

*Business Research Tips* is a monthly email with practical ideas for managing business information and research. Please feel free to forward this newsletter on to interested friends and colleagues.

## Finding what you need in the information supermarket

There is ongoing problem for today's employees – they are overwhelmed by too much information, coming from too many sources; yet they still can't find what they want, when they need it. It's not the information highway – it's the information supermarket!

In the last six months, IDC and Accenture conducted two large surveys on how the information glut is affecting employees finding what they need, and the cost for organisations. Middle managers from large companies report that less than half the information they regularly receive is of value to them. They can't easily and quickly locate the information that they need, without turning to many sources, and they frequently refer to information that is inaccurate.

As the information choices, and the channels for delivering information continues to grow, it's increasingly important that employees develop a strategy to manage the abundance of information that is available to them.

Here are a few tips to help employees to find their way around the information supermarket.

- » It's not all in one shop, let alone in the one aisle  
It's an unrealistic expectation that all of the information that an employee requires will be able to be found from the one source, such as an intranet search. The information may need to be verified through further discussion with the appropriate expert.
- » Get to know your suppliers  
Employees should narrow down the information sources that they retrieve information from, and focus on a few reliable and valued suppliers that will keep them well informed. This includes both subscription sources and good contacts with reliable colleagues.
- » Shop regularly  
It's easier to stay informed of developments if they regularly read or skim through the key sources of information that they receive. A bit each day is easier than a weekly shop.
- » Check the pantry  
If they know what's already available inhouse, they don't need to restock. They should start with checking inhouse sources of information, and contribute to inhouse systems for storing and sharing information.
- » Take a shopping list  
It's helpful to note down what information is required, and to think about who will be the best supplier for that information. They may need to check a few stores to find the information that meets their criteria.
- » Ask the shelf stacker  
Seek assistance from someone that should know where to look.

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