

PRODUCT

Marketing is an important part of starting and running a business. It helps you to sell your goods or services in the right way and to the right people. Marketing is the ability to identify the needs of potential customers and to satisfy those needs better than your competitors, in order to make a profit.

CONDUCTING MARKET RESEARCH

It is important that you should identify the needs of potential customers and find out how your future competitors have been satisfying those needs. This can be done by conducting a market research. From your experience and from developing your business idea, you may already know quite a lot about your market. But the more you know, the more capable you are to design a good Marketing Plan.

Here are some examples of ways to find out more about your customers and competitors:

- **Talk** to potential customers. Ask them:
 - What goods or services do they want to buy?
 - What do they think about your competitors?
- **Observe** your competitors' businesses. Find out about:
 - What goods or services do they provide?
 - What prices do they charge?
 - How do they attract customers?
- **Ask** suppliers and friends in the business:
 - Which products do they sell the most?
 - What do they think about your business idea?
 - What do they think about your competitors' products?
- **Read** newspapers, catalogues, trade journals and magazines to get information and ideas about new goods or services.
- **Surf** the web to explore what others are doing and to get information about the goods or services you want to provide, your competitors and new trends.

As you collect information about your customers, remember that potential customers do not all share the same needs and wants. In order to be able to provide the most adequate good or service, you need to identify different groups of potential customers that have clear and distinguishable characteristics. This is called market segmentation. Grouping your potential customers by their characteristics will enable you to collect detailed and specific information on their product preferences.