

By Beverly King  
Weber State University  
Small Business Development Center  
801-626-7232  
bking1@weber.edu

If you have been able to figure out the marketing game for your business, congratulations, you have accomplished a major task. Knowing where to place your advertising dollar is very important. For some businesses, a sign in front of the business is all that they have and it works well enough. For most business though, getting your name out to the buying public takes much more. Hence, the need for a marketing plan.

The marketing plan has three elements; market research, competitive analysis and marketing strategy. Many business owners address the marketing strategy without having the other two elements.

Market research deals with trying to identify as narrowly as possible who your primary customer will be and how much they tend to spend. Once you have identified who your customer is, it is most effective to advertise in the areas that customer is most likely to see your advertising.

There are many ways to gather market research data. Today we will talk about what is called secondary market data or data that has already been gathered and waiting to be interpreted for your business.

In researching this topic today, I went to the Utah Office of Tourism's website at [travel.utah.gov](http://travel.utah.gov). Under the tab for research and planning, I found some excellent data on tourism spending in Utah. From the 2005 Visitor Profile, I can tell

there were 10,100,000 estimated stays for the year. A "stay" is defined as one traveling group for one trip.

Then this data is broken down further by grouping these stays into business vs. leisure, day vs. night, and non-resident vs. resident. They also break down these visitors into age groups, income brackets, type of trip, individuals in the party and what activities the visitors took part in.

In total, this particular report was 222 pages of visitor data for Utah and the U.S. In other places you can get more specific data such as how many visitors came to Antelope Island or the Golden Spike Monument, you can get hotel occupancy



rates for certain areas, and you can get data as to the average spending categories for families in Utah.

Should data like this be important to your business? Yes.

Of course not all businesses see their primary customer as a visitor, but all businesses should have a primary customer and there is probably already some good data available. The trick is to identify what data can be most useful for your

business and interpret that data in order to implement a useful marketing strategy.

As an example, let's make up a scenario. Let's say you wish to open a new hotel in Ogden. Information that may be important to you is the number of visitors to this area, current number of rooms available as lodging, average occupancy rates for lodging in the area, average room rate in the area, purpose of the guest's trip, average expenditures while on the trip, and average amenities desired.

Then you need to decide how you are going to target the group of visitors that you wish to serve. Well, I know, you wish to serve them all, but the customer makes the decision and they will choose based on how you satisfy their needs. Is the data indicating a need by the Utah resident couple looking for an overnight get-away, the road traveler that realizes they are tired and need to stop for the night or the business person coming from out of town for a convention?



Seems simple, but look around at those places that are successful and see how they have utilized the data to make their business decisions. Comfort Suites is located next to the freeway and has signs easily visible to the traveler, Hampton Inn is located next to the conference center and probably advertises in travel and busi-

ness magazines and Alaskan Inn is located in scenic Ogden canyon and markets to couples looking for a special night out. Each business, based on market research data, decided that there was sufficient demand in Ogden to locate here, and because of whom they have identified as their primary market will utilize different marketing strategies to attract that customer.