

Using Research

Designing a Questionnaire for Primary Research

Primary Research:

- Involves interviewing customers and potential customers directly
- Can be conducted by
 - mailing out questionnaires
 - telephone surveys or personal interviews
 - posting surveys on the Internet

In any form of primary research, you will need to ensure that your questions will:

- motivate people to respond
- be easy to understand but not so simple that the questions lose their significance
- be brief enough to hold the attention of the respondent
- provide complete and accurate data
- allow researchers/respondents enough room to record complete answers
- be objective and not encourage people to answer in a predetermined way

A questionnaire that is to be mailed out or used to collect data from a telephone or Internet survey should include each of the following sections:

Section 1: Statement of Purpose

- Introductory statement that explains the purpose of your research and establish a positive relationship with the respondent.

Section 2: Personal Information

- Very self-explanatory, the respondent fills out their name, address, e-mail address, and any other information you will need to validate your survey data.

Section 3: Questions

- Questions should elicit information about the customer's perception of features such as quality, price, and availability, and how the respondent might react to different kinds of advertising.
- If research is exploratory, use open-ended questions.

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- If research is specific, multiple-choice questions are easier to tabulate. Attitude scales are good for specific information; you can rate items from excellent to poor.
- If you want to improve your product, include questions about your competitors.
- Sequencing your questions can help motivate respondents to keep working through the questionnaire. Go from easy to difficult, then back to easy ones again.

Section 4: Demographic Information

- Customer profiles; provide information on such as age, education level, and household income. For this, it is better to use ranges than to be specific.
- Always finish with a friendly “thank-you” to conclude your survey.

Secondary Research:

- Can provide useful information about what has happened in the past,
 - for example, how much people spent on specific goods and services in a given year.
- This research can be conducted by reading past articles in trade journals, magazines, or newspapers, watching movies or television shows, or studying advertisements.
- You can locate past statistics on the internet or in your local library.

Steps in Marketing Research:

This research usually follows a systematic procedure that helps researchers gather information in an objective and informative way.

1. Identify objectives.
 - a. What do you need to know? Why?
2. Plan the research program.
 - a. Will you use primary or secondary research? Why?
3. Select a sample.
 - a. Whose opinions will you sample? How many people will you contact?
4. Collect the data.
 - a. How will you collect the data? How do you plan to organize it?
5. Analyze the data.
 - a. How will you interpret the information?

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6. Draw conclusions.
 - a. Prepare a survey of your findings.
7. Decide how to proceed.
 - a. What decisions can you make based on your findings? What contingency plans can you make in case your first choices don't work out?

Exercise

Suppose you work for a company that is about to introduce a new game or toy. Describe the product and explain how you could use the seven marketing research steps to predict how well your item will sell, and how much it should cost. Include a copy of the research instrument (questionnaire or survey) you will use to