Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
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Consultancy Project

The Research Process

The BID ‘pitch’ event

Today's Objectives

- To advise on the content and structure of the BID presentation
- To provide further tutorial advice on topics

Essential project requirements

- **BID for work (20 marks)**
- PID agreed (and signed) (30 marks)
- Feedback
- Plan research methods in detail
- Undertake research
- Analyse findings
- Brainstorm with client
- Present findings and informed ideas
- Report (50 marks)
- Action!
- Feedback/analysis
- Does the project achieve the PID goals?

RESEARCH APPROACHES

- Investigation
- Audit
- Analysis
- Comparison
- Feasibility

Research Methods

1. **SECONDARY RESEARCH – potential sources?**
   - Library research e.g. Texts, journals
   - Internet
   - Reports
   - Official data/statistics analysis

2. **PRIMARY RESEARCH**
   - Original or empirical research/fieldwork

Primary Research

Samples – considerations/decisions:

- Population size
- Sampling frame
- Selection methods i.e. probability e.g. random, systematic, stratified, clustered or non-probability e.g. quota, snowball, convenience etc

Data collection methods?

- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Observation
- Focus groups

CONSIDERATIONS & ISSUES

- Research methodology i.e. quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods?
- Questions - unambiguous, open/closed, use of Likert scale etc
- Piloting
- Reliability, validity, bias
- Brainstorming
- Presentation of findings, use of SPSS/Excel
- Use of statistical analysis - standard deviation, pie charts, bar charts, histograms
- Written analysis of findings
- Conclusions
- Recommendations

Research Skills

What is the purpose of research? A reminder.....

'……research is conducted in order to solve problems and expand knowledge' (Drew,1980:p4)

' People undertake research in order to find things out in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge'

(Jankowicz,1995)

The outcomes of research may be useful to:

- You
- Organisations with which you are involved
- The academic community and society as a whole

An essential component of any managerial role is competence in investigative approaches to facilitate decision making and problem solving. Consequently, despite traditionalist views that research is:

‘the domain of ‘remote, ivory tower individuals working on issues of little practical relevance’

(Gill & Johnson, 1991:4)

it enlightens and informs management decision making because it solves problems and expands knowledge via:

‘a systematic way of asking questions, a systematic method of enquiry’

(Drew,1980 cited in Bell, 1999:3)

Bluestone Wales: a decade of research

Source: http://www.bluestone wales.com about company-information.aspx –

Task:

What research would have been necessary during the period from Bluestone's conception to completion?

The research process: questions posed by researchers

Some simple questions when they embark on a research project including:

1. How do I get something out of a source that I know has something relevant to my needs?

2. How do I use my time cost-effectively in taking notes & collecting quotations?

3. How do I store the material so that I know where I've put things?

4. When I want to write up a section on a subject how do I find everything that I've saved that's applicable?

5. How do I present the material in an appropriate manner to ensure it's readable and user friendly?

Difficulties faced by researchers

- Making good use of information sources & using time effectively in extracting information
- Transforming information into structured internal knowledge
- Managing the physical stores of info gathered during the research process so that the content is accessible & usable
- Scheduling the progress towards final submission & managing time during the research process
- Integrating information collections with other research activities e.g. experiments, tests, discussions with peers/tutors
- Transforming the knowledge acquired during research into an appropriate format for submission
- Taking sole responsibility & being on ones own

Effective information management is a crucial part of the research process . Orna & Stevens (1997:36) suggest that researchers need to:

- Define their information needs
- Locate sources of potentially useful information to meet the needs
- Transform the useful information into internal knowledge
- Store the physical objects e.g. books, photocopies of articles, photographs, results of experiments that contain this information
- Manage the useful information, so that it is easily accessible, may be moved around quickly and can be found easily as and when they need it

Tips for finding and handling the information

As the volume of available material may be overwhelming it's important to:

- use 'hooks' to fish for information
- scan texts using key words to catch your attention
- develop note taking techniques – ensure you:
  - record bibliographic details of books/articles accurately
  - identify key themes at the top of notes – highlight, use colours
  - are selective – avoid copying large chunks of text
  - record key ideas, models, quotations & note page numbers
  - are systematic – label/number notes & organise them effectively

Orna & Stevens (1997:43)

What does the actual research process entail?

It consists of a number of different steps or stages

Gil & Johnson (1997) identified *7 steps:*

1. Identify a broad area
2. Select a topic
3. Decide on an approach
4. Formulate a plan
5. Collect the data
6. Analyse the data
7. Present the findings

In comparison Kumar (1999) highlighted *9 stages:*

1. Identifying topic area
2. Formulating the research problem
3. Conceptualising research design
4. Construction of research instruments for data collection
5. Selecting sample
6. Writing research proposal
7. Collecting data
8. Processing data
9. Writing research report

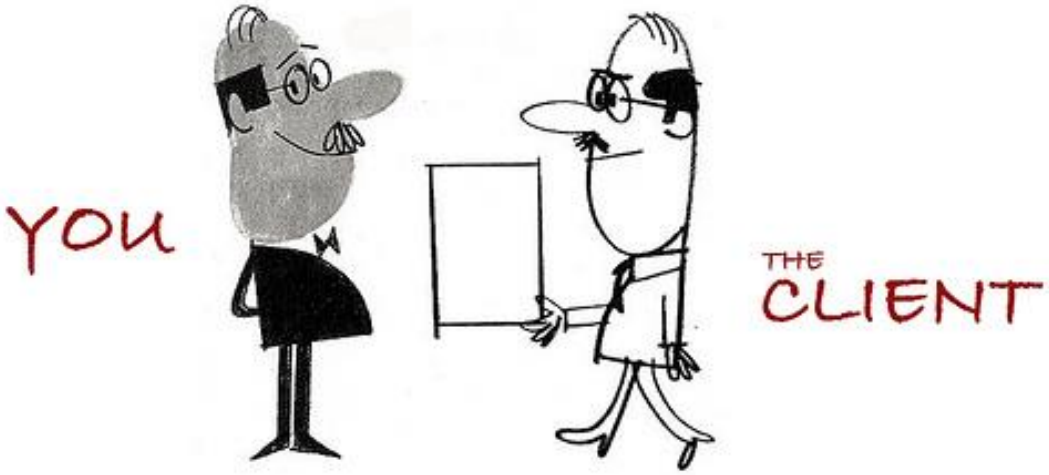
Key assumptions about the research process:

- The research acknowledges the *philosophical frameworks* within which it is set
- The *methods* and *techniques* used are *valid* and *reliable*
- The researcher has adopted an *objective* and *unbiased* approach

Getting started ……

As Gill & Johnson (1997) & Kumar (1999) indicate the first step is to **find a client & select a topic**

……Has everyone done this?



CONSIDERATIONS & ISSUES:

..... and last but certainly not least?

Time management to ensure you factor in sufficient time for planning, preparation, research, discussions with client and preparation of the final report!

Presenting your BID:
now on Wednesday 27 February
AM/PM sessions
- timeslots tbc

Presenting your Bid

https://youtu.be/eIho2S0ZahI

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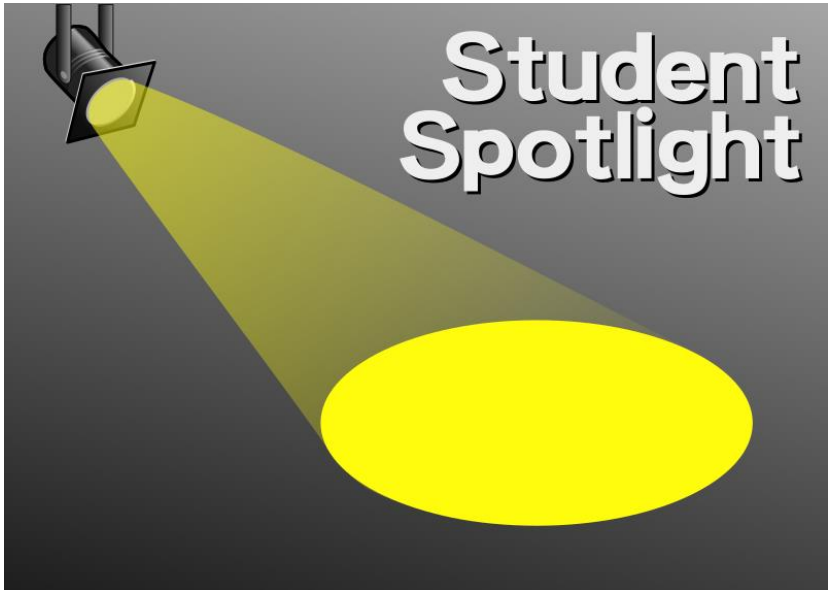
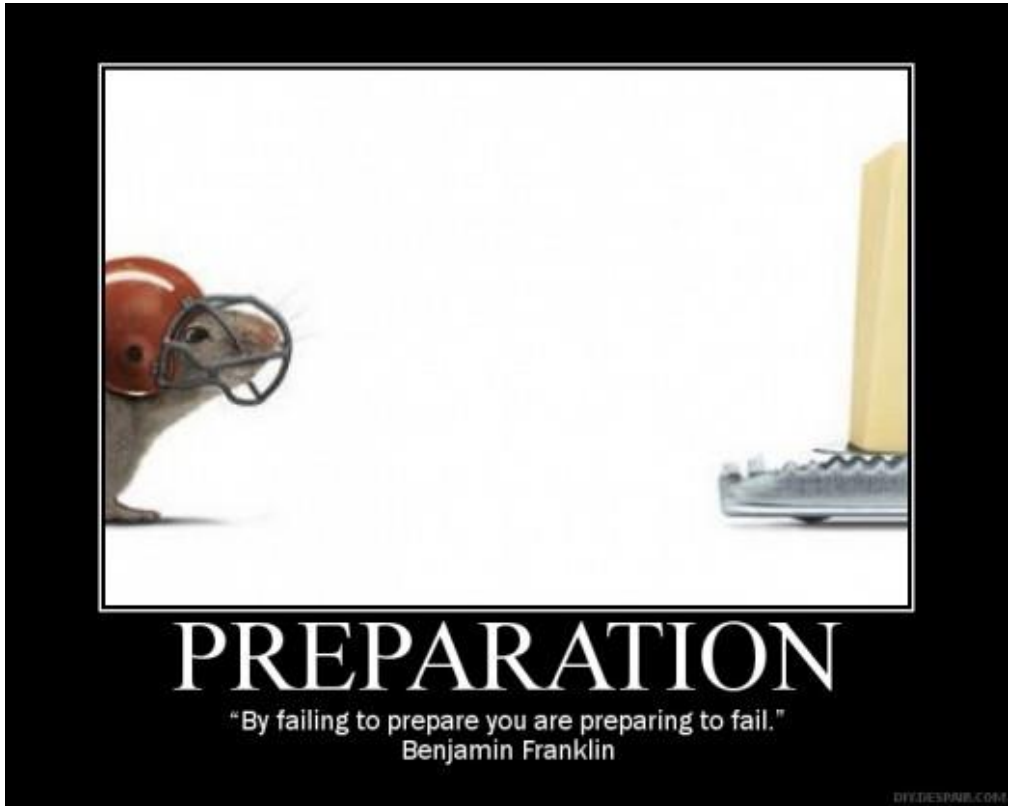


Activity – in pairs…..

Identify the basic things to consider when preparing your BID presentation



Time

Timeslot = 10 minutes per student/team

Maximum presentation length = 6 minutes

Discussion of/feedback on ideas = 4 minutes

Basic considerations:

- What's the purpose of the presentation?
- Pitching for a contract for consultancy
- To get your bid proposal **approved = project engagement**
- Who is your audience/why are they there?
- Format of the session e.g. resources required, layout of room, contributions from different team members etc
- Is the content appropriate, relevant, accurate, sufficient?
- Are the materials appropriate e.g. style, layout, interest, relevance etc
- What are you going to say, are you adequately prepared?
- Have you rehearsed?
- Avoid reading from notes or slides
- Check for errors, can you pilot it with someone?
- Time management: short, sharp, to the point

Content of BID pitch presentation

- Introduction – contextualisation: brief background
- Project aims & objectives
- Rationale i.e. reasons for the project – related to the organisation
- **Initial ideas** for moving things forward/aspects to investigate
- Consultant – why you & not someone else?
- Proposed research strategy e.g. requirements, approach, potential information sources etc
- Project plan including input from self & others (GANTT chart)
- Possible actions/outcomes – **don't give your ideas away!**
- Possible constraints, problems, issues – how will you overcome them?
- Anticipated benefits for the organisation
- "Sell it" in an innovative and entreprenurial way
- Bring a copy along & upload to Turnitin

Use some of the key PID headings to help you focus

Is your project:

-appropriate?

-realistic?

-feasible?

Does it meet the needs of the client/sponsoring organisation?

Is it deliverable within the project and module timescale identified?

Adopt the Boy Scout approach!

‘Be prepared’! consider your:

- ✓ ***Preparation*** – have you done your ‘homework’ –it needs to be thorough!
- ✓ Ability to ***‘think on your feet’*** & answer questions. The discussion will help you focus – you get free consultancy from everyone else!
- ✓ ***Approach*** – are you confident & professional?
- ✓ ***Dress*** – is it appropriate for the occasion?

Your audience

- Fellow students
- Tutors (who act as your client/sponsor)
- External consultants – real business people
- Your project client/sponsor (if available)

……. and finally ….

- ✓ Be positive, adopt a ‘can do’ not a ‘can’t do’ approach
- ✓ Don’t panic even if you’re nervous
- ✓ Look at and speak to the audience
- ✓ Speak clearly, not too fast
- ✓ Sell yourself!
- ✓ Smile!

[Recap]

https://www.ted.com/talks/david_s_rose_on_pitching_to_vcs#t-16916

Today's Objectives

- To explore the key aspects which determine the research process
- To highlight different research approaches & methods
- To outline & discuss key considerations & issues
- To introduce the key questions and considerations faced by researchers when preparing for research
- To identify & discuss different information needs
- To highlight potential sources of information & ways of gathering it
- To acknowledge difficulties in information management
- To consider strategies for effective knowledge management
- To identify the different stages in the research process

- **To advise on the content and structure of the BID presentation**