The first stage in the planning process is a preliminary country analysis. The marketer needs basic information to evaluate a country market’s potential, identify problems that would eliminate a country from further consideration, identify aspects of the country’s environment that need further study, evaluate the components of the marketing mix for possible adaptation, and develop a strategic marketing plan. One further use of the information collected in the preliminary analysis is as a basis for a country notebook.

Many companies, large and small, have a country notebook for each country in which they do business. The country notebook contains information a marketer should be aware of when making decisions involving a specific country market. As new information is collected, the country notebook is continually updated by the country or product manager. Whenever a marketing decision is made involving a country, the country notebook is the first data- base consulted. New-product introductions, changes in advertising programs, and other marketing program decisions begin with the country notebook. It also serves as a quick introduction for new personnel assuming responsibility for a country market.

This section presents four separate guidelines for collection and analysis of market data and preparation of a country notebook: (1) guideline for cultural analysis, (2) guideline for economic analysis, (3) guideline for market audit and competitive analysis, and (4) guideline for preliminary marketing plan. These guidelines suggest the kinds of information a marketer can gather to enhance planning.

The points in each of the guidelines are general. They are designed to provide direction to areas to explore for relevant data.

**Part III - Market Audit and Competitive Market Analysis**

Of the guidelines presented, **this is the most product or brand specific**. Information in the other guidelines is general in nature, focusing on product categories, whereas **data in this guideline are brand specific and are used to determine competitive market conditions and market potential.**

Two different components of the planning process are reflected in this guideline. Information in Parts I and II, Cultural Analysis and Economic Analysis, serve as the basis for an evaluation of the product or brand in a specific country market. Information in this guideline provides an estimate of market potential and an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of competitive marketing efforts. **The data generated in this step are used to determine the extent of adaptation of the company’s marketing mix necessary for successful market entry and to develop the final step, the action plan.**

The detailed information needed to complete this guideline is not necessarily available without conducting a thorough marketing research investigation. Thus, another purpose of this part of the country notebook is to identify the correct questions to ask in a formal market study.

There are fewer sections in this outline, page 619, but the last section includes the following:

**Based on your analysis of the market, briefly summarize (two-page maximum) the major problems and opportunities requiring attention in your marketing mix, and place the summary at the front of the report.**

* Academic style of writing
* Research based support of conclusions
* APA citations

III. MARKET AUDIT AND COMPETITIVE

MARKET ANALYSIS

Of the guidelines presented, this is the most product or brand specific. Information in the other guidelines is general in nature, focusing on product categories, whereas data in this guideline are brand specific and are used to determine competitive market con- ditions and market potential.

Two different components of the planning process are reflected in this guideline. Information in Parts I and II, Cultural Analysis and Economic Analysis, serve as the basis for an evaluation of the

product or brand in a specific country market. Information in this guideline provides an estimate of market potential and an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of competitive marketing efforts. The data generated in this step are used to determine the extent of adaptation of the company’s marketing mix necessary for successful market entry and to develop the final step, the action plan.

The detailed information needed to complete this guideline is not necessarily available without conducting a thorough market- ing research investigation. Thus another purpose of this part of the country notebook is to identify the correct questions to ask in a formal market study.

Guideline

1. Introduction
2. II. The product

A. Evaluate the product as an innovation as it is perceived by the intended market

1. Relative advantage

2. Compatibility

3. Complexity

4. Trialability

5. Observability

B. Major problems and resistances to product acceptance based on the preceding

Evaluation

1. The market

A. Describe the market(s) in which the product is to be sold

1. Geographical region(s)

2. Forms of transportation and communication available in that (those)

region(s)

3. Consumer buying habits

a. Product-use patterns

b. Product feature preferences

c. Shopping habits

4. Distribution of the product

a. Typical retail outlets

b. Product sales by other middlemen

5. Advertising and promotion

a. Advertising media usually used to reach your target market(s)

b. Sales promotions customarily used (sampling, coupons, etc.)

6. Pricing strategy

a. Customary markups

b. Types of discounts available

B. Compare and contrast your product and the competition’s product(s)

1. Competitors’ product(s)

a. Brand name b. Features c. Package

2. Competitors’ prices

3. Competitors’ promotion and advertising methods

4. Competitors’ distribution channels

C. Market size

1. Estimated industry sales for the planning year

2. Estimated sales for your company for the planning year

D. Government participation in the marketplace

1. Agencies that can help you

2. Regulations you must follow IV. Executive summary

Based on your analysis of the market, briefly summarize (two-page maximum) the major problems and opportunities requiring attention in your marketing mix, and place the summary at the front of the report.