

## Measuring Human Experience

Global acceleration and behavioural changes requires a new model focused around the human. Organisations need to move from the logic of a customer experience to a human experience. A key success criterion behind this is how brands measure digital experience with a human lens. At **Kin + Carta** we have a new Measuring with Empathy product called 'Human Experience Measurement' or HxM.

For our assessment we identified three external markers for a Human Experience-led organisation:

1. **How quickly a digital experience loads**

   Every extra second a page takes to load directly correlates to reduced conversion and, crucially, to human frustration. It is no surprise that **Google**'s major search update called Core Web Vitals is focused on the speed of the Load Experience.

Our research has shown that most organisations have an adequate ‘load’ experience. However, there is still work to be done. The major area where all brands are letting down their visitors is the mobile load experience. Mobile now accounts for 50% of all access and in many cases upwards of 70%. However it's clear that many organisations are not thinking device first in their digital experience creation.

2. **The simplicity of the experience**

Brands that deliver simpler experiences win. It has driven the growth of **Apple** and **Google** for the past 20 years. Often the complexity of a digital experience signposts the internal wrangling within an organisation - one that is inside out in its thinking. They are too focused on ensuring all departments and products have a seat at the table of the digital experience rather being organised around the customer, or better yet the Human.

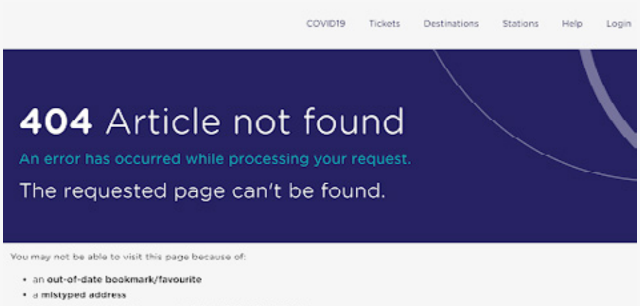
Our assessment shows that two thirds of brands do have a simple experience. However, within the retail category this falls to less than 50%. The need to showcase multiple products is clearly impacting simplicity. We believe the opportunity is for brands to embrace personalisation to focus on only what matters to the visitor. Few brands have yet to really embrace this opportunity successfully.

3. **How human is the experience?**

The language that an organisation uses with its prospects and customers is critical to how it's perceived - humans attribute human characteristics to their digital experiences, as proven by Clifford Nass’ experiments outlined in his book The Man Who Lied to his Laptop.[19]

An excellent barometer for how human-centric an organisation is in its use of language. Visiting a URL that does not exist signifies how supportive the brand is: in our assessment, two thirds of the brands delivered a robotic message to the user with no empathy, and in certain cases inferred that the individual was to blame for navigating to a non-existent page!

## The Human Approach vs The Robotic Approach

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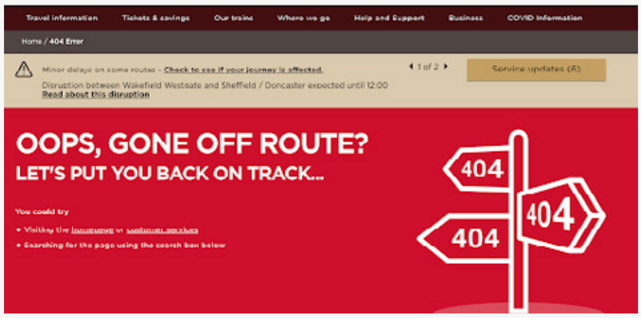


Language is a clear area where brands need to revisit their efforts and treat their visitors empathetically, balancing marketing and user experience with functional content.

# The case for employee experience

Arguably, the most important humans to look after are the people inside a business. If they're happy, supported and empowered they will stay longer and in turn treat their customers well. Humanity starts with the people closest to home.

Key signifiers of a great employee experience are 'best places to work' nominations and Glassdoor scores, which we've factored into the index – these markers can really point to issues in a business. Are you monitoring and measuring these on a regular basis? Are you actively managing your employee channels? And are you making improvements from feedback?

We believe that inclusion, diversity, equity and awareness are key factors in business resilience - in our view, diversity of thought enables more robust collaboration, problem solving and solutions fit for a wider demographic in an increasingly global marketplace. However, we acknowledge the technology industry has a long way to go in this space to finally move away from the stereotypes of Silicon Valley.

We've included factors like the size of the gender pay gap, plus BAME representation at board level, in the Index because we believe that equity is a key signifier of embracing diversity of thought. On these factors, our purpose-led B Corps are unsurprisingly outperforming the traditional FTSE players, with 47% of B Corps scoring the maximum 100% on these metrics vs just 11% of Corporates gaining the maximum score.

## Helping everyone succeed

**"Part of satisfaction at work is the ability for everyone to thrive. Knowing the best opportunities are open to everyone regardless of gender, race, disability or orientation creates a better working environment which ultimately reflects as better business outcomes."**

**Reeha Alder**
Employee Experience Director
Kin + Carta Connect

# Inclusion matters, it has always mattered

It is not by chance that Gartner placed inclusive design – a methodology for embracing inclusion and diversity, and the tools for access to all – as one of the top five trends[20] for change in technology and business during 2020.

Consider the hugely positive impact to Humanity that applying its principles could have on the lives of people. Putting inclusion at the core of any consumer offering can mean the difference between being able to perform a task like purchasing an item online, or simply giving up: overwhelmed, stressed, and incapable of processing any more information.

> "You don't have to be an expert to be an advocate. Be the voice of change and hold one another accountable to drive true access for all."

**Eloise Maslewski**
Group Account Director, Kin + Carta Connect

Designing with Empathy across a business takes a vanguard, not an individual. And each of us, small or large businesses alike, will be on our own journey at varying levels of Maturity.

The Valuable 500[21] features companies who have pledged to put disability firmly on the business leadership agenda. Whilst they might not yet be doing it perfectly now, they are committed about doing the maximum, not the minimum to truly unlock the business, social and economic value of people living with disabilities or impairments across the world.

And it goes far beyond disabilities. It extends to all groups who are under-represented. Movements such as Black Lives Matter or #MeToo only strengthen and serve as a daily reminder that organisations need to do more and ensure inclusivity is at the core of all strategies.

# Helping inclusion flourish

Building inclusion at the heart of your business can be done in a plethora of ways. One of the inclusion metrics in our Brand Resilience Index shows that the presence of senior individuals with job titles relating to accessibility, inclusivity or diversity can vary wildly from brand to brand.

There is no perfect formula, but the most important factor is always how it can be given the most opportunity to flourish within the organisation at scale. Take for example B Corp-led brands - only 24% in our Index have named individuals responsible for Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion. Inclusion is typically built in from the ground up in B Corps, which are usually smaller in size. They can apply the principle in each and every role meaning there's no central tenant, but instead a culture of shared ownership.

Spanning into larger corporations, you can see how this flips with 63% of our FTSE businesses having the named roles. Usually specific roles and departments are appointed – efforts in building true inclusion can require significant focus meaning Responsibility needs to be made official to drive the right results at scale.

The unfortunate truth is that sometimes, brands and corporations don't have time or all the right skill sets to give inclusion the attention it needs. That's where external support can be critical to the widespread uptake or success of inclusivity within an organisation.

Humanity comes when businesses treat all humans (customers, employees and stakeholders) equally well - so congratulations to our best performing brands across our combined Humanity metrics: **Danone, Severn Trent, Unilever** and **Innocent**.

# Bringing it all together

What does all this mean? What have we learned?

**Claire Robinson**
Customer Experience Director
Kin + Carta Connect

The purpose of this exercise was to explore the dimensions of resilience and create a baseline from which we'll continue to measure ourselves and others. We've initiated a valuable set of metrics to evaluate the long-term health of brands – balancing resilience in business models against that of Agile working practices; ensuring long-term purpose is clear while listening and responding to customers and employees in the present; balancing people, purpose and profit, while treating all humans (customers, employees and stakeholders) fairly and equally in the process.

While we acknowledge the 'outside-in' metrics we've used are essentially imperfect, we believe their unique combination does provide a useful benchmark to measure improvement against, and we'll be using this as a tool for conversations with our clients and peers going forward.

It's clear that resilience is not a single-faceted characteristic, and the strengths in the dimensions of resilience vary between size of business and industry type. What's a strength for one sector is not always a strength for another type of business, and there's interplay between dimensions – being more responsible correlates with better employee experience.

Often, smaller single-market B Corp organisations don't have the mature digital infrastructure or the size of workforce to support high scores in our assessed resilience characteristics – but would this cause custom to wane in a crisis? Could brand love and customer loyalty of a single brand outweigh some of the Agility factors in this instance?

We can see a reparative effect following the financial crisis of 2008 – large financial institutions have clearly invested in more sustainable business practices – from embedding Agility to investing in more energy-efficient web estates and Responsibility initiatives.

But should it take a new crisis for businesses to embrace adaptability and change? We think not.

# Start your resilience journey today

The businesses we assessed exhibit different resilience characteristics, but what are some universal takeouts, some practical questions, to address resilience within all businesses?

1

Start with your business model: have your strategic choices been made with consideration to Resilience and Agility? Is your product portfolio and geographical reach able to withstand volatility in one sector or market? Do your existing capabilities offer latent potential for diversification?

2

Establish Agile working practices to ensure precious time and investment isn't wasted. Encourage a culture of experimentation – create a continuous listening programme and unlock the value of an iterative 'permanent beta' approach

3

Ensure every employee embraces your business purpose and their role within it – ensuring what the business stands for permeates every decision – whether financial, design or service related

4

Use smart technology to remove barriers in data and communications bringing employees and customers closer – ensure customer feedback reaches decision makers as directly as possible and put your customer in the boardroom

# Start your resilience journey today

5

Take the next step in your Responsibility journey: whether aligning more closely with the SDGs, or reaching for B Corp accreditation. Pledge to ask uncomfortable questions, understand the implications of the answers and explore more positive and impactful alternatives from sourcing to selling

6

Consider the real humans experiencing your brand online – respect their time, speak in a human way and personalise your offer to their needs for the best results

7

Embrace diversity of thought to create true resilience – ensure employees can bring their authentic selves to work and encourage continuous feedback and collaboration to improve Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS)[22] every day

8

It's tempting to 'just do the minimum' in inclusivity – resist this sentiment, join the businesses striving towards the maximum and uncover the power and revenue potential of under-represented audiences

Above all, don't wait for the next crisis to invest in resilience. It's good business practice to regularly consider what could disrupt your business and ensure you have the purpose, people and processes in place to thrive through adversity.

# Face the future with Kin + Carta

We'd love this to be the first step in an ongoing conversation about resilience – adding further brands to the Index, broadening the sectors included within (e.g. adding challenger banks), and developing new, improved metrics as we go.

We want to share transformation stories focussing on improving resilience over time – what works and what specific challenges are brands facing in implementing initiatives? How can we work together across sectors and borders to make the world work better?

We'd welcome all inputs and feedback and invite further conversation from brands and peers to this end. If you'd like your brand added to the next Index wave, or to talk through our findings and how they can apply to your business, do get in touch.

We'll look forward to hearing from you.

**Adam Grant-Jones**
Chief Sales Officer
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## About Kin + Carta

A global consulting firm built for the 2020s, Kin + Carta helps make the journey to becoming a digital business as profitable, tangible and sustainable as possible. By building digital twins to replace existing analogue processes, designing and launching new digital products and services, and unlocking future innovation through modernisation initiatives, Kin + Carta seamlessly integrates the strategic consulting, software engineering and marketing technology needed to help businesses Make It Happen.

Headquartered out of London and Chicago, clients have access to a global ecosystem of 1,600 strategists, engineers and creatives across four continents.

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