



MARKET RESEARCH

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The brief . . .

Market Research Workshop content:

- Why research?
- Research planning
- Top ten options:
 1. Published research
 2. Data within your data
 3. Competitor analysis
 4. Mystery shopping
 5. In-house research with customers, e.g. At events



6. Offline research
 7. Online research
 8. Qualitative methods
 9. Conversion research
 10. Evaluation to action
- Q&As



Why research?



Main reasons:

- To inform future business direction
- To make you think harder in terms of allocating resources
- To understand our customers better
- To save money in terms of expensive mistakes and improve ROI
- To identify new markets and opportunities
- To measure success
- To justify our existence!



Research planning



AAArrrrrgggggg!!

- Often a last minute tag-on
- Fundamental, build in at the start
- Real need for effective research planning
- Discuss, then draft and redraft a brief
- What questions do you want answered?
- Schedule the research
- Budget for it



YOU WANT DATA TO BE ABLE TO ACT ON.

A small, stylized green figure is shown walking through a maze. The maze is a large, light-colored rectangular block with a grid pattern. The figure is positioned at the bottom right of the maze, moving towards the center.

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1. Published research



Desk research/review of lit

- Talk to key industry bodies: national, regional and local
- Book and Journals
- Tourism insights [www.insights.org.uk]
- Use search engines to find what is happening in other areas. People with bigger budgets may be doing something similar.
- Tripadvisor, booking.com, laterooms, etc

Remember, critically analyse the data – don't just 'accept' it.

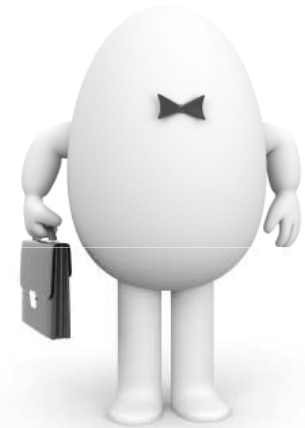


2. Data within your data



Analyse your customer database

- Identify best customers / market segments
- Do geographic mapping
- Demographic profiling
- Look at ordering/purchasing patterns, seasonality, up and cross-selling options
- Great for informing marketing planning, as well as future strategy / research required



Define more clearly what data you need to collect in the future



3. Do a competitor analysis



- Who are they?
- What do they do well?
- Are you losing business to them?
- What are they doing better?
- Can you steal and adapt ideas?



Identify areas that may require investment, then ask your customers what *they* think.



4. Mystery shopping



4 types:

- Postal
 - Email
 - Telephone
 - On site
-
- For all four of these elements, we're measuring "impact" on the customer.



Postal mystery shopping



The aim of postal mystery shopping is to gauge the impact of what is sent

- Customer expectations need to be met and surpassed if you hope to retain them
- Sometimes difficult with Royal Mail's services in the mix
- Initial contact via telephone or email
- See what comes back!
- Reports are based on a set of criteria



Email mystery shopping



The aim of email mystery shopping is to gauge the impact of what is sent

- Ultimately we're looking to improve email handling skills
- Email is very transparent; we know what the company was sent and how they responded
- Customer expectations need to be met and surpassed if you hope to retain them
- Sometimes difficult with Local Authority or Internet Service Providers in the mix
- Initial email sent
- See what comes back!
- Reports are based on a set of criteria

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Telephone mystery shopping



- Audio recordings. No disputes about who said what!
- Great for staff training purposes
- The aim is to improve telephone handling skills
- Around 72% of businesses 'live' answer on the first attempt. Rubbish!!



On site mystery shopping



- Covert video recordings; ideal for denial, lies and staff training
- Aim is to improve performance of customer handling at the place of work
- Look at everything from a customer perspective; their experience from finding your business, to walking out the door
- Some things may not be your fault, but they're still your problem, e.g. Signage, parking, litter, etc



5. In-house research



Research doesn't always have to be expensive or complicated.

- When do you have the opportunity to talk with your customers / your industry?
- Events? Meetings?
- Simple questionnaire / online polling
- Gather views from colleagues / specialists: utilise expertise that already exists

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6. Off-line research



- Surveys, questionnaires, magazine/ brochure inserts, competitions
- Incentives
- Determine questionnaire format: Focus, phraseology, form of response, sequencing / general presentation
- Field working: Pilot study to correct errors and biases, before contacting main sample
- Monitor ongoing basis, then write up findings

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7. Online research



- Simple polling on your website, e.g. What is your favourite walk in the Lake district?
- Website survey, e.g. "Do you have a minute to ?"
- Structured questionnaire developed online, clients check it – customers emailed and encouraged to complete the survey
- Less expensive than mailing, comparable response rates, quick to complete, no data inputting
- Pilot and time carefully to boost response rates

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8. Qualitative research



- What do you want to know? Customer satisfaction levels, brand awareness, feedback on imagery, areas to invest in, etc
- With qualitative research you can really dig down and find out how your customer 'feels' about a product or service
- Focus groups are commonly used for reviewing branding, imagery and design
- This can often be combined with quantitative or 'conversion' projects to offer the best information possible on which to base future strategic or operational decisions



Qualitative research [continued]



Examples:

1. *Worthing*

- Industry feedback gained through semi-structured online questionnaires [via email]
- 'destination strategy' focus group with industry representatives

2. *Lindeth Fell Country House Hotel*

- Ongoing online customer research by email
- Focus groups to guide investment in product to meet needs of new market segments

A small, stylized illustration of a person walking with a suitcase, positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide. The person is walking towards the right, and the suitcase is behind them.

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9. "Conversion" projects



- Measuring the effectiveness of marketing activity
- Comparisons can be made between different campaigns or media [email √ direct mail √ advertising]
- Typically this has been for 'destinations', but is relevant to any business
- Usual methodology is to carry out telephone interviews with relevant people, or to email customers and ask them to complete an online form
- Return on Investment generally important
- Economic impact can be measured
- Sometimes there will be connections made with other research, for example, a visitor survey
- Typical questions

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“Conversion” projects



Did you visit our area in 2009?

If Yes:

- *Which month did you visit?*
- *How many nights did you stay?*
- *What sort of accommodation did you use?*
- *What prompted you to send for the brochure?*
- *Did you book your accommodation through the brochure?*
- *If no – Did you book your accommodation before receiving the brochure?*
- *Why did you choose to visit the area?*
- *Was the brochure useful and easy to use?*
- *Was this your first visit to the area?*
- *If no - How many times have you visited in the last five years?*
- *How did you rate your visit?*
- *What is your age group?*
- *Do you have access to the internet?*
- *Do you wish to receive next year's brochure?*
- *Would you be interested in taking part in more detailed research in the future?*

If No:

- *Where did you take your holiday this year?*
- *What was your main reason for choosing not to visit the area?*
- *What other place[s] did you go to instead?*
- *Was the brochure clear/easy to use/useful?*
- *How likely are you to visit in the future?*
- *Do you wish to receive a copy of next year's brochure?*



10. Evaluation to action



- Gathering data via research is great, but what happens next?
- Beware of 'interesting' information
- Focus on how the information can be used to meet your original objectives, e.g. More targeted marketing, need to review brand, commission photography, renew website layout, etc
- Solid research is hard to ignore, it's a great back-up to get support and funding

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Questions . . .

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