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Strategic Market Research: A Guide to Conducting Research that Drives Businesses

Anne E. Beall
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Without adequate research, a business preparing for major overhaul risks failure and financial loss. The basis of any successful endeavor involves careful planning and sufficient knowledge to make an informed decision. Though isolated cases of impulsive behavior have resulted in an advantageous outcome, professionals cannot rely on gut feeling alone to gauge the future. Instinct and emotion must be taken into consideration, but containing those initial impressions in advance of acting is crucial, especially among retail establishments. If it is true that people are resistant to change by nature, any new idea, method, or product is a potential disaster in a profit-driven environment.

Strategic Market Research discusses all aspects of conducting effective, targeted studies to prevent the losses that every business dreads. When implemented incorrectly, research can be useless or misleading. Divided into nine succinct chapters, Beall opens with a critical look at traditional market research. She explains why customary tactics often fail. She favors strategic questions (opposed to broad-based, vague surveys), then narrows the analysis into choosing between qualitative and quantitative research. Achieving the depth needed for insight may require probing, testing a hypothesis or scenario, rephrasing a question, or using a skip pattern. She emphasizes the importance of body language and provides detailed instruction on how to read nonverbal communication during an interview, as well as covering the technique of getting to a respondent's emotions. Beall also includes chapters on interpreting numeric data and a final section warning of the common pitfalls in market research.

A Yale graduate, Dr. Anne E. Beall holds a doctorate degree in social psychology. With over fifteen years experience in marketing research, she's held positions at the Boston Consulting Group (their Chicago office) and at National Analysts. Currently, she is the president of Beall Research and Training, specializing in comprehensive studies for Fortune 500 companies. Beall is the author of *The Psychology of Gender* and *Reading the Hidden Communications Around You: A Guide to Reading Body Language in the Workplace.* She's also written articles and book chapters on consumer psychology.

Dr. Beall explores the negative and positive avenues that can be taken in the process of acquiring essential information, pointing out stereotypical mistakes to avoid and valuable approaches to gain results. This clear-cut guide steers the reader toward accurate evaluations, and she backs her advice with in-depth social psychology. Her work should be mandatory reading for novices in the field of market research and a welcome addition to the reference libraries of high-ranking executives responsible for making complex decisions and getting desired results.
JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (September 27, 2010)

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