RESEARCH FOR MARKETING

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RESEARCH FOR MARKETING

Michael J. Baker

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Preface

During the 1980s there emerged a broadly based consensus that success in an increasingly competitive global market-place depends significantly upon organisations being marketing-orientated and customer-driven. Starting with Peters and Waterman's *In Search of Excellence* in 1980 through to Michael Porter's *The Competitive Advantage of Nations* in 1990 there has been a continuous stream of managerial best-sellers concerned with the nature and sources of competitive success as a basis for prescribing strategies and courses of action to enable firms to succeed in a climate of accelerating technological and economic change. In content and approach these books have ranged from the rigorously scientific to the managerially anecdotal. But, despite this variation, there is universal agreement that competitive success depends fundamentally upon a clear understanding of the markets in which one wishes to compete and of the customers and competitors that comprise these markets. By contrast, there is also universal agreement that the primary source of failure is an inadequate knowledge and understanding of the market-place.

In light of this universal agreement one might anticipate that the development of a marketing information system (MIS) and extensive investment in marketing research would be a priority. All the evidence indicates the opposite. For example, in *Marketing and Competitive Success* (1989) Susan Hart and I report the findings of a rigorous survey in which we found that only 42 per cent of the sample firms had an in-house marketing research function and that only 58 per cent ever made use of any marketing research from external agencies. We also found that there was a significant and positive association between the use of marketing research and competitive success. Many similar surveys in the UK, Europe and North America report the same findings. Clearly, there is a need for much more attention to be given to the role of research in developing marketing and corporate strategy.

Research for Marketing is an attempt to cater for the anticipated growth in demand for information on the subject as students and managers recognise its importance as an essential and first element in the formulation of strategy and management of the marketing mix. Now, there are already many excellent

textbooks available on the subject of marketing research, so why write another one? Quite simply because the majority of available books are concerned with the *practice* of marketing research and are written from the perspective of the expert who is actually going to carry out the marketing research function. This book is written for those who want an overview of what marketing research is and what it can and cannot do. More particularly, it is written from the perspective of those who may want to commission research and are looking for guidance on how to define their problem and information needs and how to communicate these to a practitioner; how to assess the suitability of alternative research strategies and the precise methods and instruments to be used; how to place a value on the work agreed upon and how to evaluate the quality of the findings. In other words, this book is written for the *user* of marketing research rather than the *doer*. Together with *Marketing* (5th edition, forthcoming) and *Marketing Strategy and Management* it is intended to provide a basic library for the market manager

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MICHAEL J. BAKER

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the many research assistants who, over the years, have played such an important role in my own research for marketing.

Stephen T. Parkinson
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