**The Marketing Research Process**

Business executives usually use marketing research to provide information they need to make effective decisions regarding the firms current and future activities. Market researcher often use a six-step program to make sure good decisions are reached. They are:

1. Defining the problem- Clearly defining the question that research needs to answer increases the speed and accuracy of the research process. To define a/the problem the firm must look for the underlying causes of its market share loss or gain. A good starting point is identifying the problem might be to evaluate the firms target market and marketing mix elements. The firms might also look at possible environmental changes e.g. A new firm entered the market.
2. Conduction exploratory Research- This is the process of discussing a marketing problem with informed sources both within and outside the firm and examining information from secured sources. Once the problem is defined exploratory research seeks to discover the cause of the specific problem. They do this by examining data from the outside. The date includes evaluation of company records such as sales, profits and competitive data.
3. Formulating A Hypothesis- After defining the problem and conducting an exploratory investigation, the marketer needs to formulate a hypothesis. Hypothesis is a tentative explanation for a specific event. A hypothesis sets the stage for more in-depth research by clarifying what researcher need to test for.
4. Create a Research Design- To test hypothesis and find solution to marketing problems, a marketer must create a research design. In planning a research project, marketers must be sure that the study will measure what they intend to measure. Marketing design also carefully selects its respondents that is, the people they are using for the research. Marketing research use sampling techniques to determine which consumers to include in their studies.
5. Collect Data- Two kinds of date are usually collected at this point in the research process. They are called secondary and primary data. Secondary data is information previously published or compiled sources e.g. Census Data. Primary Date refers to information collected for the first time specifically for a marketing research study. Primary date costs more and takes longer but provide richer information while secondary date is less expensive and can be easily located but can become obsolete.
6. Interpret and Present Research Information- This step involves interpreting the findings and presenting them to decision makers in a format that allows managers to make effective judgements. Reports should be both oral and written and directed towards management and other researchers. From this, decision makers can quickly reach a consensus and action taken quickly.