
Market and Survey Researchers

(O*NET 19-3021.00, 19-3022.00)

Significant Points

- Market and survey researchers need at least a bachelor's degree.
- Continuing education and keeping current with the latest methods of developing, conducting, and analyzing surveys and other data is important for advancement.
- Employment is expected to grow faster than average.
- Job opportunities should be best for those with a master's or Ph.D. degree in marketing or a related field and with strong quantitative skills.

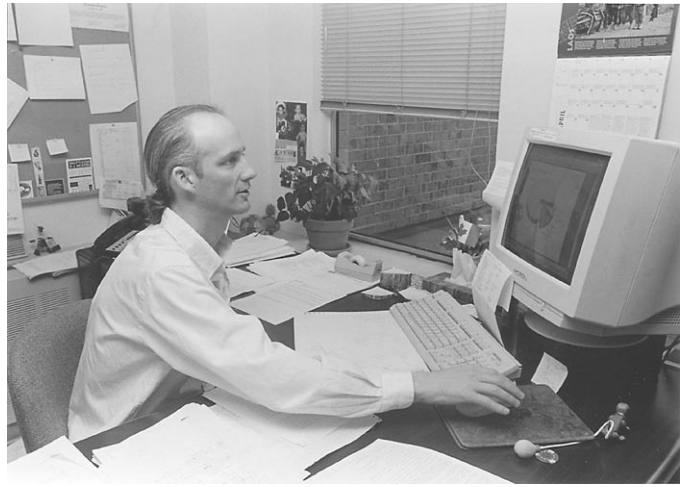
Nature of the Work

Market and survey researchers gather information about what people think. *Market*, or *marketing*, *research analysts* help companies understand what types of products people want and at what price. They also help companies market their products to the people most likely to buy them. Gathering statistical data on competitors and examining prices, sales, and methods of marketing and distribution, they analyze data on past sales to predict future sales.

Market research analysts devise methods and procedures for obtaining the data they need. Often, they design surveys to assess consumer preferences through Internet, telephone, or mail responses. They conduct some surveys as personal interviews, going door-to-door, leading focus group discussions, or setting up booths in public places such as shopping malls. Trained interviewers usually conduct the surveys under the market research analyst's direction.

After compiling and evaluating the data, market research analysts make recommendations to their client or employer. They provide a company's management with information needed to make decisions on the promotion, distribution, design, and pricing of products or services. The information also may be used to determine the advisability of adding new lines of merchandise, opening branches of the company in a new location, or otherwise diversifying the company's operations. Market research analysts also might develop advertising brochures and commercials, sales plans, and product promotions such as rebates and giveaways.

Survey researchers also gather information about people and their opinions, but these workers focus exclusively on designing and conducting surveys. They work for a variety of clients, such as corporations, government agencies, political candidates, and providers of various services. The surveys collect information that is used in performing research, making fiscal or policy decisions, measuring the effectiveness of those decisions, or improving customer satisfaction. Analysts may conduct opinion research to determine public attitudes on various issues; the research results may help political or business leaders to measure public support for their electoral prospects or social policies. Like market research analysts, survey researchers may use a variety of mediums to conduct surveys, such as



Market and survey researchers conduct research and design surveys.

the Internet, personal or telephone interviews, or questionnaires sent through the mail. They also may supervise interviewers who conduct surveys in person or over the telephone.

Survey researchers design surveys in many different formats, depending upon the scope of their research and the method of collection. Interview surveys, for example, are common because they can increase participation rates. Survey researchers may consult with economists, statisticians, market research analysts, or other data users in order to design surveys. They also may present survey results to clients.

Work environment. Market and survey researchers generally have structured work schedules. They often work alone, writing reports, preparing statistical charts, and using computers, but they also may be an integral part of a research team. Market researchers who conduct personal interviews have frequent contact with the public. Most work under pressure of deadlines and tight schedules, which may require overtime. Travel may be necessary.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

A bachelor's degree is usually sufficient for entry-level market and survey research positions. Higher degrees may be required for some positions, however. Continuing education and keeping current with the latest methods of developing, conducting, and analyzing surveys and other data also is important for advancement.

Education and training. A bachelor's degree is the minimum educational requirement for many market and survey research jobs. However, a master's degree may be required, especially for technical positions.

In addition to completing courses in business, marketing, and consumer behavior, prospective market and survey researchers should take other liberal arts and social science courses, including economics, psychology, English, and sociology. Because of the importance of quantitative skills to market and survey researchers, courses in mathematics, statistics, sampling theory and survey design, and computer science are extremely helpful. Market and survey researchers often earn advanced degrees in business administration, marketing, statistics, communications, or other closely related disciplines.

While in college, aspiring market and survey researchers should gain experience gathering and analyzing data, conducting interviews or surveys, and writing reports on their findings.

This experience can prove invaluable later in obtaining a full-time position in the field, because much of the initial work may center on these duties. Some schools help graduate students find internships or part-time employment in government agencies, consulting firms, financial institutions, or marketing research firms prior to graduation.

Other qualifications. Market and survey researchers spend a lot of time performing precise data analysis, so those considering careers in the occupation should be able to pay attention to detail. Patience and persistence are also necessary qualities because these workers must spend long hours on independent study and problem solving. At the same time, they must work well with others; often, market and survey researchers oversee the interviewing of a wide variety of individuals. Communication skills are important, too, because researchers must be able to present their findings well both orally and in writing.

Certification and advancement. The Marketing Research Association (MRA) offers a certification program for professional researchers who wish to demonstrate their expertise. Certification is based on education and experience and requires ongoing continuing education.

Researchers and analysts often begin by assisting others. With experience, market and survey analysts are eventually assigned their own research projects. Continuing education and advanced degrees will be helpful to those looking to advance to more responsible positions in this occupation. It also is important to keep current with the latest methods of developing, conducting, and analyzing surveys and other data.

Some people with expertise in marketing or survey research choose to teach others these skills. (See the statement on teachers—postsecondary elsewhere in the *Handbook*.) A master's degree usually is the minimum educational requirement for a job as a marketing or survey research instructor in junior and community colleges. In most colleges and universities, however, a Ph.D. is necessary for appointment as an instructor. A Ph.D. and extensive publications in academic journals are required for professorship, tenure, and promotion. Others advance to supervisory or managerial positions. Many corporation and government executives have a strong background in marketing.

Employment

Market and survey researchers held about 261,000 jobs in 2006, most of which—234,000—were held by market research analysts. Because of the applicability of market research to many industries, market research analysts are employed throughout the economy. The industries that employ the largest number of market research analysts were management of companies and enterprises; management, scientific, and technical consulting services; insurance carriers; computer systems design and re-

lated services; and other professional, scientific, and technical services—which includes marketing research and public opinion polling.

Survey researchers held about 27,000 jobs in 2006. Survey researchers were employed primarily by firms in other professional, scientific, and technical services—which include market research and public opinion polling; scientific research and development services; and management, scientific, and technical consulting services. Colleges, universities, and professional schools also provided many jobs for survey researchers.

A number of market and survey researchers combine a full-time job in government, academia, or business with part-time consulting work in another setting. About seven percent of market and survey researchers are self-employed.

Besides holding the previously mentioned jobs, many people who do market and survey research work held faculty positions in colleges and universities. These workers are counted as postsecondary teachers rather than market and survey researchers.

Job Outlook

Employment growth of market and survey researchers is projected to be faster than average. Bachelor's degree holders may face competition for employment in these occupations. Job opportunities should be best for jobseekers with a master's or Ph.D. degree in marketing or a related field and with strong quantitative skills.

Employment change. Employment of market and survey researchers is projected to grow 20 percent from 2006 to 2016, faster than the average for all occupations. As companies seek to expand their market and as consumers become better informed, the need for marketing professionals will increase. In addition, globalization of the marketplace creates a need for more market and survey researchers to analyze foreign markets and competition.

Marketing research provides organizations valuable feedback from purchasers, allowing companies to evaluate consumer satisfaction and plan more effectively for the future. Survey researchers also will be needed to meet the growing demand for market and opinion research as an increasingly competitive economy requires businesses to allocate advertising funds more effectively and efficiently.

Job prospects. Bachelor's degree holders may face competition for jobs, as many positions, especially the more technical ones, require a master's or doctorate degree. Among bachelor's degree holders, those with good quantitative skills, including a strong background in mathematics, statistics, survey design, and computer science, will have the best opportunities. Job opportunities should be best for jobseekers with a master's or Ph.D. degree in marketing or a related field and with strong

Projections data from the National Employment Matrix

Occupational Title	SOC Code	Employment, 2006	Projected employment, 2016	Change, 2006-2016	
				Number	Percent
Market and survey researchers.....	19-3020	261,000	313,000	51,000	20
Market research analysts.....	19-3021	234,000	281,000	47,000	20
Survey researchers.....	19-3022	27,000	31,000	4,300	16

NOTE: Data in this table are rounded. See the discussion of the employment projections table in the *Handbook* introductory chapter on *Occupational Information Included in the Handbook*.

quantitative skills. Ph.D. holders in marketing and related fields should have a range of opportunities in many industries, especially in consulting firms. Like those in many other disciplines, however, Ph.D. holders probably will face keen competition for tenured teaching positions in colleges and universities.

Market research analysts should have the best opportunities in consulting firms and marketing research firms as companies find it more profitable to contract for market research services rather than support their own marketing department. However, other organizations, including computer systems design companies, software publishers, financial services organizations, health care institutions, advertising firms, and insurance companies, may also offer job opportunities for market research analysts. Increasingly, market research analysts not only collect and analyze information, but also help clients implement analysts' ideas and recommendations.

There will be fewer job opportunities for survey researchers since it is a relatively smaller occupation. The best prospects will come from growth in the market research and public opinion polling industry, which employs many survey researchers.

Earnings

Median annual earnings of market research analysts in May 2006 were \$58,820. The middle 50 percent earned between \$42,190 and \$84,070. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$32,250, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$112,510. Median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of market research analysts in May 2006 were:

Computer systems design and related services	\$76,220
Management of companies and enterprises	62,680
Other professional, scientific, and technical services	57,520
Management, scientific, and technical consulting services	54,040
Insurance carriers	53,430

Median annual earnings of survey researchers in May 2006 were \$33,360. The middle 50 percent earned between \$22,150 and \$50,960. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$16,720, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$73,630. Median annual earnings of survey researchers in other professional, scientific, and technical services were \$27,440.

Related Occupations

Market and survey researchers perform research to find out how well the market will receive products, services, and ideas. Such research may include planning, implementing, and analyzing surveys to determine the needs and preferences of people. Other jobs using these skills include economists, psychologists, sociologists, statisticians, operations research analysts, management analysts, and urban and regional planners. Market and survey researchers often work closely with advertising, marketing, promotions, public relations, and sales managers. When analyzing data, market and survey researchers must use quantitative skills similar to those of mathematicians, cost estimators, and actuaries. Also, market and survey researchers often are concerned with public opinion, as are public relations specialists.

Sources of Additional Information

For information about careers and certification in market research, contact:

➤ Marketing Research Association, 110 National Dr., Glastonbury, CT 06033. Internet: <http://www.mra-net.org>

For information about careers in survey research, contact:

➤ Council of American Survey Research Organizations, 170 North Country Rd., Suite 4, Port Jefferson, NY 11777.

Internet: <http://www.casro.org>