

Introduction

The 5W1H is a problem-solving technique that poses six questions that cover all aspects of a problem: why (reason), who (person), what (object), when (time), where (location or platform), and how (method). It aims to view ideas from various perspectives with the goal to gain a holistic knowledge of a given situation. It is commonly used as a continuous process-improvement model and accomplished by answering all the basic elements within a problem which are what, who, where, when, why, and how.

The 5W1H, also referred to as the Kipling method is a set of questions used by Rudyard Kipling to extensively answer existing questions and trigger ideas that could contribute to the resolution of a problem. The concept was eventually incorporated into business practices to eliminate mistakes, increase efficiency, and streamline processes. It has been applied in many different industries.

The 5W1H method is a term coined after the poem by Rudyard Kipling that written in his writing called Just So Stories, published in 1902. Later on, this poem became the basis on which the method was named. It became an approach towards problem-solving, where each W and H help one to address an issue from different angles and be able to come up with possible solutions.

Definition

The 5W1H is a questioning approach and a problem-solving method that aims to view ideas from various perspectives with the goal to gain a holistic knowledge of a given situation.

Use 5W1H

5W1H can be applied during the development stage of a new product or project.

5W1H- 5 Questions With W and One With H Framework

What Analysis

This question aims to understand the criteria that customers use to choose a product or service. As a result, businesses and organizations can aim marketing plans and advertising at the right targets. The objective is to understand what customers are really looking for.

Who Analysis

The aim of this question is to find out who influences or recommends the product or service to customer. Having access to this information could allow the management and marketing team to direct their offering to the right target groups. 'Who' analysis points to people or groups that relevant to consumers' behavior.

Where Analysis

The where element should contain the exact location or position of the recognized issue. It can be a place, facility, or even a certain process where the solution is to be implemented.

When Analysis

This question aims to help businesses plan and time their marketing and advertising for the right time, such as during Thanksgiving Holidays or New Year Celebrations or Ramadan. When includes all the components of the situation pertaining to anything related to dates. It should state the timeline, deadline, duration, or any other details.

Why Analysis

This factor aims to understand the criteria that customers use to choose a product or service. As a result, businesses and organizations can aim marketing plans and advertising at the right targets. It explains in detail the reason and objectives behind the need for a product or service.

How Analysis

The aim of this question is to understand how customers search for information before deciding on a product or service. How analysis dictates the steps on how the identified plan/s should be carried out. It should also include all the resources, tools, methods, means, and even the expenditure needed for an endeavor to be effective.

To summarize, asking these questions enables those who will use the 5W1H method to get to the bottom of things by systematically structuring thoughts and emphasizing important information. As a result, this can help indicate potential problems and possible solutions related to the issues.

Examples

What does the consumer buy? (e.g. product identification or product differentiation from competitors);

Who is the target market (knowing the demographic & psychographic profile)? Who influences consumers to buy the products?

Why does the consumer want to buy the products? (Social/cultural or personal factors that affect demand for your offering).

When does the consumer buy the products? (e.g., daily, seasonally, monthly or special occasions);

Where does the consumer want to buy the products? (e.g., department stores, supermarkets, Amazon and other online marketplaces).

How does the customer buy the products? (e.g., searching, evaluating, and deciding to buy).



Conclusion

The 5W1H, otherwise known as the questioning method or the method of five W's and 1H, or the Kipling method is an effective method of arriving at solutions by asking the all-important questions of: what, who, where, when, why and how?