**CHAPTER 1**

**The Role of Marketing Research in Management Decision Making**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Review the marketing concept and the marketing mix.

2. Comprehend the marketing environment within which managers must make decisions.

**KEY TERMS**

Marketing Marketing concept

Consumer orientation Goal orientation

Systems orientation Marketing mix

Marketing research Descriptive function

Diagnostic function Predictive function

Return on quality Marketing strategy

Applied research Basic, or pure, research

Programmatic research Selective Research

Evaluative research

**CHAPTER OUTLINE**

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II. The Market Concept

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B. Goal Orientation

C. Systems Orientation

III. Opportunistic Nature of Marketing Research

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A. Elements in the External Environment

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VIII. Decision to Conduct Marketing Research

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**CHAPTER SUMMARY**

**1. NATURE OF MARKETING**

I. **Marketing**

A. **Definition**–the activity, set of institutions and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large

B. **‘Right’ Principles**–right goods or services to the right people at the right place at the right time at the right price, using the right promotion techniques, these are provided by management making the ‘right’ decisions by having timely decision-making information provided by marketing research.

II. **The Marketing Concept**

A. **Consumer Orientation**–firms strive to identify the group of people (or firms) most likely to buy their product and to produce a good or offer a service that will meet the needs of the target customers most effectively

B. **Goal Orientation**–a company must be consumer oriented only to the extent that it is also accomplishing corporate goals, such as financial goals

C. **Systems Orientation**–the creation of systems to monitor the external environment and deliver the desired marketing mix to the target

III. **Opportunistic Nature of Marketing Research**

A. Opportunities in the Marketplace – marketing research as tool

B. Holiday Inn management decided that the bar should play a bigger role at the hotels.

The social hub would tailor Holiday Inn’s lunch and dinner menus to bar fare that can be

shared, such as gourmet meatballs, sesame chicken wings, hamburgers, and a few significant entrees, such as steaks and salmon club sandwiches.

IV. **External Marketing Environment**

A. **Elements in the External Environment**–changes over time

Managers must stay alert to these changes and alter the marketing mix accordingly

B. **Marketing Mix-**the unique blend of product/service, pricing, promotion, and distribution strategies designed to meet the needs of a specific target market.

C. **Marketing Research**–key means for understanding the environment.

**2. MARKETING RESEARCH AND DECISION MAKING**

I. **Marketing Research Defined**

A. **AMA Definition of Marketing Research:**

1. Marketing research is the function that links the consumer, customer, and public to the marketer through information–information used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems; generate, refine and evaluate marketing actions; monitor marketing performance; and improve understanding of marketing as a process.

2. Marketing research specifies the information required to address those issues, designs the method for collecting information, manages and implements the data collection process, analyzes the results, and communicates the findings and their implications.

B. **Authors Preferred Definition of Marketing Research:**

**1. Marketing research** is the planning, collection, and analysis of data relevant to market decision making and the communication of the results of this analysis to management.

II. **Importance of Marketing Research in Management**

A. **Functions of Market Research**

1. **Descriptive function**–gathering and presenting statements of fact

2. **Diagnostic function**–data and/or actions are explained

3. **Predictive function**–take advantage of opportunities as they arise in the ever-changing marketplace

B. **The Unrelenting Drive for Quality and Customer satisfaction, the key competitive weapons in today’s marketplace.**

1. Quality and customer satisfaction–key competitive weapons in today’s marketplace.

2. Product quality–not to be achieved at the expense of customer service and satisfaction

3. **Return on Quality-**

a. Quality being delivered is the quality desired by the target market

b. Added quality must have a positive impact on profitability

C. **Paramount Importance of Keeping Existing Customers**

1. **Customer retention**–increasing revenues and market share, decreasing costs and demands on employees’ time, and improving employee retention and productivity

a. Ability to retain customer is based on an intimate understanding of their needs, which comes primarily from marketing research.

2. **Marketing research**–to understand customers’ needs and to satisfy those needs, which leads to customer satisfaction? British Airways used marketing research to find that first class passengers want to sleep.

III. **Understanding the Ever-Changing Marketplace.**

A. Understanding trends in the marketplace and taking advantage of opportunities

B. Marketing research has been practiced for as long as marketing has existed

IV. **Social Media and User-Generated Content**

1. Traditionally, marketers created a message via traditional media such as TV, print, radio, billboards, etc. Now consumers are participating in a variety of new media, known as social media, in which user-generated content expresses typical, honest, unsolicited and often passionate opinions of the consumer.
2. Social media such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn generate millions of comments a day about products and services.
3. Market researchers are tapping into huge streams of data to determine what people think about their products and services as well as those of the competition.

V. **Proactive Role of Marketing Research**

**A. Proactive Management**–alters the marketing mix to fit the newly emerging patterns in economic, social, and competitive environments, whereas reactive management waits for change to have a major impact on the firm before deciding to take actions

1. **Proactive position**–to become cutting-edge in the industry

2. **Proactive management**–allows managers to anticipate changes in the market and customer desires and then design goods and services to meet those changes and needs

B. **Proactive Manager**–continually seeks new opportunities through strategic planning

C. **Proactive Marketing Strategic Plan**–guides the long-run use of the firm’s resources based on the firm’s existing and projected internal capabilities and on projected changes in the external environment

VI. **Applied Research versus Basic Research**

A. **Applied Research**–conducted to determine changes in the market, to better understand results of a decision, or to reduce uncertainty in management decision making.

B. **Basic or Pure Research**–expands the frontiers of knowledge. Basic research is conducted to validate an existing theory or learn more about a concept or phenomenon–findings of basic research usually cannot be implemented by managers in the short run

VII. **Nature of Applied Research**

A. **Programmatic Research**–helps develop marketing options through market segmentation, market opportunity analysis, or consumer attitude and product usage studies

1. Arises from management’s need to obtain a market overview.

Some questions that programmatic researchers ask

a. Has its target market changed? How?

b. Does the market exhibit any new segmentation opportunities?

c. Do some segments appear to be more likely candidates than others for the firm’s marketing efforts?

d. What new product opportunities lie in the various segments?

B. **Selective Research**–used to test decision alternatives

1. Conducted after several viable options have been identified

2. Can be required at any stage of the marketing process

C. **Evaluative Research**–used to assess program performance

1. Need arises when the effectiveness and efficiency of marketing programs must be evaluated

VIII. **Decision to Conduct Marketing Research**

A. **Reasons not to conduct marketing research**

1. **Resources are lacking**–organization does not have the funds to conduct research properly, it should not be undertaken

2. **Research results would not be useful**–information obtained from the research could not be used in a practical application by the firm

3. **Opportunity has passed**–if the opportunity for successful entry into a market has already passed

4. **The decision has already been made**–management is just conducting research to try to justify a decision that has already been made

5. **Managers cannot agree on what they need to know to make a decision**–if the problem or opportunity to be researched cannot be properly identified, it is impossible to plan and implement a marketing research project to help managers resolve the problem or take advantage of the opportunity

6. **Decision-making information already exists**– Organizations gather much data and information in daily activities. This information may hold the answer to a research problem, and it is unwise to invest in a project to gather the same information.

7. **The costs of conducting research outweigh the benefits**–when the expected value of the information is greaterthan the cost of obtaining the data

a. **See Exhibit 1.1 Deciding Whether to Conduct Marketing Research**

**3. SUMMARY**

**QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND CRITICAL THINKING**

**1. The role of marketing is to create exchanges. What role might marketing research play in facilitating the exchange process?**

Exchange can take place when two or more parties have something of potential value to each other and can communicate and deliver these desired goods or services. Marketing research helps these parties to determine what goods or services are desired by other parties and at what price level these goods and services become of value. In other words, marketing research aids managers in determining who wants benefits from goods or services and where, when, and at what price an exchange can occur.

**2. Marketing research has traditionally been associated with manufacturers of consumer goods. Today an increasing number of organizations, both profit and nonprofit, are using marketing research. Why do you think this trend exists? Give some examples**.

Marketing research helps all organizations follow the principle of the “marketing concept.” Profit-making organizations face increasing amounts of competition from U.S. companies, as well as from global companies. Also, both profit-making and nonprofit organizations are serving an increasingly diverse clientele. Marketing research helps to identify target customers and their needs in a rapidly changing environment.

**3. Explain the relationship between marketing research and the marketing concept.**

The marketing concept requires (1) a consumer orientation, (2) a goal orientation, and (3) a systems orientation. The consumer orientation means that firms strive to identify the group of people (or firms) most likely to buy their product (the target market) and to produce a good or offer a service that will meet the needs of those target customers most effectively. This must be accomplished while serving the firm’s other goals, which means the firm has a goal orientation. The systems orientation aspect of the orientation means that the firm has a system in place to achieve the consumer orientation and the goal orientation. Within this system is marketing research, which helps identify what customers want to buy and at what price they will buy it.

**4. Comment on the following statement by the owner of a restaurant in a downtown area: “I see customers every day whom I know on a first-name basis. I understand their likes and dislikes. If I put something on the menu and it doesn’t sell, I know that they didn’t like it. I also read the magazine *Modern Restaurants*, to keep up with industry trends. This is all of the marketing research that I need to do.”**

This restaurant owner may know customers by name, but the assertion about understanding their tastes may be over-confident. An item on the menu may not sell because the customers are not familiar with it. Or, it may be perceived as too expensive. There could be many reasons why a product might not sell as well as the owner wants it to. By conducting marketing research, the owner could better determine the preferences of customers and potential customers. This would save the money, effort, and time of changing the menu selection. While a national magazine can determine national trends in the restaurant business, these trends are not always completely applicable at the local level. Marketing research could help the owner become familiar with the favorite foods in the local geographic market.

**5. Why is marketing research important to marketing executives? Give several reasons.**

Marketing research is important to marketing executives because it gives them additional information on which to make decisions. Some of that information includes:

* It discovers trends in the market.
* It gauges customer attitudes toward products, services, and advertising.
* It explains what effect changing an element of the marketing mix would have on sales.
* It predicts the results of a planned marketing decision.
* It determines the level of services customers’ desire at a given price.

**6. What differences might you note among marketing research conducted for (a) a retailer, (b) a consumer goods manufacturer, (c) an industrial goods manufacturer, and (d) a charitable organization?**

Each of these organizations would use marketing research to help accomplish the strategic mission of their organization or the goals that were determined to be most important. For example:

A retailer might use marketing research to track trends in demographics, to determine effective advertising strategies, and to find products or services desired by the customer.

A consumer goods manufacturer might use marketing research to help determine the probability of success of a new product or to keep current on its competitors’ activities and success. It might also use it to ascertain the best target market for current products.

An industrial goods manufacturer might use marketing research to project future needs of customers or to determine the level of products that will be demanded.

A charitable organization might use marketing research to determine what services are most needed in a demographic target market and to find the most effective vehicle for delivering those services. It might also use marketing research to identify potential donors and to find the most effective way to appeal to them.

**7. Comment on the following: Ralph Moran is planning to invest $1.5 million in a new restaurant in Saint Louis. When he applied for a construction financing loan, the bank officers asked whether he had conducted any research. Ralph replied, “I checked on research and a marketing research company wanted $20,000 to do the work. I decided that with all the other expenses of opening a new business, research was a luxury that I could do without.”**

If Mr. Moran is willing to spend $1.5 million on a new restaurant without conducting marketing research, he should be prepared to lose that money. Without marketing research, he may not know his potential customers or their desires. Nor will he know if those desires or needs are currently being met by existing businesses, or at what price or quality level the customers would be willing to try a new restaurant. His advertising may be at best ineffective or at the worst offensive. For example, what if he were to advertise barbecue pork ribs in an area that is predominantly Jewish? Given all of this, $20,000 seems a small price to pay to increase the chances of success of a business with so large an investment.

**8. What is meant by “return on quality”? Why do you think that the concept evolved? Give an example.**

Return on Quality means two things. First, that the quality being delivered is the quality desired by the target market. Second, that added quality must have a positive impact on profitability. The concept may have evolved because of the large number of quality programs that were begun in the 1980’s and 1990’s which did not improve the financial position of the companies who started them. National Bank Corporation, mentioned in the text, measures every improvement in service quality in terms of added profitability.

**9. Describe three situations in which marketing research should not be undertaken. Explain why this is true.**

**A Lack of Resources** – If an organization does not have the funds to conduct the research properly, it should not be undertaken. If a firm has the money to perform the research, but it cannot afford to implement changes based on the research, it should not conduct the research.

**Research Results Would Not Be Useful** – The information obtained from the research could not be used in a practical application by the firm.

**Poor Timing in the Marketplace** – If a product is in a category that is almost at a saturation point, new product entry research would be foolish.

**10. Given an example of (a) the descriptive role of marketing research, (b) the diagnostic role of marketing research, and (c) the predictive function of marketing research.**

An example of the descriptive role of marketing research is a bank or other financial institution performing research to determine the demographics of its customers. An example of the diagnostic role of marketing research is the bank using the demographics of customers and the demographics of the area population to determine if a certain age group needs to be targeted with promotion. If the bank uses the information gathered above, the predictive function of marketing research should allow it to predict the reaction of the target group to the advertising and the percentage increase in new accounts.

**11. Using the Internet and a Web browser, visit a search engine such as Google or Bing and type, “marketing research.” From the thousands of options you are offered, pick a Web site that you find interesting and report on its content to the class.**

There are many possible answers, depending on the interest of individual students.

**12. Divide the class into groups of four. Each team should visit a large organization (profit or nonprofit) and conduct an interview with the top marketing executive to discover how this firm is using marketing research. Each team then should report its findings in class.**

There are many possible answers.

**REAL LIFE RESEARCH**

Case 1.1 -- Can Anyone be a Market Researcher?

**Key Points**

* Recently, Google announced that it was offering Google Consumer Surveys ([www.google.com/insights/consumersurvey](http://www.google.com/insights/consumersurvey)) to anyone wanting to do marketing research. Google says that the service is for anyone from Fortune 500 companies to “the local bike shop.”
* It is promoted as fast, accurate, and a low cost alternative to traditional marketing research. The Google survey website notes, “With Google Consumer Surveys, you choose your target audience, type your question and watch the results roll in within hours. Get complete results in days; not weeks.” Google notes that users can test product concepts, track brands, measure consumer satisfaction and more.
* In an interview with Paul McDonald, a creator of Google Consumer Surveys, he addresses several concerns from the marketing research industry about the new service. He says, “I think your concerns about the quality of the data from self-service survey platforms are well known in the research community,” McDonald wrote. “As the mantra goes, ‘Garbage in, garbage out’… We try to encourage survey best practices in our help content, program policies and by providing survey templates to guide new researchers. In the end we are providing a platform which can be used to create professional and statistically accurate surveys.”

**Questions**

1. **Go to Google’s Consumer Survey website. After clicking through how it works, and examples, do you feel competent to create an Internet survey? Why or why not?**

The Google Consumer Survey method is easy to understand and use, because it is well designed and menu driven.

1. **Do you think the marketing research industry should be concerned about Google Consumer Surveys? Why?**

Yes, because Google has a methodology which possibly gives its survey method the ability to infer demographic information to its surveys without asking demographic questions.

1. **Most traditional consumer surveys conclude with a series of demographic questions such as gender, age, location, and so forth. Google Consumer Surveys don’t ask these questions. Instead it infers approximate demographic and location information using the respondent’s IP address and DoubleClick cookie. The respondent’s nearest city can be determined from their IP address. Income and urban density can be computed by mapping the location to census tracts and using census data to infer income and urban density. Gender and age group can be inferred from the types of pages the respondent has previously visited in the Google Display Network using the DoubleClick cookie. Google says that is information is used to ensure each survey receives a representative sample and to enable survey researchers to see how sub-populations answered questions. Inferring this demographic data enables Consumer Surveys researchers to ask fewer questions in a survey, which in turn increases the number of consumers that respond. Do you think this methodology is better than simply asking the demographic questions? Do you see any problems with Google’s methodology?**

It depends upon how good is Google’s method algorithm for estimating demographics. Shorter questionnaires historically have higher response rates than longer questionnaires. Google uses a number of factors such as IP addresses and DoubleClick cookies to map respondent location. Then Google infers demographics from based on the average demographics for a given “mapped” area. This method would be effective for a survey covering a large geographic area with few responses from any one area. However, if the survey is limited to a small geographic area, the effect of the average demographic may not be a valid representation of the respondent(s) in question.