

Guide to Market Research

Market Research is used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems. This information helps to identify target customers, assess competition and develop a marketing plan. Good market research can help determine all the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats facing a new or existing business.

The goal of doing market research is to equip yourself with the information you need to make informed business decisions about start-up, innovation, growth and the 4 P's:

Product — Improve your product or service based on findings about what your customers really want and need. Focus on things like function, appearance and customer service or warranties.

Price — Set a price based on popular profit margins, competitors' prices, financing options or the price a customer is willing to pay.

Placement — Decide where to set up and how to distribute a product. Compare the characteristics of different locations and the value of points of sale (retail, wholesale, online).

Promotion — Figure out how to best reach particular market segments (teens, families, students, professionals, etc.) in areas of advertising and publicity, social media, and branding.

To conduct Market Research you must first establish clear goals for the market research activity you will undertake. You need to make sure you have defined what you need to know, and why. Once this has been established, information such as the following, may be gathered through surveys:

Who are my customers and how can I reach them?

- Customer profile
- Prospective business locations.
- Marketing strategies

Which products and services do buyers need or want?

What factors influence the buying decisions of my customers?

- Price, service, convenience, branding, etc.

What prices should I set for my products and services?

- Customer expectations

Who are my competitors, how do they operate and what are their strengths and weaknesses