Chapter 2
Overview of the Research Process

Value of the Information Research Process

- Business problems require information that may be obtained through the marketing research process.
- An information perspective is used to view and understand the marketing research process.
- Four phases of the research process will be covered in this chapter.

Environmental Factors Impacting Marketing Research Practices

- Advances in Interactive Marketing Communications Technologies
- Emphasis on Internal "Quality Improvements"
- New Global Market Structures
When to Use the Information/Marketing Research Process

- “Does the decision maker face a question that requires either secondary or primary information in order to answer the question?”
- If “yes”, then the information research process should be activated.

Overview of the Information Research Process (Ex. 2.2)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Phase I</th>
<th>Determination of the Information Research Problem</th>
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<td>Phase III</td>
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Transforming Raw Data into Information

- It is critical to realize that differences exist between:
  - Raw data which are actual first hand responses,
  - Data structures which represent the output analysis results, and
  - Information which is obtained when someone analyzes and interprets the data structures.
Phase I. Determination of the Information Research Problem

Task Steps that Will Aid in the Achievement of this Objective Include:

- Task Step 1. Determine and Clarify Management’s Information Needs
- Task Step 2. Redefine the Decision Problem(s) as Research Problem(s)
- Task Step 3. Establish Research Objectives and Evaluate the Potential Value of the Information

Task Step 1. Determine & Clarify Management’s Information Needs

- Management needs some type of information in order to resolve:
  - a problem,
  - an opportunity, or
  - a critical question concerning a market performance symptom.
- List all factors that could have a direct or indirect impact on the defined problem or opportunity.

Task Step 2. Redefine Decision Problems as Research Problems

Redefining the Decision Problem is the Most Critical Step in the Information Research Process.

Type of Questions That Must Be Answered to Provide Information:

- “Why”
- “How”
- “When”
- “What”
- “Where”
Task Step 3. Establish Research Objectives/ Evaluate Value of Info.

- Research objectives are formally developed and stated so:
  - all are aware of the exact data and information that will be collected, analyzed and interpreted, and
  - they can provide guidelines to solve the defined decision problems, opportunities and/or questions.

Phase II. Development of the Appropriate Research Design

Task Steps that Will Aid in the Achievement of this Objective Include:

1. Task Step 4. Determine and Evaluate the Research Design and Data Sources
2. Task Step 5. Determine the Sample Plan and Sample Size
Task Step 5. Determine the Sample Plan and Sample Size

- Identify the relevant defined target population by either:
  - conducting a census of all members, or
  - selecting a subgroup or sample.
- Develop either a probability or non-probability sampling plan.
- Determine sample size, or how many people need to be investigated.

Task Step 6. Determine the Measurement Issues and Scales

- This is the second most important step in the research process and addresses:
  - level of information needed,
  - reliability and validity of information,
  - development of reliable and valid scale measurement,
  - dimensions underlining critical factors, and
  - single or multi-item measures used to collect data.

Phase III. Execution of the Research Design

Task Steps that Will Aid in the Achievement of this Objective Include:

- Task Step 7. Data Collection and Processing of Data
- Task Step 8. Data Analysis Procedures
- Task Step 9. Interpret Data Structures Into Information
Step 7. Data Collection and Processing of Data

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<tr>
<th>Asking Questions</th>
<th>Observation</th>
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<tr>
<td>&gt; Flexibility of collecting a wider array of data.</td>
<td>&gt; Natural or contrived.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Professional interviewers or self-administered questionnaires.</td>
<td>&gt; Disguised or undisguised.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&gt; Structured or unstructured.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&gt; Direct or indirect.</td>
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<td>&gt; Human or mechanical.</td>
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Processing of Data
Must be Done Prior to Performing Data Analysis

Task Step 8. Data Analysis Procedures

◆ Process of turning raw data into data structures that can be used in generating information for the decision maker.
◆ Analysis procedures can range from simple frequency distributions to complex multivariate data analysis techniques.

Task Step 9. Interpret Data Structures into Information

◆ Information is created for decision makers which will assist in answering the initial questions of concern.
◆ Researcher narratively (usually in complete description) interprets the meanings of data results and statistical testing.
Phase IV. Communication of the Results


Executive Summary
Introduction
Problem Definition & Objectives
Body of Methodology
Results, Findings, Limitations of Study

Components of a Research Proposal

Purpose of the Proposed Research Project
Type of Study
Definition of the Target Population and Sample Size
Sample Design, Technique & Data Collection
Specific Research Instruments
Potential Managerial Benefits of Study
Proposed Cost Structure for Total Project
Bio Sketch of Researcher and Company
Optional Dummy Tables of Results

Summary of Learning Objectives

- Describe the major environmental factors that are directly influencing changes in marketing research; explain some of their impacts in the research process.
- Describe and discuss the four phases of the information research process and the ten integrative task steps involved with the research process; and explain some of the key activities within each step.
- Explain the differences between raw data, data structures and information; and the transformation process that is used to create useful managerial information.
Summary of Learning Objectives

- Identify and explain which task step is most critical in the research process.
- Describe the basic nature of exploratory, descriptive, and causal research designs and explain the basic differences between each method.
- Describe the critical questions and issues in the development of a sampling plan and explain the basic difference between a probability and nonprobability sampling plan.
- Identify and explain the major components for writing a solid research proposal.