



## MARKET ASSESSMENT TIPS

To enhance your product or increase your market base, you need to analyze your current position in the market and try to capture data on what your customers want. There are many ways to gather this type of information. If possible, it is best to conduct surveys with customers to get first-hand information and to confirm if your ideas are appropriate. You should also look at other products on the market to make sure that your enhancement will be unique and will set your product apart from its competitors.

### Survey your customers:

1. Develop a standard set of questions. Questions should be a mix of yes/no or multiple choice and open answer type. Topics can vary from rating the current product in terms of price, quality, ease of use and availability to open-ended questions on what enhancements customers would like to see.
2. Make your written survey easy to read. Use broad, white margins on the top, bottom and sides of the document. Keep it simple by sticking with black ink on white paper.
3. Send your survey to known customers, buyers or distributors where possible. Try to follow up by telephone with individuals to get personal feedback.

### Tips:

- Make sure that your questions are brief and clear. Test your questions on colleagues before you write up the survey. Make sure they completely understand the questions.
- Introduce only one issue per question. Divide complex issues into individual questions. For example, instead of asking "Where do you buy computer equipment and software?" which may result in two different locations, ask "Where do you buy computer equipment?" and "Where do you buy software?"
- Follow up yes/no answers with a "why?" question to gather further insight into the responses.
- Try to send your survey to as wide an audience as possible. The larger your 'sample' the more information you will gather on potential markets for the programme.
- You may also want to conduct one-on-one interviews with the same set of questions rather than sending out the survey. If possible do both!



**Identify areas for enhancement:**

Use the following table to help you brainstorm ideas on product enhancement.

<p>Purpose: <i>Define your goal in considering product enhancement. For example: to increase customer demand for product.</i></p>	
<p>Overview of customers and specific groups:</p>	<p><i>List what you know about your customers and define any different customer groups</i></p>
<p>Current situation:</p>	<p><i>List what you know about the current demand for your product in the various customer groups</i></p>
<p>Desired situation:</p>	<p><i>List where you would like to be – expanded customer market, increased demand for product etc.</i></p>
<p>How can you reach your desired situation? (sales)</p>	<p><i>List any changes you can make to broaden your market or increase product</i></p>



**SWOT analysis:**

Another technique is to conduct an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that exist for your product. This will help you confront any challenges up front and plan to take advantage of your strengths and opportunities.

Strengths and weaknesses are **internal** factors. For example a strength could be:

- A new, innovative product.
- Value added services that you or your product provides.

While a weakness could be:

- Lack of marketing expertise.
- Undifferentiated product from others in the market.
- Inappropriate costing.

Opportunities and threats are **external** factors. For example an opportunity could be:

- Mergers, joint ventures or strategic alliances.
- New international brands looking for suppliers in the region.

While a threat could be:

- A similar product in the market.
- Trade agreements that will flood the market with similar products.

**Tips:**

- Be realistic about the strengths and weaknesses of your product.
- Be specific. Avoid grey areas.
- Remember, a SWOT analysis is subjective. Do not rely on it too much!

Once key issues have been identified, they feed into marketing objectives and provide you with key areas to address in your planning.