Market Research for tennis racquets

Market research is the process of setting a research goal (example: “What is the market for tennis racquets in the USA?”), gathering data (primary or secondary data—primary data is new data you collect from potential customers, etc., and secondary data is already published data accessible to the researcher for free or for a fee), analyzing them to understand the total market and target market, and drawing conclusions from the analyses to develop a marketing plan.

Secondary data for market research

Good market research is data-intensive and is a function of the quality of the data and quality of analyses and interpretation of the findings. Sources of secondary market-research data are industry-specific. For example, if the business sells medical equipment, it will find appropriate data in publications and reports pertaining to the medical equipment industry, or the hospital industry. On the other hand, the data for sports equipment such as a tennis racquet, the data concerning markets, target markets, market size, and annual sales in dollars/units will be in sports-related racquet-industry publications and reports.

Secondary data for market research are found in libraries (seek the help of a business topics librarian), US government publications for US market research, Internet web pages (use with caution because there are spurious web pages), commercial databases for a fee, and reference publications by Moody’s, and other leading publications on companies and industries in the US.

US Government publications for market research are many; market-size related publications are issued from the US Census Bureau of the US Department of Commerce. Industries are classified in 2 to 6 digits of the North American Industrial Classifications System (NAICS). For example, NAICS 339920 refers to: Sporting and athletic goods manufacturing including tennis goods manufacturing (balls, frames, rackets, etc.). US Government publications pertaining to NAICS 339920 may have useful information for market researchers investigating the size and scope of this industry. The six digit code is constructed as shown below:

1. 339 is Miscellaneous manufacturing;
2. 3399 is Other Miscellaneous manufacturing;
3. 33992 is Sporting and Athletic Goods manufacturing;
4. 339920A156 is for tennis equipment, excluding apparel, nets, and shoes.

Sample US Census Bureau data, 2002

For the classification, 339920A156: number of companies making at least $100,000 in shipments was 8; total value of shipments for 2002 was $56,701,000. Data is based on the 2002 Economic Census. This is only a small sample of what is available in government documents. More data can be obtained from industry associations and trade magazines.
A sample of industry data, 2008

According to Tennis Industry News, the following data is about the tennis industry and growth rates for the US published on March 1, 2008\(^1\); one may need more current data while conducting market research today; 2008 data is not adequate.

1. Racquet shipments up 42.1% since 2003 (+1.32 million units).
2. Racquet shipments in 2007, up 9.5% over 2006 (+0.39 million units).
3. Consumer purchases over the internet have increased in all categories.
4. In 2007, frequent players increased to 5.3 million, a 15.1% rise since 2003.

It may not be sufficient to use only secondary data for market research. Some primary data collected first-hand by the market researcher from potential customers would provide a more complete picture of the target market and its needs.

Primary data research

This information can be obtained in several ways; Interviews; focus groups; observations; and survey of potential customers. Primary data collection is frequently conducted using a custom-designed survey questionnaire. Every new business must know who their customers are, what they want, and if they would purchase the company’s products. The data, so collected, may be processed to understand the market and customer interests; the findings may be used to fine-tune the target market and improve the product, or add product features to satisfy target customers.

A Sample of Market Research Data Sources

E. Racquet Sports Industry (RSI):
   [http://www.racquetsportsindustry.com/tia/2007/05/know_your_market.html](http://www.racquetsportsindustry.com/tia/2007/05/know_your_market.html)

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\(^1\) Tennis is the Number 1 Traditional Sport, *Tennis Industry News*, Racquetsportsindustry.com: [http://www.racquetsportsindustry.com/tia/2008/03/tennis_is_the_no_1_traditional.html](http://www.racquetsportsindustry.com/tia/2008/03/tennis_is_the_no_1_traditional.html)