

Basic Marketing Research

Research can tell you what is most important to your target audience.

There are things you can personally identify about your target audience, but marketing research can augment your observations with clear, unbiased information.

Even a little research can help you learn something new about your audience. For example, the audience may deeply care about something that you missed, or there may be a surprising reason why people have sought out your service that, if you shared more intentionally, would reach more people.

Using research will help you approach your plan more effectively by providing a fresh look that directly from your audience. Above all, even just a few hours of research can give you a feeling for the patterns of energy, and what your strong points are. It helps clarify a direction that can then be made strong and unified throughout your communications.

It is important to strike a balance between creating content that is appealing to your target audience and also true to your source of inspiration:

- Balance objective research with your vibration.
- Guide your service by creativity, intuition, and inspiration.

Keep these words from Swami Kriyananda in mind as you continue reading about marketing research: “Those who are best at what they do rely on their own inner strength and discrimination.”

Right language and keywords:

Carefully chosen language makes your information relatable and enhances your connections with people. Language is the bridge that connects you with your audience. Thus, if your language isn't right, your efforts to build relationships may go wrong. For example, the use of a word or phrase called jargon. Jargon is language used regularly within a group that isn't readily understood by people outside of the group. Often, jargon eludes people as to what your message is, and deters those who would otherwise benefit from what you have to give.

Thus, it is your responsibility to ask people who are outside of your normal group perspective about how they might describe what it is you do, how they have found you, and what they would like to learn about. It will not benefit you to go full-steam ahead without looking back to check that you're creating a following as you do. Ask others what they need and how they would describe it, so that they can be touched and inspired when they see your marketing messages for the first time.



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One way to identify the right language and prevent misunderstandings is to test language in a search engine tool. Identify the right keywords or keyword phrases that your audience types into a search engine to find information online. To reach others and share in the most effective way, it is important to see how the language on your website relates to the language your audience would use in their search. You can then update the language in your communications, and design content like blog titles or social media hashtags that reflect what keywords you have found.

PRACTICE EXERCISE:

In a search engine, type subjects or questions your target audience might ask. Focus on writing common phrases worded differently than you would expect.

To identify what keywords to plug into the search engine, think about how your audience might refer to different topics. Try typing a few variations into a keyword search tool (such as Google AdWords) and look at the results. It's a great way to get started thinking outside your normal frame of reference.

Get a feel for what the audience is asking, and how their asking it. Take notes as you practice the following:

- What keywords are being used? Which keywords match the ones you use?
- How well have you related to others?
- Do you see how different words and phrases affect the type of websites that come up in the search? If you open some of these pages, you will see that each has its own vibration. Be sure the phrases you use relate to the right audience. It is better for everyone when searchers and searchees are rightly matched.

Types of Marketing Research:

Think of marketing research as taking the opportunity to ask your audience directly how you can be of help.

Marketing research typically takes three forms: surveys, focus groups, and interviews. The main benefit of using these research methods is that they provide a much needed—and sometimes overlooked—person-to-person perspective, which helps validate what online data (such as Google Analytics, explained below) is showing. Remember, online data only captures what is true for your current following, not the audience that you are yet seeking. Another thing that online data cannot do is tell you how to improve your site navigation or content.

A side-benefit of marketing research is that it allows you to share about your services, vision, and core values, while also giving others the opportunity to provide feedback. In this way, a

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circle of giving and receiving is created, which allows your audience to feel how much you care about their thoughts and feelings. When the audience is heard, they are more likely to feel that they are co-creating with you, which allows them to identify more intimately with your vision. As a result, the likelihood that they will share is much greater.