

BUSINESS RESEARCH METHODS



FIFTH EDITION

DONALD R. COOPER • C. WILLIAM EMORY

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BUSINESS RESEARCH METHODS

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To our families

PREFACE

The test of a singularly versatile textbook comes with time, years of use and years of thorough, reliable coverage of the field. In 1976, when *Business Research Methods* was first published, it was a pioneer methodology text in business. The world has witnessed extraordinary change in two decades. Our field has changed too. Advances in technology have revolutionized the way information is processed and research is conducted. Secondary data searches, data collection, data entry and analysis, graphical visualization, reporting, and many related areas have been transformed.

Amidst all these changes, our book has kept pace and remained a favorite. As we approach the third decade of writing *Business Research Methods*, we pledge to continue fulfilling students' learning needs, exceeding professors' instructional requirements, and becoming more relevant to practicing managers. We can accomplish this only by listening to you. Over 70 of our colleagues recently told us what was important to them in teaching research and how we could better serve them. We believe that our responsiveness to their feedback, to the in-depth advice of our reviewers, and to students' expectations distinguishes the leaders of a textbook tradition from the imitators.

Changes to the Fifth Edition

Let us tell you what careful listening has taught us and how that has improved this edition. You asked that *Business Research Methods* maintain its comprehensive coverage of the research process in the business setting. By doing this, we fulfill your need for a text that spans the disciplines of business, providing breadth and depth, and serving as a valuable reference. Many also wanted the topical versatility that has made it suitable for managers and future managers of nonprofit and government organizations—especially those where the functions are similar to business and decisions are based on research information.

We have worked hard to respond to your requests for specific changes. The layout and graphics were again redesigned to make the text more readable and appealing. Icons now identify key components of each chapter for ease of use. Visual images were given a fresh look to accelerate understanding, simplify the explanation of difficult ideas, and promote synthesis. Each chapter was rewritten until it met literary standards for consistent comprehension and reading level.

Special Sections A preview called *Finding Your Way* appears at the beginning of each chapter to

outline the scope and organization of topics. An exciting new series of vignettes, *Bringing Research to Life*, creates a sense of continuity and replaces standard chapter introductions. To most students' relief, they highlight the human side of research. True to life, they sometimes show conflict, usually reveal wit and humor, and always deal with practical issues for students and managers. Readers identify with the central characters in this continuing set of short stories. The interactions make for frequent page turning. Gender and multicultural themes are also given tactful treatment with this device. Our more jaded student readers tell us that the vignettes "breathe life into research."

New chapter *Close-Ups* illustrate critical learning points. They have been carefully connected to the content and tone of each chapter. With these auxiliary components, we have enhanced comprehension of each chapter's learning objectives. The synergy of *Bringing Research to Life* and the *Close-Ups* transports the reader through the research process. Starting with an amorphous management concern and working their way to the final report, students develop the skills necessary to produce and report research findings.

The summary section that completes each chapter benefits from a new *Key Terms* feature. Key terms are also bolded in the text. An expanded summary, key terms, discussion questions, reference notes, and revised suggestions for additional reading and reference improve closure for students.

Content Improvements We think that business research should be more than a slimmed-down, repackaged version of marketing research. Thus, our changes strive to include diverse topical applications: human resource management, sales/sales management, organizational culture, product development, finance, labor issues, customer satisfaction, retailing, advertising, corporate image—to name just a few.

Besides the new special sections, there are several noteworthy improvements to the chapters. "The Research Process," Chapter 3, was revised

to give exploration a more prominent role in problem definition and the research process model. The question hierarchy is better connected to other parts of the text. The topic of valuing research information now receives special treatment in Appendix B. Chapter 4, "The Research Proposal," has rewritten sections on development and evaluation and offers a sample proposal that is connected with the vignette series. Appendix C outlines the construction of an RFP and examines its variations.

A chapter-length special section on "Ethics in Business Research" is introduced in the beginning of the text to stimulate an ongoing exchange about values and practical constraints throughout the chapters that follow. It contains a new guide to resource materials on ethical awareness and three new case studies. "Sampling Design," Chapter 8, has completely rewritten coverage that simplifies this subject for students. Liberal use of examples unifies theory and practice.

"Secondary Data Sources," Chapter 9, and Appendix A on "Business Reference Tools," offer the most comprehensive coverage of this topic you will find. Global communication is stressed by other texts but connectivity is often neglected. We tell you about Internet and provide you with the resources to get connected. Online databases, CD-ROM, e-mail sources, and more traditional search methods are fully explored.

The four statistical chapters have been pared down but retain their high example and graphics count. A special section on nonparametric hypothesis tests is now found in Appendix E. The *Irwin Software Series* for SPSS, SAS, and Minitab is available to supplement these chapters. It is cross-referenced to the chapter examples and discussion questions.

Chapter 18, "Presenting Results: Written and Oral Reports," has a revised section on the most effective graphic presentation aids and a sample research report. This report is the culmination of the project described in *Bringing Research to Life* and several *Close-Ups*. Appendix D contains a sample student project on a different topic.

Features of the Fifth Edition

If you are an existing user of this text, we think you will be delighted with the blending of new and old features. If you are contemplating adopting this text, consider the many features and benefits we offer you and your students.

Professors Will Appreciate:

- A balanced presentation of practical applications and fundamental concepts.
- Timely coverage of ethics in business research, electronic searches, exploratory data analysis, presentation of statistics, charts, and graphics, and communicating research findings.
- A focus on managerial decisions, emphasizing the need for sound reasoning, problem identification and formulation, and testing.
- Methods covered in depth, not a cursory review under the guise of simplicity.
- A process model that guides research question development and the study's sequence yet promotes flexibility in matching methods to problems.
- Topics that receive meager attention in other texts—reasoning and inference, research proposals, designing experiments, observational studies, content analysis, data preparation, statistical diagnostics and assumptions, and many more.
- Software options for data entry, analysis, complex table construction, and presentation layout.
- The availability of Irwin's *Software Series: SPSS, SAS, and Minitab Guides and Computerized Business Statistics*, diskette and manual.
- An *Instructor's Manual* containing course design ideas, student projects, learning objectives, transparency masters, class discussion suggestions, end-of-chapter and case answers, and test questions.

Students Will Enjoy:

- A crisp style with a readability level that does not talk down—equivalent to a *Business Week* editorial.
- Opening vignettes that offer a humanizing view of the topic with interesting characters, situations, and chapter-to-chapter continuity.
- Extensive learning aids: icons for quick section identification, chapter *Close-Ups* to illustrate important concepts, *Key Terms* boldfaced in the text and summarized, extended chapter summaries, discussion and computer questions, and suggested references for reports and papers.
- Practical examples and skill-building techniques for a solid grounding in how to do research.
- Attractive graphics that illustrate learning points, not substitute for content.
- Informative appendices that speed the planning and execution of a research project.
- Exercises that build evaluation skills for assessing the worth of research designs and data handling procedures.
- A comprehensive reference for use beyond the course.

Target Audience and Organization

Over the years, we have taught research and data analysis for MBAs, executive MBAs, doctoral students, and public managers. *Business Research Methods* was originally written with MBAs in mind, although it supports other applications well. When used with undergraduate students, prior exposure to elementary statistics is recommended.

The book consists of four parts that parallel the research process. Part I introduces business research. Its chapters define and characterize the

nature of business research, provide a foundation for thinking and reasoning scientifically, develop a step-by-step overview of the research process, explain how to propose a research project, and set the stage for ethical awareness and responsible decision making.

There are four chapters in Part II on the design of research studies. Starting with design strategies and their relative advantages, we go on to the role of measurement, the design of scales for various objectives, and the selection of a sampling design. Part III consists of five chapters on the sources and collection of data. The most frequently used methods and procedures in business research are described: secondary data search procedures, the types and uses of survey methods, instrument development, observational research, and experimentation.

Five chapters comprise Part IV on the analysis and presentation of data. A chapter on how to prepare data, explore it, and complete a preliminary analysis begins the unit. It is convenient for some course designs to skip from this chapter to the final one on reports. However, more advanced students will want the statistical overview of the next three chapters: hypothesis testing and statistical tests for different types of data (Chapter 15), correlation, bivariate regression, and nonparametric association (Chapter 16), and multivariate methods (Chapter 17). The presentation of research results completes Part IV. Appendices offer extensive reference materials and specialized information for advanced students.

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Comments about your successes with the text and suggestions for improvement are highly valued. We earnestly solicit them. You may contact us through our universities or in care of Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1333 Burr Ridge Parkway, Burr Ridge, IL 60521.

Donald R. Cooper

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