



APPENDIX C

Sample student term project

Four members of a graduate research methods course formed a team to investigate career prospects in product management. Their stated research objectives were:

- 1 to provide an inventory of major European manufacturers that use the product management system
- 2 to gather descriptive data on the nature and degree of product management
- 3 to collect information on how product managers are recruited, selected and prepared for their responsibilities.

The research question was: ‘What is the role and scope of product management in European manufacturing companies?’ Since financial support from the student research fund was limited to Europe’s top 1000 manufacturing companies, the students further defined manufacturers according to this criterion. Their investigative questions were as follows.

- 1 What is the incidence of use of the product manager system?
 - a To what degree is it presently in use?
 - b Has it been used in the past and discontinued?
 - c Was it considered and not adopted?
 - d What are future expectations regarding its use?
- 2 How are product managers recruited and selected?
- 3 What are the qualifications for employment as a product manager?
- 4 How does the product manager function in the company?
- 5 How can we classify the characteristics of individuals and companies to discern trends and differences?

The students selected a mail survey as their data-collection method. Their initial plan was to use a screening or qualifying question to establish which companies use product management.

The team members developed the following procedure for constructing their questionnaire. Having agreed on the investigative questions, each member attempted to write measurement questions aimed at tapping the essence of each investigative question. Each measurement question was written on an A5 card to facilitate comparisons, revisions, additions and deletions. At a meeting of the team, all questions were reviewed, duplicates were eliminated and a general winnowing occurred. The remaining 31 questions were included in questionnaire draft 1, shown in Exhibit C.1. In this first draft, there was no effort to place questions in sequence or to present them graphically as they would eventually be seen by respondents.

After some discussion, the team members concluded that the questionnaire would probably need to be three pages long. In addition, the covering letter would take up a page. They decided to use a printed covering letter and to incorporate it as the first page of the questionnaire. The combination would be printed on both sides of an A3 sheet of paper, folded in booklet form to A4 size.

Each team member was assigned the task of translating draft 1 into draft 2. In the new draft, the questions were in planned sequence, had response formats chosen, and had graphic arrangements selected. Individual drafts were submitted to a sub-committee of the team, which used them as the basis for developing questionnaire draft 2. This is shown in Exhibit C.2.

Exhibit C.1 Preliminary questionnaire, PM study: draft 1.

- 1 What is your position in the company?
- 2 Is your company engaged primarily in industrial products, consumer products, or both?
- 3 Does your company use product managers (PMs)?
- 4 How many PMs does the company have?
- 5 How many products are assigned to one PM?
- 6 Would you please give or include a job description of your company's PM position.
- 7 How many brands does your company have?
- 8 Approximately what percentage of your company's brands have PMs?
- 9 What percentage of sales volume do the brands in question 8 account for as a whole?
- 10 How long have PMs been used in your company?
- 11 Has a PM system been used and dropped in your company? If yes, why was it dropped?
- 12 Has a PM system ever been considered but never adopted in your company?
- 13 Are there any plans for the adoption of a PM system in the future?
- 14 What percentage of your PMs come *directly* from each of the following sources? Campuses, within the company, other companies, other (list).
- 15 If PMs come from within the company, what department, or departments, do they come from? Sales, marketing, production, advertising, other (list).
- 16 If PMs come from outside the company (other than campuses), what department or departments do they come from? PM, sales, marketing, production, advertising, other (list).
- 17 If PMs are recruited directly from campuses, what, if any, are the typical degrees required?
- 18 Rank on a scale from 1 to 5 the relative importance of each of the following qualifications for a PM (1 denotes the greatest importance): education, age, work experience, personality, creativity.
- 19 If PMs are recruited from within the company, what is the average age, length of work experience (with the company) and educational background?
- 20 If PMs are recruited from outside the company (not including campuses), what is the average age, length of work experience and educational background?
- 21 What functions (advertising, pricing, etc.) does the PM actually perform in day-to-day activities, and what percentage of time is spent on each?
- 22 Of those functions listed in question 21, which, if any, does the PM have *final* authority over?
- 23 To whom does the PM report?
- 24 Does your company have a structured training programme for product management? If yes, please explain.
- 25 On the basis of which of the following is the PM evaluated? Market share, ROI, sales volume, profits, other (list).
- 26 What were the objectives of the company in instituting the PM concept?
- 27 How successful has the PM concept been in fulfilling the objectives set for it?
- 28 What were the characteristics of the PM concept that contributed to the fulfilment of these objectives?
- 29 What elements, if any, of the PM system did not adequately contribute to the fulfilment of the objectives?
- 30 What specific actions, if any, have been taken to deal with the inadequacies listed in question 29?
- 31 If your company is currently planning any broad revisions to the present PM programme, please describe.

Exhibit C.2 PM questionnaire: draft 2.

- 1 Does your company now use PMs? yes _____ no _____ (If no, please go to question 17).
- 2 Would you please send a copy of your job description.
- 3 How many PMs does your company have? _____
- 4 What percentage of your total sales is accounted for by PMs? _____ %
- 5 How long have PMs been used by your company? _____ years
- 6 What percentage of your personnel enters the product management programme from the following sources?
Campuses _____ %
Within the company _____ %
From elsewhere _____ %
- 7 If PMs come from within the company or elsewhere, what department(s) do they come from?
Sales _____ %
Marketing _____ %
Production _____ %
Advertising _____ %
Other product management programmes _____ %
Advertising agencies _____ %
Elsewhere _____ %

- 8 If PMs are recruited directly from campuses, please rank the following degrees from 1 to 6, with 1 being the most desirable, 2 the next most desirable, and so on.
- BS _____
 areas _____
- AB _____
 areas _____
- BSBA (BBA) _____
 areas _____
- MA _____
 areas _____
- MBA _____
 areas _____
- PhD _____
 areas _____
- 9 Briefly state what you consider to be an appropriate profile of a PM recruited directly from the campus.
 Age:
 Work experience (length and type):
 Personal traits (personality, creativity, aggressiveness, etc.):
 Education:
- 10 What do you consider to be an appropriate profile for a PM recruited from within or from another company?
 Age:
 Work experience (length and type):
 Personal traits (personality, creativity, aggressiveness, etc.):
 Education:
- 11 To whom does the PM report?

- 12 What percentage of his or her time does the PM spend in various function areas, such as production, advertising, pricing, etc.? Please list.
- 13 Please rank on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 is the most important) the following criteria used in evaluating a PM:
 _____ Market share
 _____ Return on investment
 _____ Sales volume
 _____ Profits
 _____ Other (please explain)

- 14 Does the company have a structured training programme?
 yes _____ no _____ If yes, please describe.

- 15 What prompted your firm to initiate the PM system?
- 16 Is your company currently planning any future revisions to the PM system?
 yes _____ no _____ If yes, please explain.
- 17 Is your company primarily engaged in Industrial goods _____ %
 Food products _____ %
 Consumer package goods _____ %
 Consumer durable goods _____ %
 Automotive products _____ %
 Other (list) _____ %
 _____ %
- 18 What is your company's total revenue in €? _____
 If you answered yes to question 1, you have completed the questionnaire. If your answer was no, please answer question 19. Thank you for your cooperation.
- 19 Please tick which of the following best describes your PMs:
 _____ Have never considered PMs.
 _____ Have considered, but never adopted product management.
 _____ Have used previously and discontinued.
 _____ Presently considering adoption of the system in the future.

Draft 2 was reproduced and submitted to other members of the research class for critique. Comments and challenges were sought on (i) sources of confusion and vagueness; (ii) question value (What useful information does the question provide? Not provide?); (iii) appropriateness of the proposed response formats and suggestions for improvement; and (iv) gaps in question coverage.

After this critique, a second sub-committee revised the questionnaire. This resulted in questionnaire draft 3 (not presented here). The draft was again reviewed by the full team, and modest changes were made to produce draft 4.

By this time, the team members were eager to test the questionnaire with respondents. Arrangements were made to have several local corporate executives complete the questionnaire. Team members picked up the completed questionnaires, interviewed the executives about their answers, and secured any comments they had about the questions and the study. These experiences led to a revised draft, draft 5. This was repeated twice more with other executives, finally ending with draft 7, shown here as Exhibit C.3. The limitations of time and money led the team to depend on local product managers for testing rather than on a full-scale 'dress rehearsal' by mail. This decision limited the value of the pre-testing but was accepted as a limitation of a student project.

Exhibit C.3 PM questionnaire: final draft.

Lakeside University
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
[Inside Address]

Dear Sir,

We at the Lakeside University Business School are interested in learning more about the actual recruitment and use of product or brand managers (BMs). Our objective is to help expand the body of knowledge about this important area of marketing.

To do this, of course, means going to someone such as yourself who *knows*. Your help with the few questions on the attached pages will take only a few minutes and will make a real contribution to the accuracy and success of this study.

Your reply will be treated in strict confidence and will be available only to my research staff and me. Any publication will be only of statistical totals for groups of companies.

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated and will help us to know more about product management and to teach students about it in a more relevant and effective manner.

Sincerely,
William Urbandale
Professor of Marketing

We define a *PM* (also called a *BM*) as one who is responsible for the integration and planning of a broad range of marketing functions (pricing, distribution, and so forth) for a specific product, brand or homogeneous group of products. The position usually has limited or no line authority, especially over the sales force.

1 Please indicate which of the following best describes your company/division's use of product managers.

- We are currently using PMs.
 We have previously used PMs, but discontinued.
 We have considered the system, but never implemented it.
 Presently considering adoption of the system in the future.
 We have never considered PMs.

If you are currently using PMs, please continue. If you are not currently using PMs, you have completed the questionnaire. Thank you for your cooperation.

2 Will you be answering the following for:

- your company?
 your division?

3 How many PMs (include all levels such as group PM, PM, associate PM, and assistant PM) does your company/division employ? _____

- 4 How long have PMs been used by your company/division? _____ years
- 5 What percentage of your company/division total sales are accounted for by products controlled by PMs? _____ %
- 6 From the following, please indicate whether the position exists in your company/division. Then indicate the source from which the personnel at the various levels were obtained to fill that position. If you have a similar position but with a different name, please indicate that position in the blank. (please tick)

	Do you have?		Major sources			
			Campuses	Within company		Other companies
	Yes	No		Other PM jobs	Other jobs	
PMs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Associate PMs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Assistant PMs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (specify) _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

- 7 What is the typical age of your
- Group PMs? _____ years
- PMs? _____ years
- Associate PMs? _____ years
- Assistant PMs? _____ years

- 8 Of the following personal traits, please indicate their degree of importance in the evaluation of a candidate for a product management position. (please tick)

	Not important	Desirable	Very desirable	Essential
Leadership	_____	_____	_____	_____
Creativity	_____	_____	_____	_____
Aggressiveness	_____	_____	_____	_____
Analytical ability	_____	_____	_____	_____
Communications skill	_____	_____	_____	_____
Ability to work with others	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

- 9 If you recruit directly from campus, please indicate the importance of the following traits of a PM candidate. (please tick)

	Not important	Desirable	Very desirable	Essential
Business experience	_____	_____	_____	_____
High grade-point average	_____	_____	_____	_____
Extracurricular activities	_____	_____	_____	_____
MBA	_____	_____	_____	_____
Master's, technical	_____	_____	_____	_____
Bachelor's, business	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (specify) _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

- 10 If you recruit into your PM group from other jobs (either from within your company or from other companies), please indicate the importance of the following experiences. (please tick)

	Not important	Desirable	Very desirable	Essential
Experience	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sales	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other PM programmes	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other marketing positions	_____	_____	_____	_____
Production	_____	_____	_____	_____
Advertising agencies	_____	_____	_____	_____
Undergraduate degree	_____	_____	_____	_____
Graduate degree	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (specify) _____	_____	_____	_____	_____



11 Please indicate the percentage of time a typical PM spends in the following activities:

Advertising	_____	%
Pricing	_____	
Distribution	_____	
Packaging	_____	
Product development	_____	
Marketing research	_____	
Production liaison	_____	
Finance and budgeting	_____	
Other (specify) _____	_____	
Other (specify) _____	_____	
Total	100%	

12 Please indicate which of the following criteria are used in evaluating PMs in your company/division.

a _____ Market share
 _____ Return on investment
 _____ Sales volume
 _____ Profits
 _____ Other (please specify)

b Which one is most important? _____

13 Does your company/division have a structured training programme for PMs?

yes _____ no _____ (If yes, please describe.)

14 Is your company/division currently planning any revision in its PM system?

yes _____ no _____ (If yes, please describe.)

15 Judging from your company's experience, what do you feel is the major problem facing the product management system?

16 It would be most valuable to our studies if you could supply a sample job description of your PM positions.

Are such available?

_____ Yes, examples enclosed
 _____ Yes, examples sent under separate cover
 _____ Not available

17 If you would like a summary of the results of this survey, please tick here. _____

Thank you for your assistance.

The survey was sent to the top 1000 manufacturing companies in the form described. Only one mailing was made because of time and money limitations. Usable returns numbered 492 at the cut-off point. Approximately 50 companies sent job descriptions of their product management positions.