

How market research helps Portakabin to remain at the cutting edge

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Introduction

Portakabin is a well-known brand. It is the UK market leader in modular buildings. It has 17% of the market. It was founded in 1961 by David Shepherd. It produces a wide range of buildings for the diverse needs of its customers. The range includes buildings that hold from 1 to 1,000 people. *Portakabin* needs to know what people want so that it can provide it. Buildings must be safe and pleasant for people to use. The three main issues for clients are that buildings should be:

- * of good quality
- * on time
- * within budget. So, to maintain its edge in the market, *Portakabin* must give clients what they want. It must also have new solutions ready when customer needs change. It must also attract new clients.

Portakabin is in a competitive market. Part of what helps it to compete is its 'one-stop-shop'. This provides added-value. It helps clients with all aspects of a building. These include planning, layout, furniture and fixtures. It even includes features such as climate control systems.

Market Research

Clients' needs often change. This can be caused by a number of factors, for instance, new technology or changes in the law. *Portakabin* needs to know which factors are key in its market. For this, it uses market research.

- * Primary or field research is new data
- * Secondary or desk research is data that exists. Data may be either qualitative, such as opinions and feelings, or quantitative, such as facts and figures.

Primary research

The sales team talks with clients and their staff. It also uses focus groups to find out how people feel about the buildings. It is vital for people to be comfortable in their working environment. This makes them more efficient. *Portakabin* also uses surveys to see why clients choose it.

Secondary research

Portakabin used the results of a recent survey to help them design new products. The survey looked at how a better workplace could lead to better workers. It showed what could be improved to make a better workplace. It found that workers needed to be able to see outside. They also needed to work in comfort and quiet. A further survey showed that a good working environment was a vital factor to 66% of British workers. One key feature was natural light. Another feature was that it was better if temporary buildings felt and looked permanent.

Product development

The research is used to create new products. Good marketing and sales then present these to clients. At all times, quality is a key issue. Two major new products made in response to research findings are:

- * *Ultima Vision*. This has more glass and so more natural light
- * *Portakabin Solus*. This has large windows. It uses materials to produce a pleasant workplace.

Conclusion

Portakabin wants to maintain its market position. To do this, it uses detailed primary and secondary research. This helps it to make products that meet the changing needs of its clients.