

How to react when making market research mistakes

By [Caitlin Stewart](#), courtesy [Ashlan Bonnell](#)

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WASHINGTON DC, US: In each stage of the market research process, there are common mistakes that can be made. It is when we make mistakes that our reactions are most important. How researchers choose to handle their mistakes will determine whether there will be a successful outcome in a market research project.



(Image: MarketResearch.com)

Here are some common market research mistakes we hit on last year in our two-part blog series, "Market Research Strategies: 10 Common Mistakes, [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)." We now want to take a look at the reactions and different ways to successfully follow up with some of these errors.

1. Not clearly defining your market research objectives

Incorrect reaction: Completing your current research because you are almost finished.

Correct reaction: Stop your current research and redefine your goals.

When a new research project begins, an organisation must clearly outline their goals and objectives in order to obtain data and conduct research that will support these goals. Outlining the questions you need answered through research makes it easier to tackle them. If a project does not have [clearly defined questions](#) and you continue to gather data, it has the potential to be useless, which makes the work you did wasteful. Don't continue forward without doing the very first step of research.

2. Conducting interesting, but useless, market research

Incorrect reaction: Continuing to gather information you think might be relevant or pursuing data that interests you but does not directly impact your goals.

Correct reaction: Continue to refer to your research goals and objectives throughout the research process, ensuring sure you are gathering data to support your real needs.

If the first mistake we discussed is not corrected, this can create a cascading effect into future mistakes such as collecting the wrong data. Most information gathered during the market research process can be costly or time consuming. Utilising your resources on market research that is not going to be beneficial in some way can be detrimental. If you can recognise that the research you're conducting is not actually helpful, stop and redirect the research in the right direction.

3. Asking too many questions

Incorrect reaction: Conducting potentially unnecessary research to answer multiple questions that might be too broad or not relevant enough to meet your research goals.

Correct reaction: Assess your questions and carefully eliminate any that do not directly reflect your research objectives.

When preparing for your next research project, try not to propose too many questions that need to be answered. You need to narrowly define what questions you have that market research can answer. If you find that your team creates a long list of questions, make sure you can finalise the right questions that are direct enough to answer your organisation's exact needs.

4. UNDER analysing the research

Incorrect reaction: Drawing a conclusion, which may not be supported, too early because you didn't take the proper time to analyse the data.

Correct reaction: Spend time working to truly understand all the data gathered before moving forward to make any business decisions.



(Image: MarketResearch.com)

Market researchers are required to analyse and go through a lot of data in a short amount of time. For some, this can be very difficult. A common mistake is under analysing information, or not fully working to understand everything that is found. If you choose to move forward without truly comprehending all the data that you have, you could make wrong decisions that can reflect poorly on your organisation.

5. OVER-analysing the research

Incorrect reaction: Drawing too many conclusions from basic data by reading too much into the information.

Correct reaction: Take a step back, or find someone who can offer an objective opinion; determine whether the basic data directly supports your hypothesis.

Similar to under-analysing data, over-analysing can be just as bad. You can damage your research efforts by drawing the wrong conclusions from the data you collected. For example, if data can somehow support your marketing questions, but not all the information is there, stating it as fact can cause severe consequences in the future. Stay away from determining answers that are not actually there.

6. Selecting the wrong research firm or market research provider

Incorrect reaction: Moving forward with a research firm when you feel uneasy or uncertain that they can help you reach your research goals.

Correct reaction: Continually analyse your market research resources and options throughout the process to ensure you are continuing to work with a provider, or using a solution, that is the right fit for your needs.

With all the different research providers and publishers that are out there, it is easy to select a company that won't be able to help you with your market research needs. Taking the time to determine what a provider can offer you will benefit your organisation in the long run. Talk to different research specialists and reach out to customer service representatives in different companies to understand their available research solutions. And, once you begin a relationship with a research firm, if they cannot provide you with the right data to meet your needs, do not hesitate to find a firm that can.

7. Expecting research to provide all the answers

Incorrect reaction: Using research and data to answer every question even if the data does not support it and failing to consider other resources that could have filled in the gaps.

Correct reaction: Research exactly what market research is and be realistic about how it can help your [organisation's needs](#).

Market research provides organisations with information that can help make effective business decisions. But, the research you gather will not always have the right answer to every question. Having this mentality in the beginning will assist you during your research process; but, also remembering this when you don't have all the answers is also beneficial.

8. Viewing research as an expense rather than an investment

Incorrect reaction: Dropping your market research projects because you cannot find resources to support it.

Correct reaction: Continue to compare your research costs with your potential ROI and adjust your budget accordingly.

Many in the business world do not understand the benefits that research can provide and, therefore, see it as both costly and unnecessary. It's important that marketers pass along the knowledge of how important and beneficial market research can be, even when it's costly. In the beginning, ensure you and your team [budget correctly](#) so, when the time comes, you can adequately purchase the research that will help your company.



(Image: MarketResearch.com)

There are many mistakes and misunderstandings that market researchers are going to come across during their work. Being able to stop, recognise your mistake, and react appropriately will allow you to continue with your research and find the solutions

your organisation needs.

To learn more about how market research can benefit your organisation, read this [free white paper](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Caitlin Stewart is a Marketing Associate at MarketResearch.com. Find her on <http://www.linkedin.com/pub/caitlin-stewart/8b/4ab/495> LinkedIn]] and <https://twitter.com/caitlinastewart> Twitter]].

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