

ORG-MARG, after a merger between the two companies), is a specialist in retail audits. Thus, it is usually economical for most companies to get their marketing research done from one of the many research firms—IMRB, ORG-MARG, T N Sofres MODE, Gallup-MBA being some of the prominent ones. But in certain large consumer goods companies which have multiple brands, it may be worthwhile having an in-house department consisting of a few qualified researchers. Other reasons for doing research through in-house staff could be to protect confidential information such as new product designs or pricing. But it is generally not viable to do marketing research internally alone, as the cost of hiring and retaining qualified staff may be high, so there could be a mix of internal and out-sourced research.

## TYPICAL APPLICATIONS OF MARKETING RESEARCH

Applications of marketing research can be divided into two broad areas:

1. Strategic
2. Tactical

Among the strategic areas, marketing research applications would be demand forecasting, sales forecasting, segmentation studies, identification of target markets for a given product, and positioning strategies identification.

In the second area of tactical applications, we would have applications such as product testing, pricing research, advertising research, promotional research, distribution and logistics related research. In other words, it would include research related to all the 'P's of marketing: how much to price the product, how to distribute it, whether to package it in one way or another, what time to offer a service, consumer satisfaction with respect to the different elements of the marketing mix (product, price, promotion, distribution), and so on. In general, we would find more tactical applications than strategic applications because these areas can be fine-tuned more easily, based on the marketing research findings. Obviously, strategic changes are likely to be fewer than tactical changes. Therefore, the need for information would be in proportion to the frequency of changes.

The following list is a snapshot of the kind of studies that have actually been done in India.

1. A study of consumer buying habits for detergents—frequency, pack size, effect of promotions, brand loyalty and so forth.
2. To find out the potential demand for ready-to-eat chapatis in Mumbai city.
3. To determine which of the three proposed ingredients—tulsi, coconut oil or neem, the consumer would like to have in a toilet soap
4. To find out what factors would affect the sales of Flue Gas Desulphurisation equipment (industrial pollution control equipment)
5. To find out the effectiveness of the advertising campaign for a car brand