

Marketing Research Lesson 1

SUBMITTED BY: Leya Matthew

SUBJECT(S): Marketing

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9, 10, 11, 12

≡ OVERVIEW:

Access to accurate information for making marketing decisions is essential. In this lesson, students are introduced to the basic concepts of marketing research. While marketing research can be an entire course by itself, the basic quality of curiosity and desire for accurate information drives the different methodologies. The Knowledge@Wharton articles present two interesting themes within this first lesson — the kinds of data marketing researchers have access to and use, and the problem of information overload. This lesson will be conducted in two parts.

≡ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- Marketing, V. Marketing Research

≡ RELATED ARTICLES:

- [“The Power of Curiosity”](#)
- [“Meet One of the World’s Most Well-Traveled Teens”](#)
- [“Marketing Research Snapshot: Why Some Songs Become Hits”](#)
- [“Emma Himes of JÜV Consulting Deciphers the Dynamic Style of Generation Z”](#)
- [“Connecting the Dots Between Architecture, Marijuana, Marketing and Life”](#)
- [“5 Questions for Katherine Lin: Data Scientist in Training”](#)

Common Core Standard(s):

1. CCR Standard for Reading: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and make logical inferences from it.
2. CCR Standards for Listening: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on each other's ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
3. CCR Standards for Speaking: Present information, findings and supporting evidence in such a way that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, and the organization, development and style are appropriate to the task, purpose and audience.

Objectives/Purposes: In this module, students will develop questions from the stage of everyday curiosity to that of scientific curiosity. In this lesson, students will generate as many possible research areas/questions as possible, for a product of their choice.

Knowledge@Wharton Articles:

- [“Mining Data for Nuggets of Knowledge”](#)
- [“Info Insight: Using Market Research to Your Competitive Advantage”](#)

Other Resources/Materials: Internet access, Handouts

Activity:

1. Small group activity (*10 mins*)

The teacher pulls up, from the Internet, trends predicted for particular product segments. The example I used was from the UK market for which Mintel made predictions – <http://www.mintel.com/press-centre/press-releases/424/consumer-packaged-goods-trend-predictions-for-2010>. Students are asked to form small groups and pick any one trend-prediction. They are then asked to assume that they have a company that deals in the same market and they have to make decisions based on the information presented.

For example, one of the trends states, “Consumers are hungry for nutrition facts. However, people feel confused and skeptical about different companies’ nutrition symbols. Indeed, in the UK nearly half (45%) of consumers find nutritional labels too cluttered. In response, more manufacturers will opt for clean, clear facts on front-of-pack statements in 2010.” The students who choose this trend have to imagine that they have a food product in the market, and they will

have to take any decisions based on this trend prediction. To help students' structure the activity, you could use some prompt questions like:

- Is this information in line with what you currently know about your market?
- What else do you need to know to make decisions?
- Design a research plan for additional information required.
- How do you expect this information to impact your company's marketing?

You could also ask students to break up marketing into its elements (Product, Price, Place, Promotions) to analyze the trends and to generate questions. The following are samples of decisions students are expected to generate:

Example 1:

Symbol overload: Consumers are hungry for nutrition facts. However, people feel confused and skeptical about different companies' nutrition symbols. Indeed, in the UK nearly half (45%) of the consumers find nutritional labels too cluttered. In response, more manufacturers will opt for clean, clear facts on front-of-pack statements in 2010.

- Look for research studies on the topic.
- Identify if sample populations in the study matched my customer segments.
- Are any of my competitors doing anything along these lines?
- Conduct a small-scale study with my customer segments.
- Since this deals with packaging rather than product, check if there are any other factors that could be changed like color-coding.
- Are there new customer segments I can appeal to with differentiated packaging?
- Pre-test new packaging if we decide to go with new packaging.
- Market the new packaging.
- Evaluate impact/have sales increased? Is there greater brand retention?

Example 2:

Sodium reduction: Poised as the next major health movement, sodium reduction is finally ready to take hold. Indeed, 35% of UK consumers now consider low salt content when buying food. The key difference, says David Jago, is that "sodium reduction is being pushed by food companies and health organizations, not by consumers." This could mean slow adoption of the "less salt" mantra by shoppers, even as the food industry moves ahead.

- Check with medical research about necessary sodium levels and the current sodium levels in your products.
- Research customer perception for my segments.
- Consider options with product development in a way that does not alienate positive perception of product.
- Pre-test product in a pilot program.
- Evaluate impact and change in perception.
- Implement product substitution in select outlets.
- Monitor sales, brand perception and customer satisfaction.
- Tweak product based on data.
- Market for larger markets.
- Implement plan.

2. Present to large group (10-12 mins)

The groups are asked to present their designs. Other groups are encouraged to provide constructive criticism — *What was insightful about the design? Was there anything about the design you felt was erroneous?*

3. Discussion (10 mins)

The teacher leads a class discussion about marketing research. You could ask students what they understand by marketing research, and why it could be important for marketing. You could then synthesize the various elements in the following points:

- Information used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems.
- Generate, refine and evaluate marketing actions.
- Monitor marketing performance.
- Improve understanding of marketing as a process.

Marketing research specifies the information required to address these issues, designs the method for collecting information, manages and implements the data collection process, analyzes the results, and communicates the findings and their implications (from Wikipedia).

Or you could break it down into questions like:

- What information do I require?

- How do I collect this information?

You may also want to differentiate Marketing Research from Market Research *which is any organized effort to gather information about markets or customers.*

Once students have a clear picture of what marketing research is and what its objectives are, the teacher briefs students about the next activity, conducted over two lessons. In today's class students will, in small groups, identify a product or service of their choice and begin to generate a sample plan for various research opportunities for the marketing research group of the product or service. The objective of today's exercise is to generate as many options as possible. In the next class, they will choose one possible research area and design a research plan.

4. Small group activity (10-12 mins) *Handout (Worksheet) Handout (Trend Prediction)*

To help students with their activity, the teacher distributes handouts of the marketing process and of the definition and process of marketing research discussed earlier. The marketing process is summarized in the following manner:

- Analyze market opportunities
 - Target consumers
 - Competition
- Design marketing strategy
 - Differentiating/positioning/branding
 - Product life-cycle (development, launch, growth, maturity, decline)
 - Marketing Mix (product, price, place, promotion — advertising, PR, sales promotions, direct marketing)
 - Implementation — Pilot
 - Evaluation

5. Wrap-up

The teacher asks for feedback on the activity and reminds students to bring in their handouts and analysis from today's class for tomorrow's lesson.

Tying It All Together: This lesson orients students in moving their natural curiosity on to a more scientific plane. Science has been defined as “the observation, identification, description, experimental investigation and theoretical explanation of phenomena.” The objective of this module is to systematically organize natural curiosity, generate possible explanations, and develop a design with which to test the possible explanations.

Practice Outside of the Classroom: The next time you go shopping, identify elements of your experience that could be valuable for a marketing research team. Other than such a marketing focus, you could also urge and help students to develop a scientific attitude towards all disciplines.

What Worked and What I Would Do Differently: If students can be allowed to participate in actual marketing research experiments, such experiences could be valuable, and easily integrated into this lesson. For example, students could be asked to attend experiments at the Wharton Behavioral Lab, and those experiments could be analyzed in class.

5