

Business Plan Workbook #4	
Course	Exploring Your Dream
Topics Addressed	Market Research

Key Points

Market Research

It is important to gather and analyze information about your target market. When you identify your customers and investigate your competitors it is called “market research”.

You can start by paying attention to what’s around you:

- Look closely at the different stores and businesses in your community
- Talk to your family, friends, and co-workers and ask them questions
- Pay attention to what you see on TV or hear on the radio
- Do some research online to learn about different companies that offer similar products or services

Identifying Your Market

A “market” consists of all of the customers who have a need for your product or service, and might buy it at some point in time.

Determining the Size of Your Market

Often, the local government or non-profit organizations will provide useful information about the number of people living or working in the area. This information can help you estimate the size your market.

You can also find useful information about the size of your market online, by performing a simple search. Just type the name of your city, town, or area into the search field, add a keyword, such as “demographics” or “population”, and hit enter to see what comes up.

Market Research Never Stops

Even when you are successful, you should always be watching for new customers, new competitors and new opportunities.

Related Business Plan Questions

Below, you will see a list of business plan questions related to the topics noted above. If you print this worksheet, you can use the space below each question to write down some initial thoughts and ideas.

When you're ready to start working on your business plan, return to the course, and select "Open My Business Plan".

Q: Describe the characteristics of the industry that your business will be a part of. List any current trends within this industry (size, is it shrinking or growing, number of people employed).

Q: Estimate how many customers there are in the market area that you wish to serve with your business. It does not have to be an exact number, just your best guess. Explain how you determined this estimate.

Q: Of the total customers in your market area, how many do you think your business will serve? You can give an estimated number of customers or a percentage of your total market estimate.