

Teacher Overview

Garbology is an activity that will give students an understanding of observational market research. It's designed to test students' assumptions and give them a fresh perspective on reaching their target audience.

Garbology helps students explore the concept of marketing in a surprising way; by digging through trash! Students learn to categorize their research data into useful visualizations of demographic, geographic, and psychographic information to apply sound judgment when making decisions.

As the facilitator you'll have the opportunity to test your students' assumptions and gain deeper understanding of their personal biases.

Learn more about observational research: <https://fkmensah.wordpress.com/2014/01/16/garbology-market-research-a-trash-marketing-concept/>

When to Use This Lesson

Garbology should be used during the Marketing Unit. You can do Garbology more than once however if you repeat it you need to use different bags of trash.

Time



BEFORE CLASS PREPARATION

- > Make sure you have all the supplies you need. You will need one bag of garbage for each group of students. **Protip:** Ask a handful of teachers/staff in your building to collect their trash. As you receive their bags, number them and keep a record of which bag belongs to which teacher/staff member. It makes it more fun for your students if you can tell them whose trash it actually is.
- > Read the entire activity guide as well as the article mentioned in the Teacher Overview. Prepare to briefly discuss market research with your students.
- > Make copies of Customer Profile Worksheets
- > Arrange the room so students can sit in groups to analyze garbage.
- > Determine how you plan to make groups and how many groups you will have.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- > Principled Entrepreneurship 5b, 5d

FOUNDATIONAL VALUES

- > Sound Judgment
- > Freedom
- > Knowledge

MATERIALS

- > Customer Profile worksheets - one per group of students
- > 4-5 plastic bags filled each with a variety of items you would find in the garbage of certain households. Try to refrain from including anything with names and/or addresses. (See suggestions below)
 - Pizza boxes - frozen, delivery
 - Different pop cans
 - Prepackaged meals
 - Candy wrappers
 - Cleaning supplies
 - Toothpaste/soap boxes

ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS

- > Divide the class into 4-5 groups.
- > Explain what observational research is and some of its advantages and disadvantages.
 - Describe several observational methods
- > Next, introduce the idea of using physical trace evidence to find out what people actually do, based on where they leave their footprints (literally, in some cases).
 - Tell them about the study at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, where tile wear was used to discover that the most popular exhibit by far is the baby chick hatching area. Mention that librarians can see which reference books are being used based on wear of the binding. Tell them that restaurants can figure out what people are eating based on what they leave on their plates. Grocery stores have shoppers cards so they can know what and when you purchase.
- > Ask them how we might use physical trace evidence to determine what people actually use. They will eventually come up with the idea of looking at garbage.
- > Now pass out the garbage bags with the items in them (at least 6 per bag). Give the students 15-20 minutes to go through their garbage and complete a customer profile based on the contents of their bag.
- > Of course, never answer any questions about the garbage because no interaction is possible in an observational study.
- > Let students know they will be expected to present their complete customer profile to the class.
- > As each group presents their findings, ask them the following questions
 - "Why do you think this person is single or married?"
 - "Why do you believe this is a male or female?"
 - "Do kids live there?"
 - "Do you think he/she is a blue collar or white collar worker?"
- > They always have interesting reasons for saying what they do.
 - Avoid telling them whether or not they are "right" - say "your guess is as good as mine." This tends to increase the impression they are doing something "real." Do tell them some of the findings from other garbage studies, including Campbell's findings that blue collar neighborhoods use more canned soup, and that people report using more healthy items and fewer unhealthy items than they actually do.

ACTIVITY DEBRIEF

- > A lot of the Garbology debrief will take place while the groups are presenting their Customer Profiles. Additional debrief questions can be found below.
 - What are the advantages and disadvantages of this type of market research?
 - Do you think this is the most effective form of market research a company can do? Why or why not?
 - What other types of market research do companies do to gather information?
 - Why do they choose to do that type of market research?
 - What are the advantages and disadvantages of that type of market research?

GARBOLOGY

CUSTOMER PROFILE

The stick figure below represents your "Garbology" customer. Fill in the details based on the assumptions you can make from examining your customer's garbage. There is no right or wrong answer.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Socioeconomic

Income Level: _____

Education Level: _____

Occupation: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Race: _____

Ethnicity: _____

Generation: _____

Geographic

Where do they live? Be specific!

Family Size/Details

PSYCHOGRAPHICS

Buying Behaviors

Hobbies

Attributes Relating To

Geography: _____

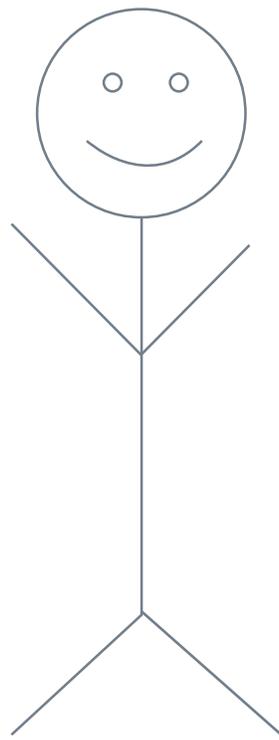
Lifestyle: _____

Life stage: _____

Personality: _____

Attitudes: _____

Values/Beliefs: _____



OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMER

