

COM310-902

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# Chapter 5



Researching your Subject



# Differences between Academic and Workplace Research:

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## ***Academic research***

Aims to answer scholarly, often abstract questions. It requires extensive secondary research.

## ***Workplace research***

Targets practical questions to improve situations within an organization. It usually involves substantial primary research.



# 12-Step Research Process:

1. Analyze your audience.
2. Understand your purpose.
3. Analyze your subject.
4. Visualize the final deliverable.
5. Create a schedule and budget.
6. Identify information for the deliverable.
7. Determine missing information.
8. Formulate key questions.
9. Conduct secondary research.
10. Conduct primary research.
11. Evaluate the gathered information.
12. Do more research if needed.

# Appropriate Research Questions

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- What is the underlying theory of this process/technique?
- What is the history of this phenomenon?
- What current techniques solve this problem?
- How is a current situation expected to evolve?



# Further Research Questions

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- What are the available products for a task/service?
- What are competitors' strengths and weaknesses?
- Which product/service is recommended by experts?



# Workplace-Specific Research Questions:

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- What are the facts about our job practices?
- What caused a problem in our organization?
- What do staff recommend for a situation?
- How well would a product/service fit our organization?





# Guidelines for Research

1. Be persistent.
2. Record your data carefully.
3. Use varied research methods.

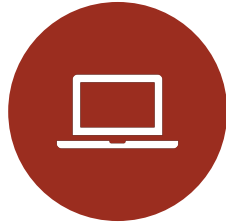


# Secondary Research



# Six Traditional Research Tools:

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Online  
Catalogs



Reference  
Works



Periodical  
Indexes




Newspaper  
Indexes



Abstract  
Services



Government  
Information



## Five Categories of Web-based Resources:

Discussion Forums

Wikis (e.g. WikiHow)

<https://www.wikihow.com/Main-Page>

Blogs

Tagged Content

RSS Feeds

## Criteria for Information:

Accurate

Unbiased

Comprehensive

Technically  
Appropriate

Current

Clear



# Evaluating Print & Online Sources:

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Authorship



Publisher's  
credibility



Knowledge of  
the literature



Accuracy and  
verifiability of  
the information



Timeliness



# Primary Research

# Eight Categories of Primary Research:

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Social media data  
analysis

Observations and  
demonstrations

Inspections

Experiments

Field Research

Interviews

Inquiries

Questionnaires

# Four Phases of Experiment:

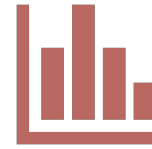
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Hypothesis  
establishment



Hypothesis  
testing



Data Analysis



Data reporting

# Two Common Problems in Behavior-focused Field Research:

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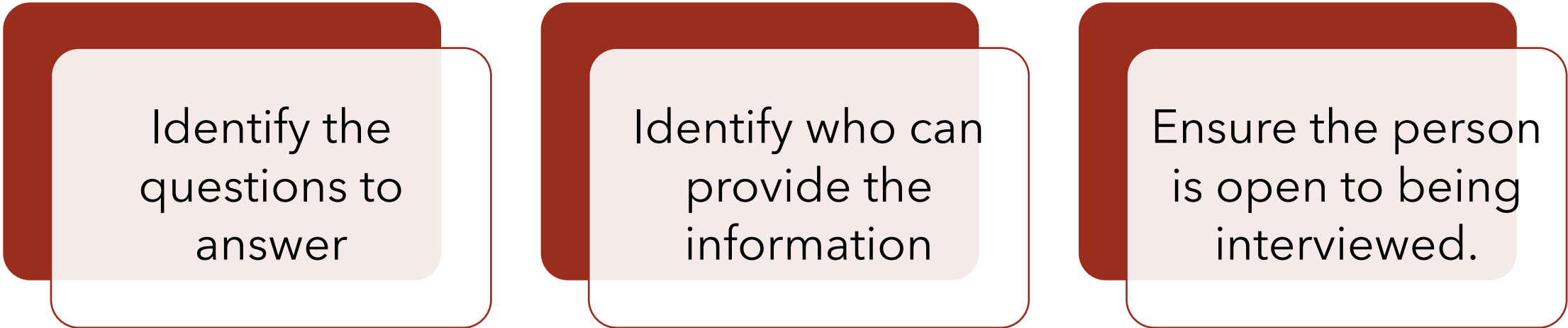
Experiment effect on  
behavior under study

Bias in data recording  
and analysis



# Consider three factors when choosing a person to interview:

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Identify the questions to answer

Identify who can provide the information

Ensure the person is open to being interviewed.



# Five Phases of an Interview:

1. Preparation
2. Interview initiation
3. Interview conduction
4. Interview conclusion
5. Post-interview

# Interview Preparation



Research  
beforehand



Formulate strong  
questions



Ensure equipment  
is functional

# Interview Initiation



Be punctual



Express gratitude  
for their time



State the  
interview's  
purpose and  
information use



Seek consent to  
record

# Interview Conduction



Note key  
points



Begin with  
prepared  
questions



Be ready for  
follow-up  
questions



Keep the  
interview on  
the right track

# Interview Conclusion



Thank the  
respondent



Request a follow-  
up interview, if  
needed



Ask for permission  
to quote

# Post-interview Actions:

Document important information promptly.

Send a thank-you note.



# Three Common Problems with Questionnaires:

1. Misfiring questions
2. Insufficient responses
3. Unrepresentative respondents



# Four Steps to Use Questionnaires:

1

Create effective questions.

2

Test the questionnaire.

3

Administer the questionnaire.

4

Include questionnaire data in your document.

# Creating Effective Questions:

Use unbiased  
language.

Be specific.



# Six Common Types of Questionnaire Questions:

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Multiple  
choice

Likert scale

Semantic  
differentials

Ranking

Short answer

Short essay