

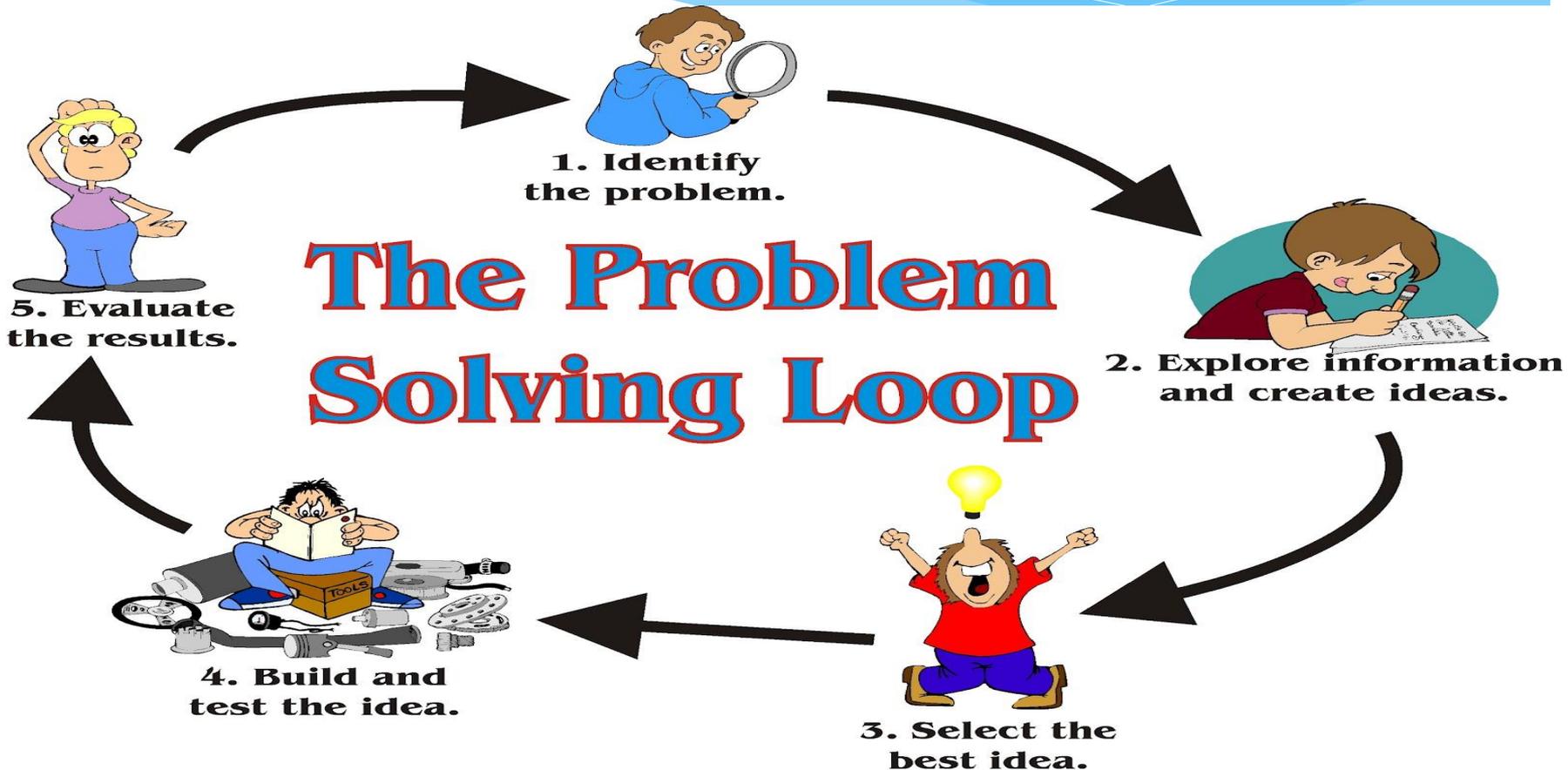
BTEC UNIT Seventeen: Marketing Intelligence

Unit Code: K/601/0955

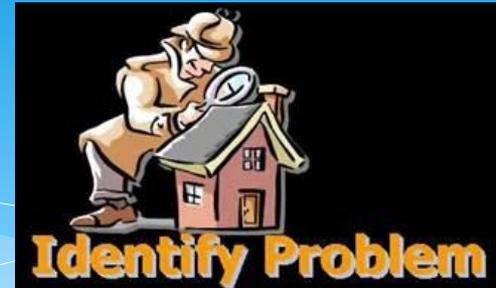


If we knew what we were doing it wouldn't be research.

Albert Einstein



Defining the Problem



- * **Defining the Problem**

- * The first step in the marketing research project is to define the problem. In defining the problem, the researcher should take into account the purpose of the study, the relevant background information, what information is needed, and how it will be used in decision-making. Problem definition involves exploratory research such as discussion with the decision makers, interviews with industry experts, analysis of secondary data, literature review, and, perhaps, some qualitative research, such as pilot studies and focus groups.
- * After the problem as been identified and clarified, with or without exploratory research, the research must formally state the research objectives. This statement defines the type of research that is needed and what intelligence may result that would allow the decision maker to make informed choices.

Defining the problem

- * Theory plays a role in determining the appropriate research objectives. A theory is a formal, logical explanation of some events that includes descriptions of how things relate to one another. This logical explanation helps the researcher know what variables need to be included in the study and how they may relate to one another.
- * The hypothesis on the other hand, is a formal statement explaining some outcome. When the data are consistent with a hypothesis, we say the hypothesis is supported. When the data are inconsistent with a hypothesis, we say the hypothesis is not supported.



EXPLORE INFORMATION AND CREATE IDEAS

- * Development of an approach to the problem includes formulating an objective or theoretical framework, analytical models, research questions proposed through surveys, hypotheses, and identifying characteristics or factors that can influence the research design. This process is guided by discussions with management and industry experts, case studies and simulations, analysis of secondary data, qualitative research and pragmatic considerations



SELECT THE BEST IDEA



- * Sampling involves any procedure that draws conclusions based on measurements of a portion of the population.
- * The first sampling question to ask is “Who is to be sampled?” The answer to this primary question requires the identification of a target population. The next sampling issue concerns sample size. How big should the sample be? The final sampling decision is how to select the sampling units.

BUILD AND TEST IDEAS



- * Data collection involves a field force or staff that operates either in the field, as in the case of personal interviewing from an office by telephone or through mail. This is considered obtrusive. Unobtrusive methods of data gathering are those in which the subjects do not have to be disturbed for data to be collected.
- * Proper selection, training, supervision, and evaluation of the field force help minimize data-collection errors.
- * Data preparation includes the editing, coding, and analysis of the data. Each questionnaire or observation form is inspected, or edited, and, if necessary, corrected. Number or letter codes are assigned to represent each response to each question in the questionnaire. The data from the questionnaires are transcribed into the computer. Verification ensures that the data from the original questionnaires have been accurately transcribed, while data analysis, guided by the plan of data analysis, gives meaning to the data that have been collect

EVALUATE THE RESULTS

- * The entire project should be documented in a written report which addresses the specific research questions identified, describes the approach, the research design, data collection, and data analysis procedures adopted, and presents the results and the major findings. The findings should be presented in a comprehensible format so that they can be readily used in the decision making process. In addition, an oral presentation should be made to management using tables, figures, and graphs to enhance clarity and impact.
- * For these reasons, interviews with experts are more useful in conducting marketing research for industrial firms and for products of a technical nature, where it is relatively easy to identify and approach the experts. This method is also helpful in situations where little information is available from other sources, as in the case of radically new products.



RESEARCH PROPOSALS

A **marketing research proposal** can be defined as,
“A plan that offers ideas for conducting research”.

OR

“A marketing research proposal details the who, the what, the where, the when and the how of research and the information and costs associated with it”.

1. Title and keywords

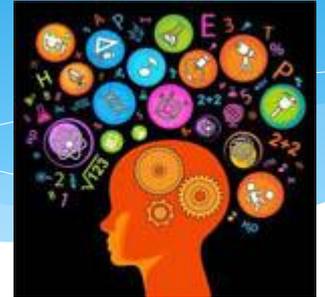
The title of the proposed investigation should be clear, precise and accurate. A short main title outlining the area of the research may be followed by a secondary part of the title that includes more specific information. Keywords are normally required to identify the content of the proposal. An average of four to six words should suffice.

2. Aims and objectives

The primary aim of the proposal is to identify the purpose of the research and the research questions/issues it attempts to address. You should provide a sequence of statements (normally between two and five) that gives an overview of what the research is trying to achieve.



RESEARCH PROPOSALS



- * **Background analysis**

This section needs to justify the proposal with a brief account of the practical issues the research will address. It should attempt to demonstrate the importance of the proposed investigation in relation to specific problems, contexts etc. References of facts, figures, reports and authors will be useful.

- * **4. Research hypothesis**

This part should specify the exact questions to be investigated. This needs to be precise and should take the form of hypotheses or statements (normally between two and four). It should specify what indicators will be measured in order to address the broad issues identified within the aims and background sections.

Data collection

- * **5. Data collection**

The data collection methods must be described succinctly. They should include a description of the data collection process and the strategy to be adopted (survey method or case study). If a survey method is used, then you should mention the geographic regions or demographic to be covered. Mention should be made of the sample frame and sampling technique utilised. Statistical knowledge helps and there are many books available on this topic. Careful attention needs to be paid in selecting the sample if it is to represent the demographic being investigated. The sample also needs to be determined based on confidence interval and confidence level. A useful tool to determine these is available at surveysystem.com (click on the research aids sample calculator).

- *



Research Methodology



- * **Research methodology**

The research methodology section should explain the key reasons for choosing the proposed methods. The research strategy and data collection methods should be discussed and evaluated, in terms of their suitability and their implications for the quality of the data to be collected. The benefits should also be compared to possible alternative approaches.

- * This section may also discuss the need for depth and breadth of information and the benefits of using qualitative or quantitative data, the likely validity of the data collected, the probability of the respondents providing honest responses and the reliability of the methods utilised.

Schedule of activity

*

This is an important section as the proposed research should be conducted within time and budgetary limits. The feasibility of the proposed research should be considered in relation to the availability of resources. An estimate needs to be provided in terms of total hours required for completion of the project – designing the questionnaire, planning, scheduling and conducting interviews, data analysis (qualitative/quantitative), and writing up the report (first draft/final draft). A Gantt chart may help to outline this plan.

Code of conduct

*

This section will articulate the way the researcher will comply with the spirit and practice of research ethics and will conduct their activities within the political/legal context within which the research will be conducted. Factors to address may include: confidentiality and anonymity statements, undertaking informed consent, authorisation for access to people and/or data and data security.

Research limitations

- * **Research limitations**

The researcher needs to acknowledge any limitations that may be inherent in the research design and to the extent it may affect the accuracy of the research findings. Examples could include: how far the findings can be generalised to the whole demographic/situation, restrictions arising from time and resources, and issues around objectivity.

Outcomes

*

The end-products likely to be produced as a result of the research activity are described in this section. The outcomes are not similar to findings. Examples would include: new practices, guidelines for good practice and recommendations.

TYPES OF DATA COLLECTION

- * Data Collection is an important aspect of any type of research study. Inaccurate data collection can impact the results of a study and ultimately lead to invalid results.
- * Data collection methods for impact evaluation vary along a continuum. At the one end of this continuum are quantitative methods and at the other end of the continuum are Qualitative methods for data collection .

TYPES OF RESEARCH TOOLS

*

There are varieties of tools of research used in collecting data .These include:

Tests

Questionnaires

Opinionnaire or attitude scale

Quantitative interviews

Qualitative interviews

Focus groups

Observations

Quantitative observations

What is qualitative research?

- * Qualitative research is a type of scientific research. In general terms, scientific research consists of an investigation that:
 - * • seeks answers to a question
 - * • systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the question
 - * • collects evidence
 - * • produces findings that were not determined in advance
 - * • produces findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the studyQualitative research shares these characteristics.
- * Additionally, it seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations

Interviews

- * The interview is undoubtedly the most common source of data in qualitative studies. The person-to-person format is most prevalent, but occasionally group interviews and focus groups are conducted. Interviews range from the highly structured style, in which questions are determined before the interview, to the open-ended, conversational format. In qualitative research, the highly structured format is used primarily to gather sociodemographic information. For the most part, however, interviews are more open ended and less structured (Merriam, 2001). Frequently, the interviewer asks the same questions of all the participants, but the order of the questions, the exact wording, and the type of follow-up questions may vary considerably

FOCUS GROUPS

- * Another type of qualitative research technique employs interviews on a specific topic with a small group of people, called a focus group. This technique can be efficient because the researcher can gather information about several people in one session. The group is usually homogeneous, such as a group of students, an athletic team, or a group of teachers.
- * In his 1996 book *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*, Morgan discussed the applications of focus groups in social science qualitative research

Observation

- * Observation in qualitative research generally involves spending a prolonged amount of time in the setting. Field notes are taken throughout the observations and are focused on what is seen. Many researchers also record notes to assist in determining what the observed events might mean and to provide help for answering the research questions during subsequent data analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Pitney & Parker, 2009)

Other Data-Gathering Methods

- * Among the many sources of data in qualitative research are self-reports of knowledge and attitude. The researcher can also develop scenarios, in the form of descriptions of situations or actual pictures, that are acted out for participants to observe. The participant then gives her or his interpretation of what is going on in the scenario. The participant's responses provide her or his perceptions, interpretations, and awareness of the total situation and of the interplay of the actors in the scenario.
- * Other recording devices include notebooks, narrative field logs, and diaries, in which researchers record their reactions, concerns, and speculations. Printed materials such as course syllabi, team rosters, evaluation reports, participant notes, and photographs of the setting and situations are examples of document data used in qualitative research.

Quantitative

- * Quantitative data collection usually involves numbers, graphs and charts, whereas, qualitative data collection methods deals with feelings and other non-quantifiable elements.

Differences between Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

* Differences between Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

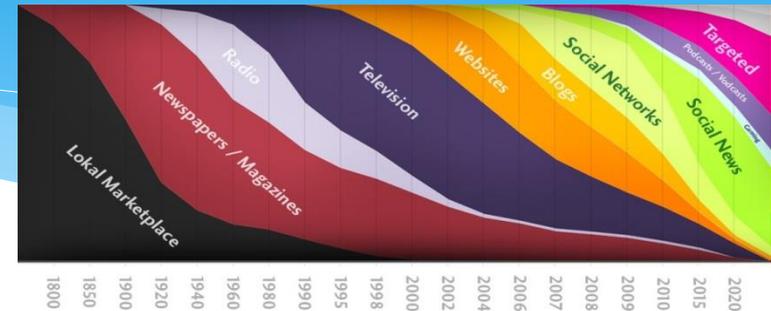
- * The main differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods can be summarised in the following points:
- * Firstly, the concepts in quantitative research methods are usually expressed in the forms of variables, while the concepts in qualitative research methods are expressed in motives and generalisations.
- * Secondly, quantitative research methods and measures are usually universal, like formulas for finding mean, median and mode for a set of data, whereas, in qualitative research each research is approached individually and individual measures are developed to interpret the primary data taking into account the unique characteristics of the research.
- * Thirdly, data in quantitative research appears in the forms of numbers and specific measurements and in qualitative research data can be in forms of words, images, transcripts, etc.
- * Fourthly, research findings in quantitative research can be illustrated in the forms of tables, graphs and pie-charts, whereas, research findings in qualitative studies is usually presented in analysis by only using words.
- * Commenting on the differences of the qualitative methods from the quantitative methods Monette et al (2005, p.428) point to the advantage of the former method which recognizes the abstraction and generalisation as a matters of degree, acknowledging that they may be less important in some studies.
- * Similarities of both qualitative and quantitative forms of data are drawn by Neuman (2003, p.439) as a use of inference and the involvement of a public method of process for both types of data in both styles.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- * **Internal Information**

- * Accounting records are a prime source of internal information. They detail the transactions of the business in the past - which may be used as the basis for planning for the future (e.g. preparing a financial budget or forecast).
- * The accounting records are primarily used to record what happens to the financial resources of a business. For example, how cash is obtained and spent; what assets are acquired; what profits or losses are made on the activities of the business.
- * However, accounting records can provide much more than financial information. For example, details of the products manufactured and delivered from a factory can provide useful information about whether quality standards are being met. Data analysed from customer sales invoices provides a profile of what and to whom products are being sold.
- * A lot of internal information is connected to accounting systems - but is not directly part of them. for example:

SOURCES OF INFORMATION



- * **External Information**

- * As the term implies, this is information that is obtained from outside the business.
- * There are several categories of external information:
- * - **Information relating to way a business should undertake its activities**
- * E.g. businesses need to keep records so that they can collect taxes on behalf of the government. So a business needs to obtain regular information about the taxation system (e.g. PAYE, VAT, Corporation Tax) and what actions it needs to take. Increasingly this kind of information (and the return forms a business needs to send) is provided in digital format.
- * Similarly, a business needs to be aware of key legal areas (e.g. environmental legislation; health & safety regulation; employment law). There is a whole publishing industry devoted to selling this kind of information to businesses.
- * - **Information about the markets in which a business operates**
- * This kind of external information is critically important to a business. It is often referred to as "market" or "competitive intelligence".
- * Most of the external information that a business needs can be obtained from marketing research.

INTERPRETATION OF DATA

- * Data interpretation is the analysis of scientific measurements and observations to develop evidence for answering a question, according to visionLearning.com.
- * Weather forecasts, for instance, are the end result of data interpretation, according to the site
- * When one group produces data, another group has to interpret it. Data are the results of an experiment, or the information collected from a process, or observations. The interpretation of data is based on the workings of the human mind. Since the human mind is not 100 percent objective, the interpretation of data may not be 100 percent accurate.
- * Interpretation of data is at the core of good decision-making in any situation, but there are a few situations where superior data interpretation can set you ahead of your peers. Jobs that entail heavy database use such as call centers and archives make quick data interpretation vital. By speed reading and mastering the use of pattern sweeping, a data interpretation specialist can greatly improve her work efficiency and therefore her earning potential.

REFERENCES

- * The Six Stages of the Marketing Research Process
- * Posted by [laurachristinedesigns](#) on [September 11, 2011](#)
- * www.writeawriting.com/business/marketing-research-proposal
- * HOW TO: Write a market research proposal
- * **Author: Jyotishman Goswami, marketing frontrunner-NCT at De Montfort University**
- * people.uwec.edu/piercech/ResearchMethods/Data
- * www.ccs.neu.edu/course/is4800sp12/resources/qualmethods.pdf
- * ***Research Methods in Physical Activity, Sixth Edition*, by Jerry R. Thomas, Jack K. Nelson, and Stephen J. Silverman**
- * research-methodology.net/research-method
- * www.tutor2u.net/business/ict/intro_information_sources.htm
- * http://www.ehow.com/facts_5840702_data-interpretation_.html
- *