
MANAGEMENT OF COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE COURSE

Introduction:

Competitive analysis is critical for managers formulating corporate or divisional strategies. Executives and planners must be aware of the levels and trends in performance of their competitors to determine the best direction for their divisions and parent corporations. They also must be capable of critically assessing their own organization's performance, over time, relative to its competitive peers. Therefore, organizations and organizational units increasingly employ competitive intelligence (CI) to support decision-making, management, and to build and sustain competitive advantages.

A competitive intelligence system is the organizational process for systematically collecting, processing, analyzing, and distributing to decision makers, information about an organization's external environment. Such a systematic process organizes the flow of critical information and focuses it on operational and strategic issues and decisions

The only company's that don't need competitive intelligence are those with no competition. In a world of hyper-competition (lower barriers to entry, global marketplace, customer focus, etc.), few companies can abstain from some form of competitive intelligence. Even if you don't have competition, competitive intelligence will generate numerous benefits: early warning systems, more accurate forecasting, business development, market research, due diligence, etc. As the formal practice of CI has grown in adoption and sophistication, information professionals are often charged with intelligence-related responsibilities. This course examines competitive intelligence models, functions, & practices; the roles of information professionals in CI, and the management of CI.

Discussion and practice topics include: intelligence ethical & legal considerations; identifying intelligence needs; intelligence project management, research methods, analysis, production, and dissemination; the uses of intelligence; intelligence sources and tools; managing the intelligence function; and the evolution of CI. A working knowledge of print and electronic business information sources is recommended.

General Objectives

This course is designed to achieve the following Student Learning General Outcomes:

- Demonstrate knowledge of print and electronic information retrieval procedures.
- Analyze, synthesize, and communicate information and knowledge in a variety of formats.
- Recognize existing and potential problems in a workplace and devise strategies to resolve them.
- Analyze information problems and develop solutions, drawing from a wide range of information technology tools and practices

Specific Objectives

Achieving these objectives, students will:

- Become conversant in competitive intelligence, strategic, and corporate/organization terms and concepts.
- Develop more in-depth knowledge of and anticipate issues impacting organizational effectiveness and Competitiveness.
- Develop an awareness of issues and trends in the field of competitive intelligence, including research, analysis, and process management.
- Know how to take advantage of opportunities for information professionals in the field of competitive intelligence.
- Know the range of competitive intelligence tools & services; as well as how to evaluate, select, and use them effectively.
- Gain familiarity with competitive intelligence-related projects and deliverables.
- Identify and apply professional tools, news, and resources to gain awareness and build upon skills.
- Learn how to protect an organizations' competitive and knowledge assets from internal and external threats.
- Elevate problem solving through targeted analysis.

Course structure

This web-based course will be implemented entirely via the Internet with a flexible schedule. There will be weekly discussions and 2 written assignments. This course is designed to optimize discussion and community so that everyone can bootstrap on each other's knowledge, learning, and analytical abilities. This course will center upon regular readings and discussions of the readings, as well as discussions of assigned examples of CI. Discussions of readings are staggered so that they occur during the week following the week the readings are assigned. This will give everyone a full week to engage with the readings and prepare to discuss them.

COURSE CONTENT

The course consists of three Modules and the following 12 topics:

MODULE I

Lesson 1. CI Introduction: CI history & purpose.

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.2 What is Competitive Intelligence?
- 1.3 The Evolution of Competitive Intelligence
- 1.4 The importance of Competitive Intelligence
- 1.5 The CI program's value
- 1.6 The Intelligence Cycle
- 1.7 The link between CI and Strategic Management
- 1.8 Summary

Lesson 2. Ethical & legal considerations

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Ethical Guidelines in Competitive Intelligence
- 2.2 Law and Ethics
- 2.3 Misrepresentation
- 2.4 Client Conflict
- 2.5 Interview process for new hires
- 2.6 Cases of Organizations accused of Unethical CI Practices
- 2.7 Final considerations
- 2.8 Summary

Lesson 3. Knowledge Management and Competitive Intelligence

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Knowledge defined
- 3.2 Knowledge Management defined
- 3.3 Value-based Knowledge Management
- 3.4 Knowledge Management and Competitive Intelligence
- 3.5 Getting Competitive Intelligence to the Right People at the Right Time
- 3.6 Access to CI Subject Matter Experts
- 3.7 Transfer of Knowledge and Best Practices
- 3.8 Summary

Lesson 4. Roles of information & intelligence professionals: organizing the CI team

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 CI Professional skills
- 4.2 What do competitive intelligence professionals need to know?
- 4.3 Why every manager needs education in CI
- 4.4 Organizing the CI team

- 1.4.5 The evolution levels
- 4.6 CI practitioner efforts are rarely concentrated on only one aspect of competitive intelligence
- 4.7 Small companies versus large companies
- 4.8 Best Practice: The In-House CI Team
- 4.9 Summary

MODULE II

Lesson 1. The Intelligence Process: purpose, functions, applications.

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 The intelligence process
- 1.3 The Intelligence Cycle
- 1.4 The Competitive Intelligence Cycle (CI Cycle)
- 1.5 Planning & direction
- 1.6 Collection activities
- 1.7 Analysis
- 1.8 Dissemination (Communication)
- 1.9 The pyramid approach (Intelligence Hierarchy)
- 1.10 The functional view of the CI process
- 1.11 Summary

Lesson 2. Understanding & defining intelligence needs.

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 The need for a CI Needs Assessment
- 2.2 The Key Intelligence Questions (KIQs) and the Key Intelligence Topics (KITs)
- 2.3 How to obtain the KITs?
- 2.4 Determining the number of KITs that can be handled efficiently
- 2.5 KIT's Action Plan
- 2.6 Continuously evaluation of the company's KITs
- 2.7 Summary

Lesson 3. Developing an implementation plan

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 The base
- 3.2 Getting Started
- 3.3 Your Company
- 3.4 Competitors
- 3.5 Industry
- 3.6 Analysis
 - 3.6.1 Building Profiles
 - 3.6.2 Identifying Strategies
 - 3.6.3 Data Management
 - 3.6.4 Analytical Tools

3.7 Summary

Lesson 4. Gathering internal information

4.0 Introduction

4.1 How information is internally generated?

4.2 Identifying the most productive sources of internal information in your organization.

4.3 Marketing and sales personnel

4.4 Operations

4.5 Financial information

4.6 Engineering, R&D and Human Resources

4.7 Internal use of the Internet for CI activities

4.8 Developing an internal network

4.9 Intelligence delivery strategy

4.10 Summary

MODULE III

Lesson 1. Gathering external information

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Information needs, seeking and use

1.2 Data Management

1.3 Organizing Your Data

1.4 Enterprise-Wide Repository

1.5 Storing Your Data

1.6 Finding Your Data

1.7 Security Issues

1.8 Primary external sources

1.9 Summary

Lesson 3. Competitive Intelligence Software

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Using Databases for Competitive Intelligence

2.2 Databases: A Definition

2.2.1 How a Database System Works?

2.2.2 Which Data Base System to Choose?

2.2.3 Database Vendors

2.3 CI Software

2.4 CI Software evaluation

2.5 CI Software Reports/Books

2.6 Summary

Lesson 3. Analyzing the competition

3.0 Introduction

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- 3.1 Two main tasks: competitor identification and competitor analysis
 - 3.2 Conducting Competitive Research: Define Yourself
 - 3.3 Conducting Competitive Research: Define Your Competitors
 - 3.3.1 Priority 1: Head-to-Head Competitors
 - 3.3.2 Priority 2: First-Tier Competitors
 - 3.3.3 Priority 3: Indirect Competitors
 - 3.4 The information sources
 - 3.5 Conducting Competitive Research: understanding the Benefits
 - 3.6 Getting Started
 - 3.7 Creating a Framework
 - 3.8 Selecting Targets
 - 3.9 Secret Shopping
 - 3.10 Ongoing Monitoring
 - 3.11 Using Tools
 - 3.12 Summary

Lesson 4. Analytical Models. Some Advanced Techniques

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Analytical models and tools and the Intelligence Cycle
- 4.2 Analytical models
 - 4.2.1 Product Life Cycles
 - 4.2.2 SWOT Analysis
 - 4.2.3 Porter's Five Forces Model
 - 4.2.4 War Games
 - 4.2.5 Value Net Model
 - 4.2.6 Four Corners Analysis
 - 4.2.7 Supply Chain Analysis
 - 4.2.8 Customer Segmentation Analysis
 - 4.2.9 Strategic Business Units
 - 4.2.10 PEST and STEEP
 - 4.2.11 The Full Range of Analytical Models
- 4.3 Some Advanced Techniques
 - 4.3.1 Psychological Profiling
 - 4.3.2 Shadowing
 - 4.3.3 Reverse Engineering
- 4.4 Techniques most used by CI practitioners
- 4.5 Summary