

CHAPTER 2

THE MARKETING RESEARCH INDUSTRY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this chapter you will learn:

- 2-1 A brief history of the marketing research industry
- 2-2 The different types of marketing research firms
- 2-3 The industry structure of marketing research
- 2-4 New challenges to the marketing research industry
- 2-5 Industry initiative for self-improvement
- 2-6 Areas of ethical sensitivity in the marketing research process
- 2-7 How to investigate careers in the marketing research industry

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The Marketing Research Industry

Evolution of an Industry

- Earliest Known Studies
- Why Did The Industry Grow?
- The 20th Century Led to A “Mature Industry”
- Marketing Research in the 21st Century

Who Conducts Marketing Research?

- Client-side Marketing Research
- Supply-side Marketing Research

The Industry Structure

- Firm Size by Revenue
- Types of Firms and Their Specialties
- Industry Performance

Challenges to the Marketing Research Industry

- The Need to Incorporate Innovative and Evolving Sources of Data and Methods
- The Need to Effectively Communicate Insights
- The Need to Hire Talented and Skilled Employees

Industry Initiatives

- Best Practices
- Maintaining Public Credibility of Research
- Monitoring Industry Trends
- Improving Ethical Conduct

Industry Standards and Ethics

- Certification of Qualified Research Professionals
- Continuing Education

A Career in Marketing Research

- Where You've Been and Where You're Headed

KEY TERMS

Client-side research

Do-it-yourself (DIY) research

Supply-side research

Supplier

Agency

Full-service supplier firms

Limited-service supplier	GreenBook
Blue Book	Quirks
Sugging	Frugging
Transparency Initiative	National Do Not Call Registry
AAPOR	Insights Association
MRIA	ESOMAR
Professional Researcher Certification (PRC)	

TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

1. Instructors may want to bear in mind that the historical development of marketing research is not as interesting to students as it is to instructors. Most students will relate only to the present-day. If you have personal experiences or observations to illustrate some of the changes in marketing research over time, use them, but you should be aware that, depending how far back in history you give personal examples, you will be dating yourself. Most students were born after 1990. Examples should be based on current products and experiences students can relate to.
2. Ask students if they can detect the three main causes for the changes in marketing research over its history. All three of these are likely to be tied back to the Internet and how it has changed our consumption patterns. Discuss the evolution of markets where we moved from local markets where buyers and sellers were neighbors to global ones where buyers and sellers are from completely different cultures. This drives the need for information about the marketing environment. Another is changes in technology ranging from questionnaire design to computerization that have been adopted by marketing research. The third cause is the combination of PC technology (namely the Internet) and globalization effected by online research. Class discussion and examples of one or all three of these forces can be fruitful. Select a company that has global marketing aspirations and have students identify what research questions are relevant as it moves into different countries and cultures
3. Some topics that you might want to describe to students to open their eyes up to the impact of technology on marketing research are the following: (1) single source data where purchases of a family's (for example) grocery products are captured across several weeks, (2) focus groups that take place over the Internet using video cameras and chat software, or (3) handheld computers that administer customer satisfaction questionnaires to existing customers at (for example) automobile dealership service centers.

4. Students may not understand client-side research: (a) formal department, (b) do-it-yourself, and (c) supply-side research. If possible, have a representative from each organizational type come to the class and discuss how marketing research takes place in his/her company. Alternatively, describe the situations based on your knowledge of representative companies.

5. Most students will think that all marketing research companies are full-service. One way to help them understand about the limited service companies is to say that they are practicing niche marketing. They have found niches in the research industry, and they specialize in performing their functions very well.

6. Save copies of the *Marketing News* and bring them to class. After reviewing full-service and limited-service marketing research firms, hand out the newspapers and have students look at the marketing research company ads. Let selected students summarize the services of companies they have singled out. Alternatively, select the ads yourself, make overhead transparencies or PowerPoint slides, and use them in class when you cover this topic in your class presentation. Another approach, if you have multimedia classroom capability, is to find the Internet sites for various types of marketing research firms and to illustrate the products and services of these different firms during class.

7. If your college has a business research division, invite its director to come to class and describe the various research activities that take place there. Alternatively, such divisions sometimes have Internet sites with descriptions and examples of their products, services, and activities that can be viewed in a classroom with multimedia capabilities.

8. The chapter indicates that formal marketing research departments are typically only found in large companies, and often they are very small. Ask students what this implies about a career in marketing research. What will it take to be successful in this field? As suggested by the first two challenges to the marketing industry, a 2015 survey by GreenBook notes a need for individuals who can combine tech savviness and analytical skills with the ability to synthesize data and communicate results in a compelling way. At the same time, the survey points to the need for people who have a good foundational understanding of the basics of research. At the same time, the survey points to the need for people who have a good foundational understanding of the basics of research.³⁰ Some established marketing researchers complain that younger employees have not been trained in basic statistics and methodologies. Do students agree with this? Are they surprised by this?

9. Many students are surprised that the research industry has not performed at an outstanding level. As an opening to this class discussion, you can ask, “What does it take to start up a marketing research company?” Students will mistakenly say it will take a degree in marketing research, a master’s degree, or even a Ph.D.! However, there are no formal requirements, and literally anyone can say he/she is a marketing researcher. There is a need for people who have a good foundational understanding of the basics of research. This revelation may shed some light on the performance deficiency or otherwise point out the need for a certification system.

10. It is important that students come to realize the ethical issues in marketing research early on, and this is why this topic is introduced in chapter 2. Also, they need to be made aware that philosophical differences exist. Several industry initiatives are directed at keeping the public informed about the value of research, the appropriateness of research methods, and the ethics the industry uses in collecting research information. Going over the various ethical issue areas is worthwhile, but suggesting and frugging invariably generate the most class interest and story-telling.

11. The right to privacy issue is a major worry in the research industry. Ask students what they believe are their personal privacy rights and how they enforce them when they are violated. Then turn the tables by telling them that they have taken on a job as a telephone interviewer where they will be compensated \$5 for each completed interview. What would they do to make money? Sometimes students do an about face on privacy when they are worried about making enough money to pay their rent. How far students seem willing to go to pay the rent in this situation can be a good springboard to discuss ethical versus practical issues.

12. It is always fun to ask students if they have been “sugged” or “frugged” recently. Those who have not read the chapter will be immediately obvious, as suggesting and frugging invariably stick in students’ minds. Those who have no clue obviously did not read the chapter before class. This also leads to the ethical discussion of these practices

ACTIVE LEARNING EXERCISE

Using the Marketing Research Directories

Marketing research companies are involved in many areas, including mystery shopping, mock trial juries, behavioral economics, airport interviews, crowdsourcing, taste tests, copy testing, new product concept testing, competitor analysis, focus groups, brainstorming research, site selection, political polling, and in-store interviewing.

This exercise is intended to expose students to a variety of marketing research tools available online. As a class, have students discuss some of their favorite companies or brands, and discuss what type of marketing research should be conducted to solve a problem in the organization or with the brand. After determining a problem, discuss directory they should use to learn more about aspects of the industries and how those relate to the organization or brand they have identified.

It would also be interesting to have students discuss the types of research they may have been a part of (perhaps at the mall or on campus). How did they feel about the experience? What is comfortable or did they have concerns? What type of data was collected? What might they have done differently if they were conducting the research instead of being the research subject?

ANSWERS TO END-OF-CHAPTER QUESTIONS

- 2-1. *What revolutionized the marketing research industry in the 1950's? Why did this allow the industry to expand so rapidly?*

Computers revolutionized the industry in the 1950s. Marketing research in the middle of the 20th century was dominated by small firms.ⁱ By the late 1950s and 1960s, marketing research was seen as indispensable for companies to track consumption changes in increasingly expanding markets. During this time many client companies added marketing research departments, and the number of supply-side companies also increased greatly. The development of computer technology in the 1970s led to the automation of data management and analysis for larger firms. In the 1980s, the innovation of personal computers brought computing technologies to companies of all sizes. The introduction of data automation to the marketing research industry led to the ability to gather and analyze data at much faster speeds.

- 2-2. *Who first introduced focus groups? What type of research are they considered to be?*

During the 1940s, Robert Merton introduced focus groups, which today represent a large part of what is known as qualitative marketing research.

- 2-3. *Describe the difference between client-side and supply-side research. What other terms are used to refer to companies that are involved in supply-side research?*

Any company seeking to understand its customers, distributors, competitors, or the environments in which they operate may conduct marketing research. Research that is conducted within an organization is called client-side research. Larger firms, such as those found in the Fortune 500 typically have a formal department devoted to marketing research.

Research that is conducted by an outside firm to fulfill a company's marketing research needs is called supply-side research. A firm that is engaged in supply-side marketing research is often referred to as an agency, or simply as a supplier. These firms specialize in marketing research and offer their services to buyers needing information to make more informed decisions. In most cases, client-side marketing researchers also purchase research from marketing research suppliers.

- 2-4. *What are some advantages and disadvantages of DIY research?*

DIY research is helped by online access to secondary data and better knowledge of data analysis software. This research is more cost-effective, and an increasing number of tools are being developed to allow firms to conduct

their own research. However, some business owners and managers do not have the time or expertise to feel confident about using DIY for important issues.

- 2-5. *Who are the top 3 firms in marketing research based on revenue? What is their revenue?*

Based on the 2017 AMA Gold Global Top 25 report, the top three marketing research firms based on revenue are Nielsen Holdings with a revenue of \$6.3 billion, Kantar with a revenue of \$3.384 billion, and IQVIA with a revenue of \$3.3 billion.

- 2-6. *What are full-service supplier-firms? What type of services do they provide?*

Full-service supplier firms have the capability to conduct the entire marketing research project for buyer firms. Services provided include problem definition, specify the research design, collect and analyze the data, and prepare the final written report.

- 2-7. *List and describe two different types of marketing research services. What firms offer those services?*

Full-service supplier firms have the capability to conduct the entire marketing research project for buyer firms. Full-service firms offer clients a broad range of services; they often define the problem, specify the research design, collect and analyze the data, and prepare the final written report.

Limited-service supplier firms specialize in one or, at most, a few marketing research activities. Firms can specialize in marketing research services such as online communities, questionnaire development and pretesting, data collection, or data analysis. Some firms specialize in specific market demographic segments such as senior citizens or Hispanics. Other firms specialize in different types of industries such as airlines, sports, or pharmaceuticals.

- 2-8. *Explain the meaning of the statement that the “marketing research industry thrives off derived demand.”*

The marketing research industry relies on derived demand. As client firms develop new products, expand into new markets, examine new opportunities, and develop and evaluate new promotional campaigns, they need information to guide their decisions. As the world economy continues to improve, client firms’ businesses will grow and so will the revenues and profits of the marketing research firms that support them.

- 2-9. *What is the fastest-growing region for marketing research? What five markets are currently the largest in the world?*

North America has the largest market share (44%), followed by Europe (36%) and Asia Pacific (15%). The fastest-growing regions of the world for marketing research is Africa. The five largest markets by country are the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Japan.

2-10. *What are three challenges facing the marketing research industry? Why?*

With the fast speed of technological change, the marketing research industry is currently facing a number of important challenges. Three of those challenges include new and evolving sources of data and methodologies, the effective communication of results, and the need for talented and skilled employees.

2-11. *What is the National Do Not Call Registry? What type of communication is exempt from it?*

In 2003 the **National Do Not Call Registry** was established, allowing U.S. residents to register their telephone numbers to be protected from receiving unsolicited telemarketing calls. Note, however, that unsolicited phone calls for the purpose of conducting surveys are exempt from the restrictions imposed by the Do Not Call Registry. In other words, researchers conducting surveys can still legally call U.S. residents.

2-12. *Define *sugging* and *frugging*. Give an example of each.*

Sugging is selling under the guise of research; *Frugging* is fundraising under the guise of research.

2-13. *Is it ethical for the Republican and Democratic parties to engage in *frugging* (see MRI 2.3)? Explain.*

Both the Democratic and Republican surveys appear to be examples of *frugging*, or fundraising under the guise of research. *Frugging* starts with an appeal to solicit opinions and ends with a request for money. *Frugging* takes advantage of people's willingness to help by giving their opinion, with hopes that the survey respondents will continue to cooperate with a cash contribution.

Frugging has been practiced by both the U.S. Democratic and Republican parties for many years. The marketing research industry condemns *frugging*. As the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) states, "the practice undercuts the legitimacy of our profession, no matter who employs it." Furthermore, it can undermine Americans' trust in political parties to respect their opinions.

2-14. *Is it ethical for OKCupid to conduct experiments on its users (see MRI 2.4)? Explain.*

How students feel about the ethics surrounding OKCupid's practice may vary.

OKCupid has announced that it conducts experiment on its users. In one experiment, the popular online dating site falsified the “match percentage” to make it appear that potential pairs were much better matches than they actually were. The results showed that, when told they are good matches, OKCupid pairs are more likely to connect with messages. Still, the highest rate of connections occurs when pairs actually are good matches. When the experimental period was completed, OKCupid revealed to the users whose scores had been manipulated that they had been part of an experiment and then told them their real compatibility scores.

- 2-15. *List three important marketing research codes and provide a brief explanation of what purpose they are intended to serve.*

There are three important codes that state the responsibilities that researchers have to the subjects and clients with whom marketers work, as specified by the Insights Association.

Section 1: Duty of Care

Researchers must:

1. Be honest, transparent, and straightforward in all interactions.
2. Respect the rights and well-being of data subjects and make all reasonable efforts to ensure that data subjects are not harmed, disadvantaged or harassed as a result of their participation in research.
3. Always distinguish between research and non-research activities so as to maintain public confidence in the integrity of research.
4. When engaging in non-research activities (for example, promotional or commercial activities directed at data subjects, including but not limited to advertising and direct marketing), do not permit any direct action to be taken against an individual based on his or her participation in research.

Responsibilities to Clients

Section 7: Honesty and Transparency

Researchers must:

1. Be honest and transparent in all interactions.
2. Accurately represent their qualifications, skills, experience and resources.
3. Upon request, inform the client if any part of the work is subcontracted.
4. Inform all clients when a project is conducted on behalf of more than one client.
5. Not use any data collected solely for a specific client for any other purpose without permission.
6. Retain all data and research materials in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, industry quality standards, company processes or as requested by a specific client.

7. Work in good faith to resolve all disputes with clients.

2-16. *What is PRC, and what is it designed to do?*

The Professional Researcher Certification is designed to recognize the qualifications and expertise of marketing and opinion research professionals.

CASE SOLUTIONS

Case 2.1 Pinnacle Research

Case Objective

This case provides students the opportunity to apply the MRA Code of Marketing Research Standards.

Answers to Case Questions

1. *Do you think Tracy's actions are ethical? Explain.*

Tracy did not act ethically. She was not honest in her dealings with Bonway, a competitor of Delish.

2. *Do you think Josh's actions are ethical? Explain.*

Josh did not act ethically. He gathered data on people based on false pretenses.

3. *Consult the Insights Association's Code of Standards and Ethics for Marketing Research and Analytics. Are these standards in line with your judgement of the morality of Tracy and Josh's actions? Explain.*

Tracy and Josh were not honest, transparent or straightforward in all interactions. They did not inform Bonway that they were working with Delish, and Josh collected data under false pretenses.

4. *Do you think that Delish will be pleased with the methods by which Pinnacle Research obtained findings to address their questions? Why or why not?*

Delish might be pleased with the results of the research but may not be pleased in the methods which were used to collect the data.