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Planning the Research Design and Gathering Primary Data

According to Lamb, Hair & McDaniel (2011) appropriate secondary data can help researchers perform a thorough situational analysis. With this information, researchers can draw up a list of unanswered questions and then classify them. They must then decide the exact information needed to answer the questions.

The design of the research specifies which questions in the study need to be answered, how and when the data will be collected and how it will be analyzed.

The project budget is usually finalized before the research design is approved.

Sometimes it is possible to answer research questions by collecting more secondary data; otherwise, primary data is likely to be needed. Primary data, which is the information collected for the first time, is used to solve the problem of interest.

The primary advantage of primary data is that they will answer a specific research question that the secondary cannot ask. For example, suppose Pillsbury has two new dough recipes for refrigerated sugar cookies. Which one will consumers like best?

Secondary data will not help answer this question. Rather, target consumers should test each recipe and evaluate the taste, texture and appearance of cookies.

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In addition, primary data are current, and researchers know the source. Researchers sometimes collect the information themselves, rather than assigning the projects to external companies. Researchers also specify the methodology of the research. Patented information must be kept secret. In contrast, much of the secondary data is available to all interested parties for a relatively low fee or for free.

Primary data collection is costly; it can range from a few billion dollars for a limited survey to several million dollars for a nationwide study.

For example, a 15-minute U.S.-wide phone interview with 1,000 adult men can cost \$50,000 in total, including a data analysis and report. Because in-person primary data collection is very expensive, many companies currently use an online study instead. Larger companies that carry out several research projects employ another cost-saving technique.

Apply the piggyback technique or collect information about two different projects using only one questionnaire. The downside is that answering questions, for example, about dog food and gourmet coffee can confuse interviewees.

In addition, this technique requires a more extensive interview (sometimes half an hour or more), which fatigues the interviewees. Generally, the quality of responses decreases and people start giving short answers and think, "When will it end?" Also, an overly extensive interview also demotivates people to participate in other research studies.

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However, the disadvantages of collecting primary data are almost always outweighed by the advantages. It's often the only way to solve a research problem. And with a variety of research techniques available, including surveys, observations, and experiments, primary data can answer almost any question.

Survey Research

The most popular technique for collecting primary data is survey research, in which a researcher interacts with people to obtain facts, opinions and attitudes.

Personal Home Interviews

Although personal home interviews often provide high-quality information, they are often very expensive due to interviewers' time and travel costs. Thus, they quickly disappear from the toolbox of US and European market researchers. However, they remain popular in many countries around the world.

Interception Interviews

Interception interviews in shopping malls are conducted in the common area of a shopping center or in a market research office within it. It is the economical version of the door-to-door interview; the interviewer has a personal contact with the interviewee, but saves on travel time and gas. To conduct this type of interview, the research firm rents an office space in the mall or pays a considerable fee every day. One disadvantage is that it is difficult to obtain a representative sample of the population.

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However, an interviewer may also inquire (or clarify a person's response) when necessary. For example, an interviewer may ask, "What did you like most about the salad dressing you just tasted?" The interviewee may answer: "Taste." This response does not provide much information, so the interviewer can poll by asking: "Can you tell me anything else about the taste?" And the interviewee can go deeper: "Yes, it's not too sweet and has the right amount of pepper, and I love that slight garlic flavor."

Telephone interviews

Compared to staff, the telephone interview costs less, but their cost increases rapidly due to the refusals of the interviewees to participate. Most telephone interviews are conducted from a specially designed telephone center, called a central telephone interview facility (CLT). A telephone facility has a large number of lines, individual interview cubicles and sometimes monitoring equipment and hearing aids.

Executive Interviews

Market researchers use executive interviews to conduct the industrial equivalent of door-to-door interview. This type of study involves interviewing entrepreneurs in your office about industrial products or services. For example, if Dell wants information about user preferences for different features, they might offer in a new line of business computer printers, it would need to interview buyers and potential printer users. It is appropriate to search for an interview these people in your office.

This kind of interview is very expensive. First, it is necessary to identify and locate the individuals involved in the purchase decision of the product in question. Sometimes it is possible to get lists from various sources, but more

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often it is necessary to carry out a search by phone. Even after locating a company that is likely to have the required type of buyers, locating such people within a large organization can be costly and time-consuming. Once the qualified person is located, the next step is to have them agree to be interviewed and schedule a time for the interview. It's not as difficult as it seems because most professionals seem to enjoy it when they talk about issues related to their work.

Finally, an interviewer must go to the established location at the time of the appointment. Long waits and cancellations happen frequently. This type of study requires the best interviewers, because they often talk about topics, they know very little about. Executive interviews have, in essence, the same advantages and disadvantages as home interviews.

A focus group is a type of personal interview. Recruitment is often done by random telephone monitoring, between 7 to 10 people with certain desired characteristics to form a focus group. These qualified consumers are offered an incentive (usually \$50 to \$75) to participate in a group session. The meeting place (which sometimes looks like a house room and sometimes has a board table) has audio and video equipment.

You may also have a monitoring room with a one-way mirror so that customers (manufacturers or retailers) can observe the session. A moderator, hired by the research firm, leads the group's discussion during the session.

Focus groups are much more than Q&A interviews. Market researchers make a distinction between "group dynamics" and "group interviews." The interaction

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provided in group dynamics is essential to the success of research with focus groups; this is why group and non-individual research is carried out.

Questionnaire Design

All forms of survey research require a questionnaire. It ensures that all interviewees are asked the same set of questions, and include three basic types: open, closed, and response in scale. An open question gives rise to an answer in the interviewee's own words. Researchers obtain a wide variety of information based on the interviewee's frame of reference. In contrast, a closed question asks the interviewee to make a selection from a limited list of answers. Traditionally, market researchers differentiate questions by two options (called dichotomous) from those with multiple options (often referred to as multiple-choice). A scale answer question is a closed question designed to measure the intensity of the interviewee's answer.

Closed and answerable questions in scale are easier to tabulate than open ones, as the options are fixed. On the other hand, unless the researcher carefully designs the closed question, an important option is likely to be omitted.

Observation Research

It depends on paying attention to what people do. Specifically, it can be defined as the systematic process of recording people's behavioral patterns, objects, and events without questioning them.

Ethnographic Research, or the study of human behavior in its natural context, encompasses the observation of behavior and the physical scenario. Ethnographers directly observe the population they study. As "participating

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observers," ethnographers use their proximity to people under study to gain a broader and deeper picture of culture and behavior; in short, they try to understand what causes people to do what they do. Ethnographers often question those who observe to actually understand what they see.

Observation Research and Virtual Shopping

Advances in computer technology have allowed researchers to simulate the real retail environment on a computer screen.

Depending on the type of simulation, a buyer can "take" a package by tapping their image on the monitor and rotate it to examine it everywhere. Just like shopping with most online retailers, the buyer taps the shopping cart to deposit an item in the cart. During the purchase process, the computer discreetly records the amount of time the consumer spends shopping in each product category, the time spent examining each side of a package, the quantity of the product they purchase, and the order in which they purchased the articles.

Computer-simulated environments like this one offer several advantages over older research methods. First, unlike focus groups and other lab approaches, the virtual store doubles the overcrowding of a real market. Consumers can shop in an environment with a realistic level of complexity and variety. Second, researchers can prepare and alter the tests very quickly.

An experiment is a method that a researcher can use to collect primary data. The researcher alters one or more variables (price, package, design, shelf space, advertising topic, advertising expenses), while observing the effects of those alterations on another variable (almost always sales). The best experiments are those in which all factors remain constant, except those that are being

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manipulated. Thus, the researcher can observe, for example, that such changes in sales result from variations in advertising expenditures.

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Specifying the Sampling Procedures

Once researchers decide how they will collect primary data, the next step is to select the sampling procedures they will use. A company can rarely census all potential users of a new product or interview them all. Therefore, you must select a sample from the group to interview. A sample is a subset of a larger population. Several questions need to be answered before choosing the sampling plan. First, it is necessary to define the population or universe of interest. This is the group from which the sample will be taken and should include all persons whose opinions, behaviors, preferences, attitudes, etc., are of interest to the marketer.

Collection the Data

Field services firms for market research collect mainly primary data. A field services firm specializes in interviewing participants on an outsourced basis.

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Analyzing the Data

After collecting the data, the market researcher proceeds with the next step in the research process: the analysis of the data. The purpose of this is to interpret and draw conclusions from all information collected. The researcher tries to organize and analyze this data using one or more common techniques for market research: one-dimensional frequency counts, cross-tabulations and more sophisticated statistical analysis. Of these three techniques, the one-dimensional frequency count is the simplest.

Preparing and Presenting the Report

Once the analysis of the data is complete, the researcher should prepare the report and communicate its conclusions and recommendations to management. This is a key step in the process. If the market researcher wants managers to carry out their recommendations, he must convince them that the results are credible and that they are justified by the information collected.

Researchers generally need to submit written and oral reports about the project.

Following up

The last step in the market research process is monitoring. The investigator must determine why management followed or did not follow its recommendations in the report.

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Did you include enough information for decision-making? What could I have done to make the report more useful to management? It is essential that there is good harmony between the product manager or the person who authorized the project and the market researcher. They often have to work together in many studios throughout the year.

India is a very special market for McDonald's. Let us remember that in that country cows are sacred animals; therefore they do not eat beef. It's hard to imagine a fast food restaurant, especially burgers without a meat menu. McDonald's is an example of marketing research in each of the geographic regions where it is established, the variety of menus around the world. Vegetarian, spicy and chicken-based is what stands out most about its adaptation in India. In other Asian countries they include rice on their menus, in Europe some packages come with beer and premium cuts of meat in countries like Germany. There's no doubt that global brands like McDonald's have a lot to share on this issue.

REFERENCE:

Lamb, C., Hair, J. and McDaniel, C. (2011). Marketing. Ohio: Cengage Learning.