



New Product Development & Concept Testing

Discover the future

*"You've got to start with the customer experience and work back toward the technology, not the other way around."
Steve Jobs*

Market Research can help you with the development of new products and new services. It can also help to test and refine new concepts before they go to market.

The process of developing any new product, service or concept goes through a number of distinct stages. A different form or research can help to support each stage of this process:

- 1) Starting from scratch / early stage concepts & ideas.
- 2) Picking a winning design from a short list of options.
- 3) Testing & refining a prototype or final draft concept.

This guide outlines how Market Research can help at each stage of this process.



Starting from scratch

You have a blank sheet of paper in front of you and some rough ideas



*Photo by
Guilherme Stecanella
on Unsplash.com*

You might be by looking at emerging future trends

There are likely to be many forces at work in your market today that are going to bring change in the future:

- New technology
- New competitors
- New opportunities
- New threats

If you can make sense of these trends and changes you'll understand the customer experience that the market will be demanding tomorrow. You will need to differentiate between key emerging trends and transient fashions – and to be able to relate these to the creation of an offer that fits well with your skillset.

For this kind of research we would recommend you look at our Future Trends Research service. We provide a free separate downloadable guide that outlines this offering.

Sometimes it may help to start by understanding the current experiences of potential customers

Steve Jobs advised that a good place to start was the customer experience. That means having an intimate understanding of the customer experience of using products/services today.

If there are existing products out there (either your own or your competitors); how are customers using them today? What do they like about them and, crucially, what are their main gripes and unmet needs?

If you know the answers to these questions you have the insight you need to focus in on gaps and opportunities. You can also make sure you aren't wasting time trying to fix what isn't broken.

You can also get feedback from the market on any rough ideas or concepts you may have. You can explore a longlist of possibilities and narrow it down before needing to devote too many resources to developing them further.



Photo by Blake Wisz on Unsplash.com.

Refining your ideas

You have some tangible ideas and concepts – potential shortlist of possibilities. You now need to pick the best idea from your shortlist.

Refining your options to create a definitive final design

If you do not yet have a prototype but you are rapidly approaching the time when you need to make a final decision on what your prototype will look like; there are various ways in which market research can help you refine your final design:

- Qualitative research to get a better in-depth understanding of the relative merits of specific options. Especially useful if you need to understand **why** people might prefer particular features or services rather than others.
- A quantitative survey test to compare the relative appeal of a small number of clearly defined alternatives in A/B tests, or to test the appeal of different aspects of your planned design.
- A quantitative conjoint test to determine the optimal combination of features from multiple options that are not yet so clearly defined.



Road testing your design

You have a design, perhaps a prototype, and what you now need to do is make some final modifications and polish the end product.

Road testing your final design before venturing forth into the market



Perhaps you have a good working prototype and you just want to road test it to make some final design tweaks and refinements before going to market?

Depending on the nature of your offer there are a number of ways in which market research can help:

- Get customers to review/comment on your concept in a focus group or depth-interview (conducted in-person or online).
- Road test your product with a select online community of potential customers; getting them to diarise their daily experiences of interacting with your product over the period of a week or two.
- A quantitative online test of visual images or for reactions to combinations of text and images (either for the product itself or related marketing content) for quantified feedback on likes and dislikes.

Sometimes customer experience is best understood by monitoring experience over time



Photo by Gian Cescon on Unsplash.com

What type of product or service are you developing?

If it is something customers engage with as a one-off experience (for example once a year) then exploratory techniques like in-person focus groups and workshop sessions can be valuable (although these days we should also give serious consideration to similar online techniques).

But the true user experience for many products is not confined to a single interaction – but rather multiple interactions over time. Mobile phones are a classic example of this. Most people use their phones in different contexts every day. They may well not even recall some of the ways in which they use their phones if asked in a focus group.

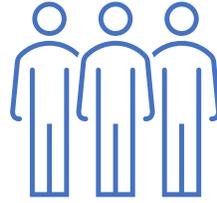
Here an online community approach can help, where customers diarise their experiences as they encounter them over a period of one or two weeks. This will uncover particular applications, problems and unmet needs that simply may not be recalled in a single “snapshot” interview.

Working with us

Our design approach

We always start by getting to fully understand your needs:

- It's important to ensure we get a full brief from your key people.
- So that we understand what you need to discover about the market.
- And we can make full use of existing knowledge in your organisation.
- And ensure we get full buy-in from key stakeholders early on.
- That way we get the clearest possible picture of:
 - a) what your business already knows, and...
 - b) what it needs to find out.

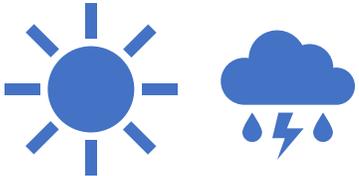


What we deliver

We feedback our findings in a report form best suited to your needs. In it we will:



Explain the key findings of the project. Creating a clear narrative that helps you discover important insights about your market.



Relate our findings to the specific circumstances of your own organisation; outlining the potential opportunities and threats that they represent. Recommending possible actions and strategies you might take.



Facilitate a suitable form of de-briefing to help your organisation to disseminate the information and make practical use of it. Depending on your needs, this might be anything from a simple de-brief presentation to a more interactive workshop/brainstorming event.

Other options: Help with surveys you run in-house

Some people may these days elect to run some of their own surveys in-house. Some may acquire simple online survey tools that enable the collection and analysis of data and, for a basic survey, that may well be sufficient.

However, running a survey in-house can be a time drain and the technicalities of designing and analysing such a survey can be a daunting prospect. Accessing respondents, aside from customers, can be a huge challenge.

So before embarking on such a course it is important to feel confident about all the things you will need to do (and having enough time to undertake these tasks).

However, there is a middle road you can take here. You can choose to manage some tasks in-house and outsource others. We can provide you with a modular service, that enables you to select only the services you need:

- **Questionnaire design service:** Based on a brief you provide; we can design a survey questionnaire for you in MS Word format. You can then do the rest.
- **Analysis and Reporting service:** Maybe you've already designed and run a survey in-house and just need a helping hand with analysing the data and reporting the results.

Contact us for more information or to discuss a potential project

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