

Finding answers to narrow questions

We are overwhelmed by information, yet finding the precise answer for many business questions can still be difficult.

Business questions are often forward looking and very narrow, such as, what will the demand for consulting services in xyz field be over the next two years in the Asia Pacific Region?

There isn't a one size fits all approach to finding the answers to narrow business questions, however, the following factors will shape your approach to finding the answer.

Start with a clear understanding of what information is required and how the information will be used – such as sales forecasting or recruitment decisions.

If necessary, establish what surrounding information is already known, or needs to be found regarding the narrow issue. For example, if searching for information on growth of consulting services in xyz field, does the requester also need an overview information on the consulting industry within the Asia Pacific Region?

Clarify what information is likely to be available from third party sources, such as market research reports, business commentary and reported news on issues that are likely to impact on the information you are searching for, such as the demand for consulting services in xyz field.

Will experts in the field need to be contacted to obtain answers to specific queries? If so, do the experts need to be found, or are they already known?

Will the experts be able to provide the answer that is required, or are they likely to be constrained in what they can reveal due to confidentiality.

How much time is available to find the answer?

The approach taken for finding information to narrow business questions is also strongly influenced by where the business and its relevant market is located, as the sources of business information available varies greatly between countries and markets.