Secondary Data Sources

Secondary Data: Defined

- Data that has been previously gathered by someone other than the researcher and/or for some other purpose than the one at hand.

Types of Secondary Data

- **Internal Secondary Data**: data collected within the firm, such as internal databases of customer information.
- **External Secondary Data**: data obtained from outside the firm
  - *Published* (data available for free from libraries or trade associations)
  - *Syndicated* (specialized available for a fee to subscribers - Nielsen, Arbitron are examples)
  - *Databases* (collection of inter-related data - examples include business index, 1990 census, directory data bases such as Dunn and Bradstreet)

Sources of Secondary Data

Internal Information

Marketing Research Firms

Trade and Industry Associations

National Research Bureaus

Professional Associations

Commercial Publications

Types of Information Sources

- Indexes and Bibliographies

- Dictionaries

- Encyclopedias

- Handbooks

- Directories

Secondary Sources by Type

- **Indexes and Bibliographies**
  - to find or locate books or articles
  - to find authors, topics to use in online searches

Secondary Sources by Type

- **Dictionaries**
  - to identify jargon of an industry--used for online searches
  - to identify bell-weather events in an industry
  - to identify knowledgeable people to interview
  - to identify organizations of influence

Secondary Sources by Type

- **Encyclopedias**
  - To identify historical or background information
  - To find critical dates within an industry
  - To find events of significance to the industry, company

Secondary Sources by Type

- **Handbooks**
  - To find facts relevant to topic
  - To identify influential individuals through source citations

Secondary Sources by Type

- **Directories**
  - To identify influential people and organizations
  - to find addresses, e-mail, other contact info on these people and organizations

Advantages of Secondary Data

- It can be obtained *quickly*.

- It is *inexpensive* (compared to primary data collection.)

- It is *widely available*.

- It can be effectively used to *enhance primary data collection* (identify components for use in the study)

Advantages of Secondary Data

- Saves time and money if on target

- Aids in determining direction for primary data collection

- Pinpoints the kinds of people to approach

- Serves as a basis of comparison for other data

Disadvantages of Secondary Data

- May not be on target with the research problem

- Quality and accuracy of data may pose a problem

Problems Associated w/ Secondary Data

- *The measurement units <u>may not match</u> the measurement units needed by the researcher.*
  - Size of business, square footage vs. sales?
- How *recent* is the secondary data?
  - Why is secondary data like fruits and vegetables?
  - The time elapsed since the data was collected may be a problem (ex: census data)
- The *credibility* of the data reported.
  - Does it fit with what we already know?
- These are *problems of accuracy.*

Evaluating Information Sources

- Purpose

- Scope

- Authority

- Audience

- Format

Evaluating Sources

- **Purpose**
  - What the author is attempting to accomplish
    - identify hidden agenda(s)
    - identify direction of bias
  - Seek both biased and unbiased sources

Evaluating Sources

- **Scope**
    - Identify dates of inclusion and exclusion
    - Identify subjects of inclusion and exclusion

Evaluating Sources

- **Authority**
  - Identify background of author
    - Credentials: educational, professional
    - Experience: duration, setting, level
  - Identify the level of scholarship in content
    - footnotes, endnotes

Evaluating Sources

- **Audience**
  - Identify knowledge level and background
  - Identify orientation and bias
  - Seek biased and unbiased sources

Evaluating Sources

- **Format**
  - Order of content
  - Versatility of use
    - Indexed?
    - Searchable?
    - Downloadable?