Marketing Research Certificate Program Syllabus

Week 1—Marketing and Marketing Research Overview

- Marketing fundamentals and how they affect business success
  - Marketing mix
  - Product lifecycle
  - Market segmentation
  - Targeting and positioning
- The role of marketing research as an information aid that guides decision making
- Steps in the marketing research process
- Identifying the business issue
- Defining the research scope and developing research hypotheses
- Custom research vs. syndicated services
- Three types of research design: exploratory, descriptive and causal
- Experimental design – Development, Analysis, and Critique
- Primary vs. secondary research techniques and when to use each
- Advantages and disadvantages of various data collection methods:
  - Qualitative research techniques: observation, focus groups, depth interviews
  - Quantitative research techniques: Internet surveys, mail surveys, phone surveys, in-person
- Key elements of marketing research proposals
- Practical applications of marketing research

Week 2—Sampling Process and Sample Plans

- Reasons for sampling
- Sampling methods:
  - Probability techniques: random sampling, systematic sampling and stratified sampling
  - Non-probability techniques: convenience, judgement, quota, panel and referral
- Specialized sampling techniques: disproportionate, double sampling and validation
- Types of error in consumer sampling
- Steps in developing a sample design plan
- "Rep" consumer samples
- Methods for determining sample size
  - Approaches: Arbitrary, conventional, cost basis, statistical analysis, confidence interval
- Practical considerations in establishing sample size
  - Precise, reliable and valid
  - Confidence intervals for means and proportions
- Sources of consumer samples for various research techniques
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Week 3—Focus Groups

- Key benefits of focus groups and when to use them
- Disadvantages of focus groups
- Online focus groups vs. traditional focus groups
- Focus group selection criteria
  - Focus group composition
  - Recommended size of focus groups
  - Recruitment and selection of focus group participants
  - How to determine the appropriate number of groups
  - Selecting appropriate markets for groups
- Creating effective focus group discussion guides
- Focus group moderators:
  - Role and responsibility
  - Tips for choosing a moderator
  - Techniques moderators use to run successful groups
- Focus group analysis
  - Pointers for summarizing focus group sessions

Week 4—Questionnaire Design

- Fundamentals of Validity and Reliability
- Steps in the questionnaire design process
- Major differences between mail, phone and Internet questionnaires
- Question design:
  - Suggestions for question wording
  - Common mistakes in writing questions and how to avoid them
- Questionnaire organization and question sequencing
  - Flowcharts
  - Logical sequencing
  - Common approaches to question flow
- Question formats and considerations in selecting the appropriate one
  - Open-ended, closed-ended (dichotomous vs. multichotomous) and scaled questions
- Levels of measurement scales and why they're important
  - Nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio measures
- Scaled response attitudinal measurement techniques
  - Modified Likert scale
  - Semantic differential scale
  - Graphic rating scales
  - Itemized rating scales
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- Stapel scales
- Percentage scales
- Paired comparisons
- Ranking vs. constant sum technique
- Considerations in selecting the types of questions to use
- Types of bias and how they can be avoided
- Designing effective Internet survey instruments
  - Checklist of recommended do's and don'ts

Week 5—Data Analysis and Communicating Research Results

- Stages of data processing
- Major elements of a tabulation plan
- Preparing data for tabulation
  - Editing, cleaning and coding specifications
    - Developing master code lists for open-ended responses
    - Methods used for missing responses
  - Base considerations
  - Stub and banner specifications
  - Marginals
  - Cross-tabulation nomenclature
    - Direction of percentaging: vertical vs. horizontal
- Weighting and sample balancing considerations and techniques
- Summarizing research results:
  - Four types of bases
  - Principles to follow when classifying responses
  - Analytical methods for summarizing data and their appropriate uses:
    - Frequency distributions, percentages
    - Measures of central tendency: mean, median, mode
    - Measures of dispersion: range, variance, standard deviation
    - Indices
- Statistical inference
  - Confidence intervals, hypothesis testing and significant differences
    - Directional and non-directional hypothesis testing
    - Z test for the differences between two means and proportions
- Tips on ways to effectively communicate research findings:
  - Oral presentations and written summaries of research results
    - Presenting facts and offering actionable recommendations