MODULE 3 OF 11 · FOUNDATIONS OF MARKETING

Marketing Research & the Marketing Audit

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Distinguish primary and secondary research, and explain how a marketing audit uses SWOT to review a business's position.

KEY VOCABULARY

Primary research · Secondary research · Marketing audit · SWOT · Strengths · Weaknesses · Opportunities · Threats

WHY THIS MATTERS

Every decision in the rest of this course — who to target, what mix to use, what strategy to follow — should be grounded in evidence, not guesswork. This module is where that evidence gets gathered and organised.

WARM-UP QUESTION

“If you wanted to know whether your school canteen should add a new menu item, how would you find out?”

DISCUSSION QUESTION

Can the same fact be both a Strength and a Weakness, depending on how you look at it?

DISCUSSION QUESTION

Why might primary research be worth the extra cost and time compared to just using secondary sources?

Core Concepts

Primary research is collected first-hand

Surveys, interviews, focus groups and observation gathered specifically for the question at hand.

Example: A café owner handing out a five-question survey to this week's customers is doing primary research.

Secondary research already exists

Published reports, government statistics, industry data and past company records, gathered for some other original purpose but reusable here.

Example: Checking national census data on local age groups before opening a shop is secondary research.

The marketing audit brings it together as SWOT

Internal Strengths and Weaknesses are compared against external Opportunities and Threats to give a structured snapshot of where a business stands.

Example: A gym might list "loyal member base" as a Strength and "an ageing building" as a Weakness, then note a new competitor opening nearby as a Threat.

COMMON MISTAKE TO AVOID

Padding a SWOT grid with vague entries like "good service" or "the economy" — every entry should be specific enough that someone else could act on it.

Running the Lesson

TEACHING OUTLINE

1. Compare primary vs secondary research methods and when each is used.
2. Introduce the marketing audit as a structured review process.
3. Build a SWOT grid together, as a class, for a familiar organisation.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Students complete a mini SWOT analysis for their own school or a local business.

MINI CASE STUDY

A family-run hardware store used secondary research (national DIY spending trends) to spot rising demand, then ran its own primary survey of regular customers to confirm exactly which product category to stock more of — combining both research types gave more confidence than either alone.

RECAP

- Primary research is gathered first-hand; secondary research already exists elsewhere.
- A marketing audit reviews a business's current position.
- SWOT organises that review into internal Strengths/Weaknesses and external Opportunities/Threats.

HOMEWORK / EXTENSION

Write one Strength, one Weakness, one Opportunity and one Threat for a business you know well — make each specific enough to act on.

Full lesson & free auto-marked quiz: marketingteacher.com/courses/foundations-of-marketing/lessons/the-marketing-audit-and-swot-analysis/