
SURVEY OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Purpose of the Survey

The challenge facing today's businesses is to succeed in uncertain and unstable environments. Learning about developments in the environment thus becomes an important activity of the CEO who is charting the course of the firm. This questionnaire invites you to describe how you scan the business environment. Our aim is to better understand how top managers acquire and use information about the environment. This will enable the design of information systems and services more pertinent to the needs of managers.

What is Environmental Scanning?

Environmental scanning is gaining information about events and relationships in your company's external environment, the knowledge of which would assist you in planning the company's future course of action. Scanning could range from gathering data deliberately (such as by doing market research), to informal conversations or reading the newspaper.

Completing the Questionnaire

There are 13 questions which take about 15 minutes to answer. For most questions, you evaluate items by circling numbers. Please return the completed questionnaire in the envelope provided to: Chun Wei Choo, Faculty of Library and Information Science, 140 St. George Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1A1. If you have any questions, please call Chun Wei at (416) 978-8852.

Confidentiality

We respect and will protect the confidentiality of every respondent. The true names of respondents and their organizations will not be used. Data collected will be analyzed to produce aggregate statistics only.



University of Toronto
Faculty of Library and Information Science

Section A: Perception of the Environment

A1 How important to your organization are trends and events in each environmental sector?

The external environment may be divided into 6 sectors defined below.

Please *circle the number* that best indicates your response.

Environmental sector	Not important	Fairly unimportant	Of some importance	Fairly important	Very important	
(1) Customer sector: companies or individuals that purchase your products, including distributors and resellers.	1	2	3	4	5	[1/15]
(2) Competition sector: companies that make substitute products, products that compete with your own, and their competitive tactics.	1	2	3	4	5	[1/17]
(3) Technological sector: development of new production techniques, innovations, and R&D trends relevant to your firm.	1	2	3	4	5	[1/19]
(4) Regulatory sector: federal and provincial legislation and regulations, city or community policies, and political developments.	1	2	3	4	5	[1/21]
(5) Economic sector: economic factors such as stock markets, inflation, interest rates, unemployment, and economic growth.	1	2	3	4	5	[1/23]
(6) Sociocultural sector: demographic trends, social attitudes and values in the general population.	1	2	3	4	5	[1/25]

A2 What is the rate of change taking place in each environmental sector?

Rate of change is the extent to which agencies, issues, trends, problems, or opportunities change over time in your firm's external environment.

A low rate of change means things stay about the same from year to year.

A high rate of change means things change quickly and unpredictably from year to year.

Please *circle the number* that best indicates your response.

Environmental sector	Low	Fairly low	Medium	Fairly high	High	
(1) Customer sector:	1	2	3	4	5	[1/28]
(2) Competition sector:	1	2	3	4	5	[1/30]
(3) Technological sector:	1	2	3	4	5	[1/32]
(4) Regulatory sector:	1	2	3	4	5	[1/34]
(5) Economic sector:	1	2	3	4	5	[1/36]
(6) Sociocultural sector:	1	2	3	4	5	[1/38]

A3 What is the level of complexity of each environmental sector?

A complex sector has a large number of diverse factors that need to be taken into account in decision making. There are many organizational and individual players with complex relationships, so that cause and effect links cannot always be established.

Please *circle the number* that best indicates your response.

Environmental sector	Low	Fairly Low	Medium	Fairly High	High	
(1) Customer sector:	1	2	3	4	5	[1/41]
(2) Competition sector:	1	2	3	4	5	[1/43]
(3) Technological sector:	1	2	3	4	5	[1/45]
(4) Regulatory sector:	1	2	3	4	5	[1/47]
(5) Economic sector:	1	2	3	4	5	[1/49]
(6) Sociocultural sector:	1	2	3	4	5	[1/51]

Section B: Perception of Information Sources

B1 How frequently do you use each of the following information sources to scan the environment?

Please *circle the number* that best indicates your response.

Information source	Never	Less than once a year	Few times a year	At least once a month	At least once a week	At least once a day	
1 Customers	1	2	3	4	5	6	[2/01]
2 Competitors	1	2	3	4	5	6	[2/03]
3 Business/professional associates ¹	1	2	3	4	5	6	[2/05]
4 Government officials	1	2	3	4	5	6	[2/07]
5 Newspapers, periodicals	1	2	3	4	5	6	[2/09]
6 Government publications	1	2	3	4	5	6	[2/11]
7 Broadcast media (radio, tv)	1	2	3	4	5	6	[2/13]
8 Industry, trade associations	1	2	3	4	5	6	[2/15]
9 Conferences, trips	1	2	3	4	5	6	[2/17]
10 Superiors, board members	1	2	3	4	5	6	[2/19]
11 Subordinate managers	1	2	3	4	5	6	[2/21]
12 Subordinate staff	1	2	3	4	5	6	[2/23]
13 Internal memoranda, circulars	1	2	3	4	5	6	[2/25]
14 Internal reports, studies	1	2	3	4	5	6	[2/27]
15 Company library	1	2	3	4	5	6	[2/29]
16 Electronic information services ²	1	2	3	4	5	6	[2/31]

1: suppliers, distributors, bankers, lawyers, consultants, financial analysts, other chief executives, etc.
 2: newswires, online databases, electronic news bulletin boards, etc.

Please list here **other sources** which you use and indicate their frequency of use:

17 _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	[2/33]
18 _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	[2/35]

In the following questions, please include these additional sources.

B2 How relevant is the information from each source about the environment?

Relevant information is information that is *needed* and *useful* with respect to the goals and activities of your firm.

Please *circle the number* that best indicates your response.

Information source	Very irrelevant	Fairly irrelevant	Of some relevance	Fairly relevant	Very relevant	
1 Customers	1	2	3	4	5	[2/38]
2 Competitors	1	2	3	4	5	[2/40]
3 Business/professional associates ¹	1	2	3	4	5	[2/42]
4 Government officials	1	2	3	4	5	[2/44]
5 Newspapers, periodicals	1	2	3	4	5	[2/46]
6 Government publications	1	2	3	4	5	[2/48]
7 Broadcast media (radio, tv)	1	2	3	4	5	[2/50]
8 Industry, trade associations	1	2	3	4	5	[2/52]
9 Conferences, trips	1	2	3	4	5	[2/54]
10 Superiors, board members	1	2	3	4	5	[2/56]
11 Subordinate managers	1	2	3	4	5	[2/58]
12 Subordinate staff	1	2	3	4	5	[2/60]
13 Internal memoranda, circulars	1	2	3	4	5	[2/62]
14 Internal reports, studies	1	2	3	4	5	[2/64]
15 Company library	1	2	3	4	5	[2/66]
16 Electronic information services ²	1	2	3	4	5	[2/68]

1: suppliers, distributors, bankers, lawyers, consultants, financial analysts, other chief executives, etc.
 2: newswires, online databases, electronic news bulletin boards, etc.

Other sources that you use:

17 _____	1	2	3	4	5	[2/70]
18 _____	1	2	3	4	5	[2/72]

B3 How reliable is the information from each source about the environment?

Information is reliable when it is *authoritative* and *dependable*. It is information that you personally *trust*.

Please *circle the number* that best indicates your response.

Information source	Very unreliable	Fairly unreliable	Reliable to some extent	Fairly reliable	Very reliable	
1 Customers	1	2	3	4	5	[3/01]
2 Competitors	1	2	3	4	5	[3/03]
3 Business/professional associates ¹	1	2	3	4	5	[3/05]
4 Government officials	1	2	3	4	5	[3/07]
5 Newspapers, periodicals	1	2	3	4	5	[3/09]
6 Government publications	1	2	3	4	5	[3/11]
7 Broadcast media (radio, tv)	1	2	3	4	5	[3/13]
8 Industry, trade associations	1	2	3	4	5	[3/15]
9 Conferences, trips	1	2	3	4	5	[3/17]
10 Superiors, board members	1	2	3	4	5	[3/19]
11 Subordinate managers	1	2	3	4	5	[3/21]
12 Subordinate staff	1	2	3	4	5	[3/23]
13 Internal memoranda, circulars	1	2	3	4	5	[3/25]
14 Internal reports, studies	1	2	3	4	5	[3/27]
15 Company library	1	2	3	4	5	[3/29]
16 Electronic information services ²	1	2	3	4	5	[3/31]

1: suppliers, distributors, bankers, lawyers, consultants, financial analysts, other chief executives, etc.

2: newswires, online databases, electronic news bulletin boards, etc.

Other sources that you use:

17 _____	1	2	3	4	5	[3/33]
18 _____	1	2	3	4	5	[3/35]

B4 How much of your time and effort is needed to approach, contact, or locate each information source?

Please *circle the number* that best indicates your response.

Information source	Very great deal	Great deal	Some	Little	Very little	
1 Customers	1	2	3	4	5	[3/38]
2 Competitors	1	2	3	4	5	[3/40]
3 Business/professional associates ¹	1	2	3	4	5	[3/42]
4 Government officials	1	2	3	4	5	[3/44]
5 Newspapers, periodicals	1	2	3	4	5	[3/46]
6 Government publications	1	2	3	4	5	[3/48]
7 Broadcast media (radio, tv)	1	2	3	4	5	[3/50]
8 Industry, trade associations	1	2	3	4	5	[3/52]
9 Conferences, trips	1	2	3	4	5	[3/54]
10 Superiors, board members	1	2	3	4	5	[3/56]
11 Subordinate managers	1	2	3	4	5	[3/58]
12 Subordinate staff	1	2	3	4	5	[3/60]
13 Internal memoranda, circulars	1	2	3	4	5	[3/62]
14 Internal reports, studies	1	2	3	4	5	[3/64]
15 Company library	1	2	3	4	5	[3/66]
16 Electronic information services ²	1	2	3	4	5	[3/68]

1: suppliers, distributors, bankers, lawyers, consultants, financial analysts, other chief executives, etc.

2: newswires, online databases, electronic news bulletin boards, etc.

Other sources that you use:

17 _____	1	2	3	4	5	[3/70]
18 _____	1	2	3	4	5	[3/72]

B5 After contacting or locating the source, how easy is it to get the desired information from that source?

Please *circle the number* that best indicates your response.

Information source	Very hard	Fairly hard	Neither easy nor hard	Fairly easy	Very easy	
1 Customers	1	2	3	4	5	[4/01]
2 Competitors	1	2	3	4	5	[4/03]
3 Business/professional associates ¹	1	2	3	4	5	[4/05]
4 Government officials	1	2	3	4	5	[4/07]
5 Newspapers, periodicals	1	2	3	4	5	[4/09]
6 Government publications	1	2	3	4	5	[4/11]
7 Broadcast media (radio, tv)	1	2	3	4	5	[4/13]
8 Industry, trade associations	1	2	3	4	5	[4/15]
9 Conferences, trips	1	2	3	4	5	[4/17]
10 Superiors, board members	1	2	3	4	5	[4/19]
11 Subordinate managers	1	2	3	4	5	[4/21]
12 Subordinate staff	1	2	3	4	5	[4/23]
13 Internal memoranda, circulars	1	2	3	4	5	[4/25]
14 Internal reports, studies	1	2	3	4	5	[4/27]
15 Company library	1	2	3	4	5	[4/29]
16 Electronic information services ²	1	2	3	4	5	[4/31]

1: suppliers, distributors, bankers, lawyers, consultants, financial analysts, other chief executives, etc.

2: newswires, online databases, electronic news bulletin boards, etc.

Other sources that you use:

17 _____	1	2	3	4	5	[4/33]
18 _____	1	2	3	4	5	[4/35]

Section C: Amount of Scanning

C1 How frequently does information about each environmental sector come to your attention?

Please *circle the number* that best indicates your response.

		Less than once a year	Few times a year	At least once a month	At least once a week	At least once a day	
Environmental sector							
1	Customer sector	1	2	3	4	5	[4/38]
2	Competition sector	1	2	3	4	5	[4/40]
3	Technological sector	1	2	3	4	5	[4/42]
4	Regulatory sector	1	2	3	4	5	[4/44]
5	Economic sector	1	2	3	4	5	[4/46]
6	Sociocultural sector	1	2	3	4	5	[4/48]

C2 To what extent do you keep yourself informed about developments in each environmental sector?

Please *circle the number* that indicates the *one* statement that is most applicable for *each* sector.

			I generally do not try to keep myself informed about this sector.	I try to be informed about the <i>existence</i> of <i>major</i> events and trends in this sector.	I try to be informed about the <i>details</i> of <i>major</i> events and trends in this sector.	I try to be informed about <i>most</i> events and trends in this sector.	I try to know <i>everything</i> about this sector.	
1	Customer sector	1	2	3	4	5		[4/51]
2	Competition sector	1	2	3	4	5		[4/53]
3	Technological sector	1	2	3	4	5		[4/55]
4	Regulatory sector	1	2	3	4	5		[4/57]
5	Economic sector	1	2	3	4	5		[4/59]
6	Sociocultural sector	1	2	3	4	5		[4/61]

C3 How many hours do you work in a *typical* day, including working at home?

_____ hrs

[4/64-65]

In a *typical* working day,
how many hours do you spend scanning?

_____ hrs

[4/67-68]

Section D: Use of Information

D1 How frequently do you use information about the environment in your decision making activities?

Please *circle the number* that best indicates your response for each type of decision making activity.

How frequently do you use information about the external environment, when you

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always	
(1) decide on improvement projects such as going into new businesses, organizational restructuring, acquisitions, public relations programs, computerization projects, and the like?	1	2	3	4	5	[5/01]
(2) decide about resource allocation , including budget allocation, employment of resources, setting of targets, distribution of work, and the like?	1	2	3	4	5	[5/03]
(3) decide how to handle unexpected but important events , such as loss of a major customer or supplier, conflicts with another organization, cutting off of key resources, and so on?	1	2	3	4	5	[5/05]
(4) decide during negotiations with external organizations or individuals, about your firm's position on, for example, the commitment of resources, or agreement on contracts?	1	2	3	4	5	[5/07]

D2 How frequently do you use information about the environment from each source in your decision making?

Please *circle the number* that best indicates your response for each source.

	Information source	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always	
1	Customers	1	2	3	4	5	[5/10]
2	Competitors	1	2	3	4	5	[5/12]
3	Business/professional associates ¹	1	2	3	4	5	[5/14]
4	Government officials	1	2	3	4	5	[5/16]
5	Newspapers, periodicals	1	2	3	4	5	[5/18]
6	Government publications	1	2	3	4	5	[5/20]
7	Broadcast media (radio, tv)	1	2	3	4	5	[5/22]
8	Industry, trade associations	1	2	3	4	5	[5/24]
9	Conferences, trips	1	2	3	4	5	[5/26]
10	Superiors, board members	1	2	3	4	5	[5/28]
11	Subordinate managers	1	2	3	4	5	[5/30]
12	Subordinate staff	1	2	3	4	5	[5/32]
13	Internal memoranda, circulars	1	2	3	4	5	[5/34]
14	Internal reports, studies	1	2	3	4	5	[5/36]
15	Company library	1	2	3	4	5	[5/38]
16	Electronic information services ²	1	2	3	4	5	[5/40]

1: suppliers, distributors, bankers, lawyers, consultants, financial analysts, other chief executives, etc.

2: newswires, online databases, electronic news bulletin boards, etc.

Other sources that you use:

17	_____	1	2	3	4	5	[5/42]
18	_____	1	2	3	4	5	[5/44]

Section E: Background Information

Please tell us about yourself and your company: (We will preserve the confidentiality of all data.)

E1 What is your age? (Please check one box.)

<25 _1 25 - 34 _2 35 - 44 _3 45 - 54 _4 55 - 64 _5 65+ _6 [5/47]

E2 How many years have you been CEO of this firm? _____ years [5/49-50]

In total, how many years have you been with this firm? _____ years [5/52-53]

E3 In which functional area were you a manager before becoming CEO?
(Please check one box.)

Finance _1 Marketing _2 Production _3 Personnel _4
Other _5 please specify: _____ [5/55]

E4 What is your highest educational degree?

None _1 High school diploma _2 Bachelor's degree _3 Master's degree _4
Ph.D. _5 Other _6 please specify: _____ [5/57]

E5 Do your responses reflect your *normal* scanning behavior?

Yes _1 No _2 [5/59]

If NO, please explain why:

E6 How many employees are there in your firm? _____ employees [5/61-66]

E7 Is there a unit in your firm which specializes in scanning? Yes _1 No _2 [5/68]

If YES, please give us the name of the unit: _____

E8 Are you willing to be interviewed for this study? Yes _1 No _2 [5/70]

COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about
how you scan for and use information about the external environment?

If so, please use this space for that purpose.

Thank you very much for answering the questionnaire!

Please return the questionnaire in the stamped addressed envelope to:

**Chun Wei Choo
Faculty of Library and Information Science
140 St George Street
Toronto Ontario
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