

# Riger

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## Market Research: Is It Really Necessary?

Marketing communications is typically asked to achieve four things—introduce a new fact or idea, correct an existing misconception, reinforce a favorable opinion or stimulate action.

Since in all four cases, communications is working to influence customers'/prospects' minds, it's critical you have a good picture of what's in those minds.

What's more, the significant expense involved in communicating effectively makes it critical to eliminate the possibility of delivering the wrong message, to the wrong people, at the wrong time.

Today, marketers must continually ask: What is the problem? What is the objective? Will it work? Did it work? And that's why market research has become indispensable.

There's a good chance you're already conducting research...Reading published information from trade associations and appropriate trade journals. Asking employees, co-workers, vendors, family members, even customers their opinions. Looking at sales trends. This is all research, but it may not be enough.

Focused, well-planned market research can illuminate practically any facet of a marketing or communications program. It can:

- Pinpoint audiences
- Discover and analyze consumer habits, attitudes and preferences

- Determine who influences crucial buying/ contributing decisions
- Uncover problems or opportunities
- Help define the characteristics of your marketplace
- Provide data for forecasting sales, fund raising
- Measure the effectiveness of current communications programs
- Keep your business or organization profitable

This is not to say that market research can provide all the answers. But it can usually help you understand your organization's image, uncover small problems before they grow large, let you see how you stack up against your competition, provide feedback, chart new directions, and measure how fast you're getting there.

It can also protect your firm from costly errors—dollars wasted on off-target efforts. That's why more and more business, professional and institutional leaders are turning to objective research as a primary planning tool.

Remember, successful communication is delivering a meaningful message to prime prospects through the proper media environment. However, this doesn't just happen by chance. It usually involves sophisticated planning and thorough market awareness. So although great communications is sometimes created through intuition, hard work and market research are more often the best way to achieve success.

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