

On the Rail Trail there are great distances between refreshment stops. The weather on the Rail Trail can change from extremely warm to quite cold conditions. One of the places on the Rail Trail is Waipiata, where there is one pub and no shops. The local pub does not open until 11:00 am. This is inconvenient for the people on the Rail Trail because they have been on the trail since around 7:00 am and are looking for refreshments before the pub opens. Also, as many Rail trail people are families they may not feel comfortable bringing children into the pub.

The scenario for this assessment is that I have bought a roadside/mobile coffee van and have already done research on other products such as cold drinks and snacks.

Aim of Research

Before I open my business I need to research what customers' preferences are for hot drinks. Research will give me a fair and accurate indication of what I should have for sale and the amount I can expect to sell. As my business is a small van it is also important to know much product to buy. I intend to question people on whether they prefer coffee or tea and this will give me an indication of how much of each product to purchase and keep in stock and whether or not there is a market for tea and coffee. My research aim is therefore to question the local population about whether they prefer tea or coffee.

1

Secondary data

I will obtain secondary data from the E Café on tea and coffee preference by speaking with the owner Mrs R. This is because access to the working population, especially those aged 20-40, is difficult in such a remote location. The target market, which is cyclists on the Rail Trail, is not available at this time of year so I will use a comparison of the local population.

Plan

As all age groups use the Rail Trail and there are also a few locals in the area I will include all ages from 10 years up, divided into categories such as 10-20, 20-40 etc. The reason for this is that different age groups use the Rail Trail at different times, e.g. in the holidays there are more young families.

Due to it not being the Rail Trail season, I will get my samples from mostly the local population. I will question 50% males and 50% females but not graph it. The reason for this is I will not gain anything by graphing it.

I will do the data collection in Ranfurly because there are only 20 or 30 people in Waipiata and most work or are at school during the day. I will gather primary data by interviewing members of the public. People of Ranfurly as well as passing tourists will be interviewed. Places of research gathering include the street, school, the Chalet (old-age pensioners) and café customers. Ages 10 and above will be divided into 4 categories 10-20, 20-40, 40 -60 and 60+. I will use yes/no questions or closed straightforward questions. I will not use questions where the public could tell me endless drinks. For example, if I asked their preferred drink, then they could say anything from V to mochaccino. The outcome would be near endless, so open ended questions would allow me to get a good conclusion as to what hot drinks to offer in my small van.

2

Research findings were presented in bar graphs and a pie graph. Some data was presented in raw format (handwritten survey responses).

3

Conclusion

From my data I found out that most of the population I interviewed preferred tea as shown by the blue bars in my bar chart. Coffee came second and 'other' came last for all age groups except the 10-20's, where the coffee was the least preferred.

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In the other bar chart it is shown that when consumers buy hot drinks at a café, 99% of them prefer coffee and 1% of them prefer tea. This is true for all adult age groups.

Strengths and Weaknesses

There were no real strengths in this research apart from the age groups. Different age groups use the Rail Trail at different times during the season, so having clear age groups made it easier to get more valid results.

- One of the weaknesses was that I asked the locals. This was a problem because they are not the target market.
- On questioning the owner of the E-Café I discovered that consumer behaviour was completely different at a café than at home.
- I concluded that the research needed to be done differently to guarantee a more valid result. The reason why this didn't work for my situation was that the behaviour of people changed in different situations.
- It would have been an advantage to also find out the number of on average using a specific part of the Rail Trail on a weekly basis during the season.
- I could have conducted the survey of trail riders during the Rail Trail season instead of interviewing locals as they were my actual target market.
- I also could have collected secondary data from another similar business on another part of the Rail Trail as a starting point, for example, the Ida Valley Kitchen. This would be a good choice considering it won't be in direct competition with me.

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