

## TEACHING MARKETING RESEARCH UTILIZING THE MARKETING RESEARCH PROPOSAL

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The use of formal, written research proposals is an endeavor both interdisciplinary in nature and employed under a wide variety of conditions. It is difficult to imagine modern marketing managers who will not, at some point in their careers, be heavily involved in the research proposal process. It would therefore appear that research proposals ought to be addressed somewhere in the marketing curriculum, particularly in courses in marketing research.

Marketing research texts which contain sections addressing the research proposal note several criteria effecting its length and level of detail. Among these are the magnitude of the research effort in time and money, the importance of the research to the product and the product to the organization, whether the research is to be performed "in-house" or on contract with an external organization, and the type of client agency (particularly government agencies contracting with private researchers).

As noted in the various marketing research textbooks, the proposal formulation process is probably the most creative part of the research process and, in the case of selection from among competing proposals, may well be the basis for obtaining or not obtaining the contract. Frequently the proposal also serves as a basis for, or even a part of, the contract document, hence the careful attention to format and wording is justified. Thus, the proposal typically is not easily changed once approved.

In addition to being important in its own right, the research proposal can serve as a valuable educational tool. In particular, it can serve as an overview of the course, as a vehicle for clarification of the ways in which the various types of research differ from one another, and assist students in understanding the relationship among research program components.

The attached exhibit of the Marketing Research Proposal Outline has been prepared based on discussions contained in various marketing research texts. It is intended to indicate eight different sections of a "typical" marketing research proposal, as well as emphasizing some of the differences in the type of study, sources of information, and type of design.

This Outline has evolved as a result of classroom use, and is still being developed. Hopefully the concept will be seen as having some value, and the exhibit will be useful enough to serve as a base for individual instructor's preparation of a similar outline, which could be tailored more closely to specific course and instructor requirements.

