

7. False. A project might last for nine to 12 months, but there is no set time requirement. A small project, with limited scope, could be done within days or weeks.
8. True. How you present your results is very important, and can influence how others view your work. An attractive and effective presentation will make your results, whatever they are, seem more impressive.
9. False. The Internet is loaded with information that can be extremely useful in business research. We'll discuss using the Internet in detail later in the book.
10. False. This is a tricky question, but the answer is false. Your research will result in information on which people within your business can base their decisions. A research project, by itself, can't make a decision.

How did you do? If you answered eight or more questions correctly, give yourself a big pat on the back. Yet even if you did that well, keep on reading. You're sure to pick up some additional information and insights.

If you didn't do very well, don't worry. By the time you finish the book, you'll be researching with the best of them. Now, let's get ready to learn.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Business research is the process of gathering information that can be used to answer a question or solve a problem relating to your business or company. There are different methods of conducting research, but the goal is always to come up with information on which your business can base decisions or solve problems.

DOWN TO BUSINESS

All businesses, regardless of size or venture, require information about many different topics. Information is the stuff on which all decisions are based.

In our increasingly complex and fast-moving world, the value of information has reached a premium. We constantly want information, and we want it fast.

Moving away from businesses and into American households for a minute, consider how things have changed in the past 25 or 30 years regarding the way we get our information.

Up until the mid-1950s, when many people began getting televisions in their homes, people got their information in several ways, including:

- direct communication with others
- newspapers
- radio

Direct communication was fine but it wasn't always reliable. We're all aware of the *whisper down the lane* tendency of news to become distorted.

Newspapers were fine too, and unlike today, many towns had both morning and evening papers. That allowed breaking news to be delivered in a timely fashion (according to then-standards of timeliness). Still, the problem with newspapers is that you have to wait for them.

FOR THE MISCELLANEOUS FILE



As a former newspaper reporter and columnist, I believe that newspapers still play an integral role in our quest for information. No other medium can provide local news as thoroughly as a newspaper, and many people still like to get their news from something they can hold and read at their own pace. I fear for the survival of newspapers, however, because they can't give consumers instant information the way television or the Internet can. Timeliness has always been an issue for newspapers, and it will become more and more pronounced.

Radios were considered the end-all to communication when they were first introduced into American households. Families and neighbors would crowd around a radio the way you'd crowd close to a fireplace on a freezing cold night, waiting anxiously to hear the latest news and entertainment.

Radio stations were limited, however, and the radio often was filled with nothing but static. It was the most efficient way of getting information at the time, but not so at all by today's standards.

THE TELEVISION TRANSFORMATION

Once TVs became common in homes, the amount and type of information we had access to increased dramatically. Americans watched in horror as young sol-