
Market Research Training Course: Commissioning, Survey Design and Insight for Decisions

23 – 27 November 2026
Amsterdam





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Programme Summary

This one-week market research training course for heads of marketing, insight managers and commercial directors ends in a market research plan for one live decision. Leaders who commission studies must judge whether a brief, a sample and a report can bear the weight of a pricing, launch or investment choice. The programme moves from principles, through diagnosis of existing evidence, to the design of studies and data controls, then to application on a real question. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this market research programme for senior marketing and commercial leaders.

The Business Case

Many organisations buy studies whose questions were never tied to a decision, then find the findings arrive too late. Sound market research starts with the decision, sets the evidence needed to take it and controls how data is gathered, so that results can be trusted and acted on.

- Decision Confidence: Improves as every study is linked to a named decision and the evidence it requires.
- Research Waste: Falls as briefs, samples and supplier scopes are agreed before fieldwork starts.
- Insight Take-Up: Rises as findings are written as recommendations for the people who must act.

Principles and Evidence Base

- The market research process: it runs from defining the decision and research questions to design, fieldwork, analysis and reporting, and structures the five sessions.
- Insights Association Data Quality Toolkit: it guides the checks on survey data reliability applied to fieldwork controls in Session 4.
- Quantitative and qualitative methods: they frame the choice of design in Session 3, so that each question is matched to a method able to answer it.

Intended Participants

- Marketing leaders who need evidence before they set positioning, pricing or launch plans.
- Insight managers who brief agencies and defend study designs to senior colleagues.
- Commercial directors who rely on customer evidence for account and portfolio choices.
- Product and brand leaders who commission concept and customer studies.
- Strategy leads who combine research findings with internal data.

The programme serves retail, banking, consumer goods, telecommunications and healthcare organisations, and suits mixed groups.



Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to construct a research brief that links each question to a decision and a deadline.
2. Participants will be able to evaluate existing evidence and identify the gaps a new study must fill.
3. Participants will be able to justify a choice between quantitative and qualitative methods for a given question.
4. Participants will be able to design a questionnaire and a sampling plan that suit the audience studied.
5. Participants will be able to diagnose data quality problems in fieldwork and set controls over suppliers.
6. Participants will be able to prioritise findings and write recommendations for a decision committee.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Market Research Principles and the Decision Brief

Which decision does the market research serve, and what evidence would change it?

- Market Research Process Stages
- Decision and Research Question Tree
- Research Brief Template
- Quantitative and Qualitative Method Map
- Study Budget and Timeline Sheet

Day 2: Diagnosing Existing Evidence and Information Gaps

What does the organisation already know, and how reliable is it?

- Evidence Inventory of Internal Data
- Secondary Source Reliability Check
- Customer Feedback Review
- Information Gap Register
- Hypothesis Statement Sheet

Day 3: Designing Surveys, Samples and Interviews

How are questions, samples and interview guides built so that answers are usable?

- Questionnaire Design Checklist
- Sampling Frame and Sample Size Worksheet
- Interview Guide Structure
- Pilot Test Plan
- Bias Review of Question Wording



Day 4: Designing Fieldwork Controls and Analysis Plans

How are suppliers and data controlled until results are ready for analysis?

- Supplier Selection Scorecard
- Fieldwork Quality Control Log
- Insights Association Data Quality Toolkit Checks
- Cross-Tabulation Analysis Plan
- Findings Reporting Outline

Day 5: Applying Market Research to One Live Decision

Is the research plan ready for sign-off by the sponsor?

- Applying the Session 1 Question Tree to the Chosen Decision
- Closing the Session 2 Gap Register
- Testing the Session 3 Questionnaire and Sample Plan
- Rehearsing the Sponsor Review
- Completing the Market Research Plan

Methodology

The programme uses a structured exercise method built on anonymised briefs, draft questionnaires and sample study reports. Participants work in small groups to critique briefs, build questionnaires and sampling plans and defend their choices, with feedback from peers and the facilitator on each work product.

- Suggested activity: Rewriting a vague research brief so that every question points to a decision.
- Suggested activity: Reviewing a draft questionnaire for leading wording and recording the changes.
- Suggested activity: Scoring two supplier proposals against a selection scorecard.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a market research plan for one live decision. It holds a research brief, an evidence gap register, a method choice, a questionnaire outline, a sampling plan, a supplier control checklist and a reporting outline. The plan is used at work to brief an agency or internal team and to agree scope and timing with the sponsor.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is market research suitable for leaders who have never commissioned a study?

Yes. This market research programme starts from the decision brief and assumes responsibility for marketing, insight or commercial choices, not prior experience of running studies.



Which models does market research rest on in this programme?

Market research here rests on the market research process, the Insights Association Data Quality Toolkit and the choice between quantitative and qualitative methods.

How is the market research plan used at work?

You use the market research plan to brief an agency or internal team, agree scope and timing with your sponsor and control data quality during fieldwork.

How does market research differ from competitor analysis?

Market research studies customers and markets through surveys and interviews to answer a decision question, while competitor analysis centres on named rivals and their likely moves.