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MBA - IMC Proposal

Introduction of Competitive Intelligence (CI) processes as strategic consultancy project



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*Using CI processes to support the
strategy building process*

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Introduction of Competitive Intelligence (CI) processes as strategic consultancy project – Using CI processes to support the strategy building process

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Introduction of Competitive Intelligence (CI) processes as strategic consultancy project

Using CI processes to support the strategy building process

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Introduction

“Organizing and presenting significant facts about what [is] going on in and around a business is one of the chief bases for strategic business decisions. At all times, particularly in times of crisis or of contraction or expansion from whatever cause, it is of the essence in the running of a business.” – Alfred P. Sloan, former CEO of General Motors in “My Years with General Motors”, 1964, Doubleday, Garden City, NY, USA, EN.

Mr. Sloan is absolutely right in his statement that strategic business decisions should be based on the significant facts affecting these decisions. This was true when Mr. Sloan was running General Motors from 1923 until 1946 and putted an emphasis on this fact in his book. Nowadays it is even more important as the changing world is speeding up every day.

These influencing factors can originate inside of a business or its environment. In addition, the strategic decisions can be affected by factors which are (sometimes) out of the control of the decision makers (e.g. if the legal situation is changing).

Good strategic decisions should be made by having information on all efficacious factors available. As in Samuel Johnson's Boswell Life (vol. 2, p. 3 - 1 April 1775) stated *“Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it.”* it is very important today to have specialists taking care of the organisation and the presentation of important facts.

This function is nowadays widely known as Competitive Intelligence¹. Larry Kahaner (1996; page 16) defines Competitive Intelligence as :

“Competitive Intelligence is a systematic program for gathering and analyzing information about your competitors' activities and general business trends to further your own company's goals.”

The CEO of a company or the upper management should be capable of relying on a trustworthy Competitive Intelligence (CI) process to provide them with Intelligence rather than piles of raw data. Even if the CI department or group performs an excellent job *“The practical value of intelligence depends on the attitude of mind of its recipients.”* (RONALD LEWIN, Ultra Goes to War: The First Account of World War II's Greatest Secret Based on Official Documents, 12, 1978), i.e. the recipient of the intelligence must be able and willing to use it for the benefit of the firm. This trust must be developed between Management and CI department so that, e.g. a CEO

¹ intelligence, n. can be defined as *“... information received or imparted; news., ... the gathering or distribution of such information., the evaluated conclusions drawn from such information., an organisation engaged in gathering such information: military intelligence ...”* (1999 Webster's College Dictionary CD ROM)

does not feel offended by been provided with pre-chewed chunks of information (i.e. Knowledge = Intelligence) rather than raw data. The CI processes transform this raw data (or information) to usable intelligence.

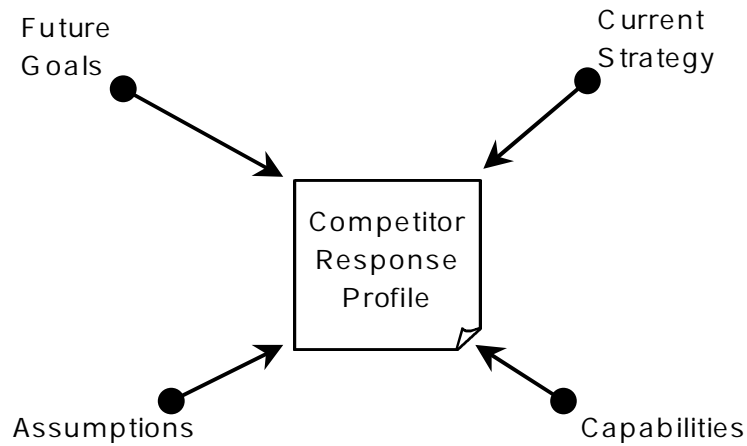
Many companies are doing this in a somewhat unorganised and in an rather informal way. Sometimes not even knowing that they have a kind of basic CI work done. By setting up an institutional Competitive Intelligence (CI) process a company can secure that the strategic business decisions will be based on accurate information. This could be seen as one of the most critical strategic decisions to set up such a CI department.

Working in different companies in different positions doing CI related work like monitoring products or services from competitors, legal changes and their implication on the industry or the demand from customers (or how to create such a demand) was kind of my natural behaviour as in the statement "*Competitive Intelligence is a way of thinking*" by William Rothschild (1984, How to gain (and Maintain) the Competitive Advantage in Business; New York, NY, USA; McGraw Hill, page 179). All this was done in a rather informal and chaotic way as there was no responsibility assigned and no value seen in it by peers and bosses. This voluntarily work later proofed itself valuable when some new consulting products - based on the acquired information - became recognised.

This is a general problem with CI work nowadays: nobody remembers that the good decision from a CEO was based on Intelligence (i.e., Knowledge / Information) provided by a CI department (it is difficult to establish a ROI like measurement, e.g. a ROIFI (Return on Investment for Intelligence)). One important point in a consulting process which introduces a CI function in a department or company is to make sure that the people understand how valuable and important such work is. A German saying "*Wissen ist Macht*" ("Knowledge is Power") expresses this quite strong. Similar as Francis Bacon wrote in *Meditationes Sacrae* (1597 - "Of Heresies") "*Nam et ipsa scientia potestas est*" (i.e. "For also knowledge itself is power"). Today it should be easier to increase the awareness for the value of intelligence as the terms "Knowledge Management" and "Learning Organisation" became widely spread and accepted (including the cost factor which they are baring).

There are several theories or statements about the different influencing factors. In the books of Porter (1998 (1980)) and Cowley (1997) we have two models.

Porters model is more focused on the direct competitor and the industry of the competitors, i.e. the direct business environment. It does not directly take into account the other influencing factors from the "outside" world. It's like in the words of Lord Chesterfield "*The knowledge of the world is only to be acquired in the world, and not in a closet.*" (Letters to his Son (1774) 4 October 1746) which could be interpreted in this respect that there is more around than the own company or industry.

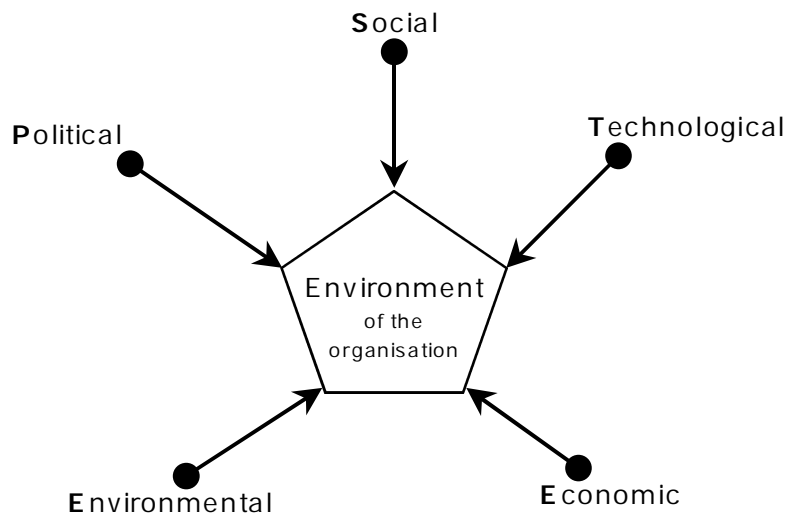


- Future Goals – What drives the competitor
- Current Strategy – What is the competitor doing and can do
- Assumptions – Held about itself and the industry
- Capabilities – Both strength and weaknesses

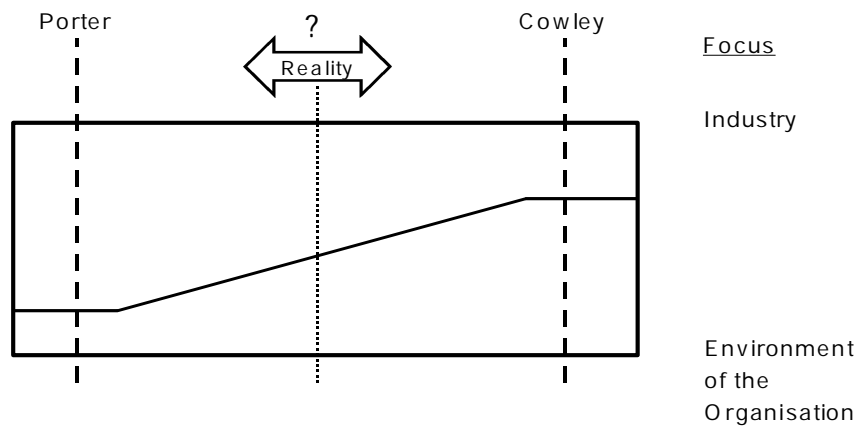
Cowley mentions a model which has a wider scope - taking the environment surrounding a company or organisation into account :

- **S**ocial
- **T**echnological
- **E**nvironmental
- **E**conomic
- **P**olitical

These five STEEP factors give a much better overview about changes in the environment a company is operating in. This could be seen as a superset of the factors used in the Porter model. The Porter model could be integrated into the STEEP model as it has a stronger focus on the Technological and Economic arms as the STEEP model.



These models are possible models to map reality into a theoretical approach. Both could be a basis for scenarios about possible future trends or behaviour of the competition in the industry. Additionally these models could be used to define the areas in which the competition and organisational environment have to be monitored.

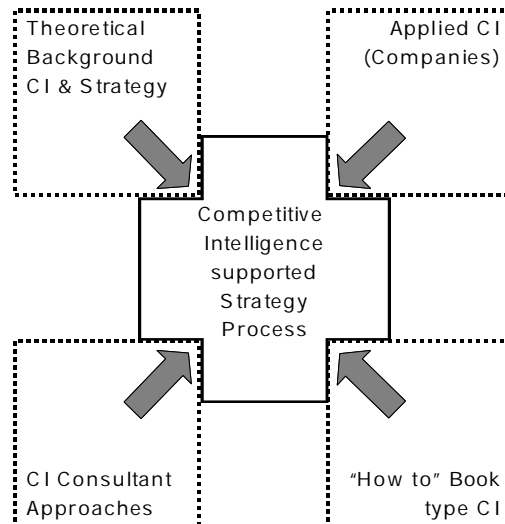


Mapping these more theoretical approaches to the "reality" is the challenge which has to be faced in the event of introducing an institutionalised Competitive Intelligence process.

There are different approaches described in various books ranging from theoretical works to publications which have a more “How To” style. Besides this there are the approaches promoted by consultants working in this field. Usually these consultants base their work on one of the established publications in this field (if not even written by them self).

The other kind of “extreme” is the CI professionals working in this field doing “hands on jobs” sometimes not even knowing books about CI. It could be assumed that their work has only little to do with the ivory tower theories. Probably the professional is rather struggling to justify their existence in their firm.

The following figure shows the different information or models which might offer input to the deployment of Competitive Intelligence supported Strategy processes. It should be mentioned that CI can also support other processes, e.g. Decision-Making processes.



All these four fields can deliver a valuable input for the proposed dissertation topic.

The main focus would be the CI processes supporting the strategy building process and a real life implementation approach as a consulting process.

Relationship to previous work

Considering the short time period and the limited length of a dissertation the scope of this work had to be narrowed down. For example only a small selection of works about strategy can be considered to provide a framework in which the context or the main topic of this work will be embedded.

The main works used for the strategy part are written or edited by Peter F. Drucker and H. Igor Ansoff. The material selected for the Competitive Intelligence part could be considered as better coverage of the available works as this field is a rather young discipline. It could be said that some of the older material is about topics which would nowadays be called Competitive Intelligence (e.g. in older material Business Intelligence is used to describe a process which would today be known as CI – the term Business Intelligence is nowadays used more as a buzz word for information technology related areas like data mining, data warehouses, OLAP (Online Analytical Processing)). Other supporting material would be selected appropriately.

Strategic Planning & Decision-Making processes

The CI process supports the efforts of Strategic Planning and delivers input for the Decision-Making processes involved. Strategic Planning is not possible without the right intelligence. Peter F. Drucker (1985 (1973), starting from page 125) defines Strategic Planning :

What Strategic Planning is

We can now attempt to define what Strategic Planning is. It is the continuous process of making present entrepreneurial (risk-taking) decisions systematically and with the greatest knowledge of their futurity; organising systematically the efforts needed to carry out these decisions; and measuring the result of these decisions against the expectations through organised systematic feedback. As such, planning, whether long range or short range, is nothing new. It is organised performance of an old task. But we have learned that the task will rarely get done unless organised. Above all, it will rarely become achievement unless done purposefully.

Following this definition it also implies that the supporting tasks (“... with the greatest knowledge of their futurity ...”) have to be systematically organised, e.g. the Competitive Intelligence processes, as well. This is expressed again from Drucker on page 610 (Introduction to Top-Management Tasks and Organisation) by writing “*And there is need for providing top management with the stimulation and information it needs for its specific tasks.*”

The prerequisite before starting this Planning process could be seen as defined by JOHN NAISBITT when he wrote : *"Strategic planning is worthless --- unless there is first a strategic vision."* (in Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives, 4, 1984). Lewis P. Johnson's statement defines what purpose a vision has as :

"The idea is to seek a vision that gives you purpose in life and then to implement that vision. The vision by itself is one half, one part, of a process. It implies the necessity of living that vision, otherwise the vision will sink back into itself. ("Seeking the Spirit Path," Parabala, February 1987)

The statement allows to interpret the connection between the (strategic) vision and the necessary strategy (e.g. in this citation strategy could be understood as the other half of the process mentioned). Additionally this is supported by :

A problem is defined and isolated; information is gathered; alternatives are set forth; an end is established; means are created to achieve that end; a choice is made. JAMES MacGREGOR BURNS, on the decision-making process, Leadership, 14, 1978

Before the Planning process can start it is important to define the problem or the strategic vision. Again this has to be done by having the right intelligence available either to define the vision or re-define an existing vision.

Sometimes business is compared with war (*"War is a continuation of business by other means."* ANONYMOUS) so it would be reasonable to relate or compare the Business Strategy Planning processes with :

An ideal command system... should be able to gather information accurately, continuously, comprehensively, selectively, and fast. Reliable means must be developed to distinguish the true from the false, the relevant from the irrelevant, the material from the immaterial. MARTIN van CREVELD, Command in War, 1, 1985

As both have the same needs regarding the intelligence needed to achieve the best possible performance, i.e. reaching the "right" decision based on available, trustworthy intelligence so been prepared and capable of re-evaluating the changing situation. Trustworthiness is very important as *"[Everyone is prone to] look for the facts that fit the conclusion they have already reached."* (PETER F. DRUCKER, 1967, The Effective Executive, 7.1) .

Nowadays changes happen faster and faster every day (e.g. the Brick & Mortar economy versus the E-economy). Always being capable to re-evaluate the companies own position and the position of the competitors in the existing or altered business

environment becomes a life saving factor as well as necessary for Strategic Planning and Decision-Making processes.

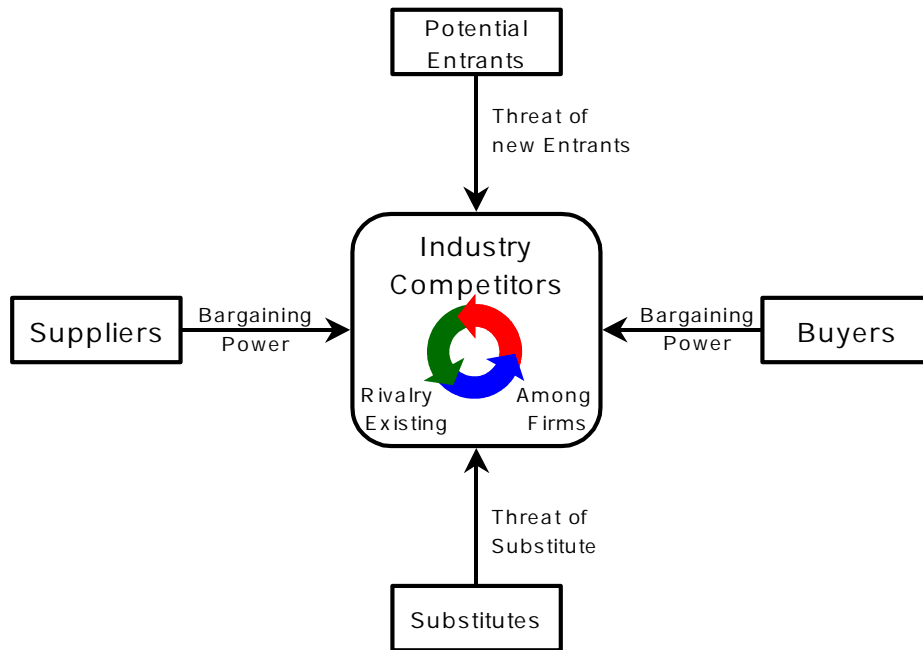
"The firm's need for strategy, as well as the characteristics of opportunities, are determined by its environment. Therefore, the first step of a strategic planner is to perceive and to analyse the shape of the future. (Ansoff, 1969, page 73).

This statement from H. Igor Ansoff book (1969, Introduction to Part Two) states that a strategic change is influenced by the environment of the company. The first step towards a strategic change is an analysis of the future. This implies that the gathering of data and information is necessary to have the right basis (i.e. intelligence) to identify the opportunities which might lead to a future change of the strategy and allows to predict the possible outcome from this strategy change ("*... with the greatest knowledge of their futurity ...*", Drucker 1985 (1973)).

H.I. Ansoff (1969, "The firm of the future", page 112) also writes :

"The accelerated pace of product and market change will require that tomorrow's firm have wide-open ' windows of perception' on the surrounding business scene. Not only will the successful firm be able to perceive opportunities, but it will also know how to anticipate them. As response times get shorter, the successful firm will seek out new applications for new technologies, start product development ahead of the arrival of demand, cultivate and encourage demand, and establish its market penetration in anticipation of demand. Similarly, the firm will have developed a keen sense of anticipation of potential threats from rival technologies and rival firms."

This is similar to Porter (1985 (1980), page 4, Competitive Strategy) when he is defining the five "Forces Driving Industry Competition" (see figure below). Porters model is once more centred around the firm and it's direct environment.



Both are descriptions of the possible reason and (by Ansoff) a description of a possible solution for monitoring the business environment which today would be called Competitive Intelligence.

Definition of Competitive Intelligence (CI)

To outline the topic more in detail there are some definitions of the term Competitive Intelligence from different sources presented :

"Competitive intelligence (CI) is the process of monitoring the competitive environment. CI enables senior managers in companies of all sizes to make informed decisions about everything from marketing R&D, and investing tactics to long-term business strategies. Effective CI is a continuous process involving the legal and ethical collection of information, analysis that doesn't avoid unwelcome conclusions, and controlled dissemination of actionable intelligence to decision makers."

(Source : Society of Competitive Intelligence People (SCIP), URL: www.scip.org/ci/, 2000.04.29)

The American CI People are putting a strong emphasis on the fact that CI work follows an ethical code and uses legal ways to collect the data / information (*"The bulk of intelligence activities does not involve ... sleuthings but careful analyses and judgements of openly available data."* R. G. H. SIU, *The Craft of Power*, 2.41, 1984). The SCIP Code of Ethics can be found in the Appendix.

As already mentioned earlier in some older publications the term "Business Intelligence" was used instead of CI :

"Business intelligence is the activity of monitoring the environment external to the firm for information that is relevant for the decision-making process of the company." (Gilad, Benjamin & Tamar, 1988, The Business Intelligence System, New York, NY, USA, AMACOM, EN – page viii)

Another term used in older days was "Competitor Intelligence" :

" The objective of competitor intelligence is not to steal a competitor's trade secrets or other proprietary property, but rather to gather in a systematic, overt (i.e., legal) manner a wide range of information than when collated and analysed provides a fuller understanding of a competitor firm's structure, culture, behavior, capabilities and weaknesses." (Shammon, W.L. et al., 1985, Business Competitor Intelligence, New York, NY, USA, John Wiley & Sons, EN – page 62)

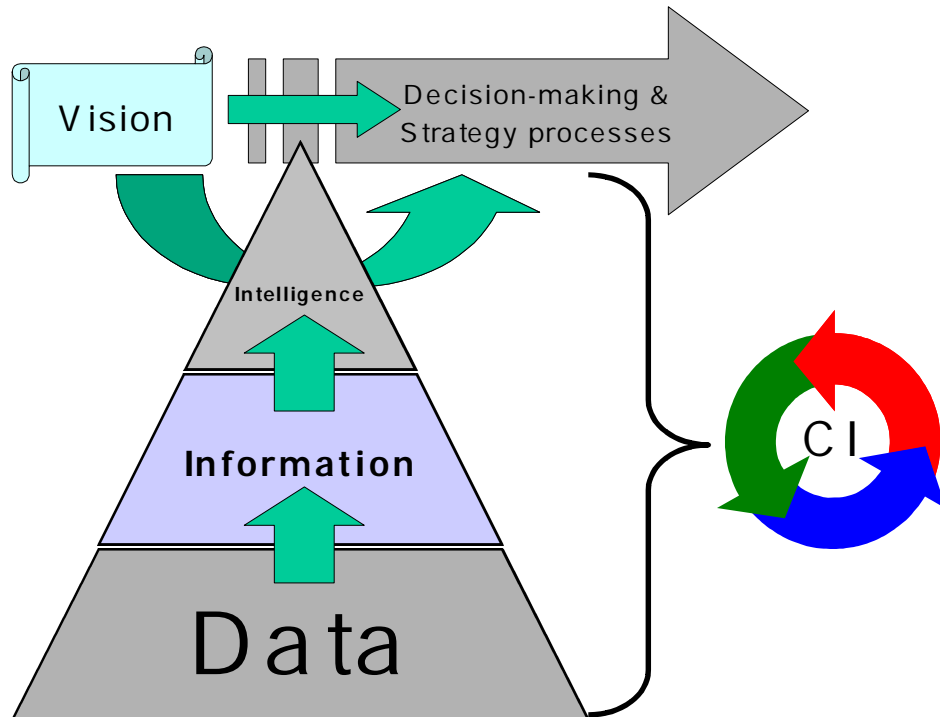
The CI process should eliminate the main problem for today's companies which is the vast amount of available & fast changing data :

"Information is, above all, a principle of economy. The fewer data needed, the better the information. And an overload of information leads to information blackout. It does not enrich, but impoverishes." (PETER F. DRUCKER, Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices, 30, 1974, abr., 1977)

Competitive Intelligence takes care of the process of converting raw data to information and information into intelligence. John Naisbitt (Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives, 1, 1984) wrote : *"We are drowning in information but starved for knowledge."* The term knowledge here should be interpreted as the result of the CI process, i.e. Intelligence (As mentioned in the prelude (2) to Thoughts on Education *"Of work comes knowledge, ...; of the union of knowledge and work comes the development of intelligence."* VINOBA BHAVE, quote tr. Marjorie Sykes, 1964). The need for knowledge and the value of it can be epitomised as *"Knowledge Is Money."* (JOHN R. HAYES, article title, Forbes, 13 February 1995).

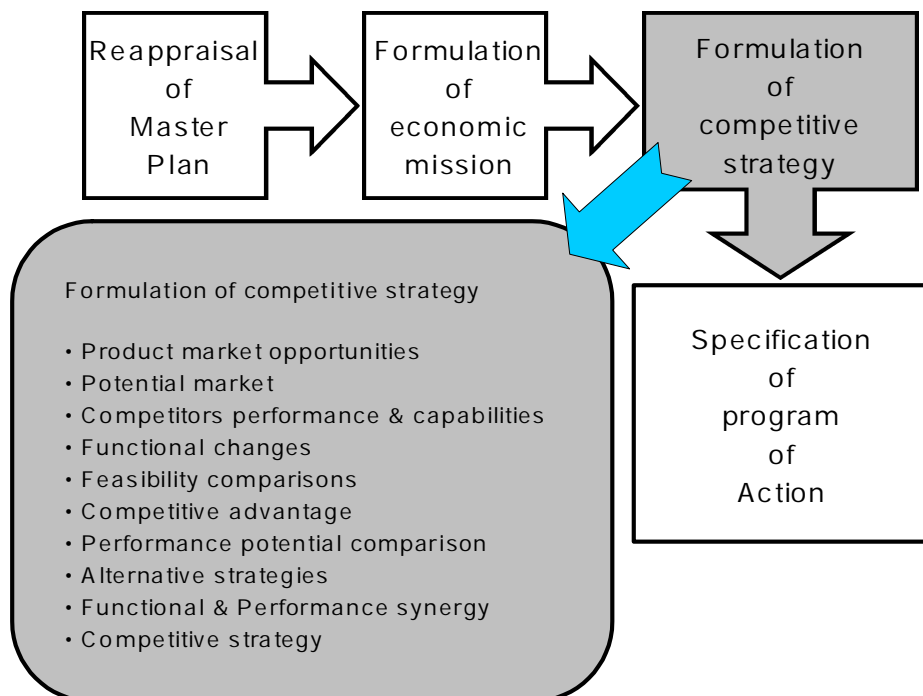
To summarise these CI definitions : "Competitive Intelligence" (CI) can be considered as a supporting process in the decision-making and strategic planning processes in a company by delivering intelligence .

The following figure shows how the CI process supports the decision – making or strategic planning process :



The CI process itself needs some input about possible future directions (e.g. the vision) from the top management. By having the right CI processes in place it will deliver valuable input for the other, supported processes.

F.F. Gilmore and R.G. Brandenburg describe in Ansoff, 1969 (Chapter 7, starting from page 141, Text from 1962) the "Anatomy of Corporate Planning".



Within these four phases the third phase takes care about the formulation of a competitive strategy (which could be seen as an early description of CI processes). This so called "Top-management planning framework" shows how a CI process can be embedded in a Strategic Planning / Decision-Making processes.



Unfortunately, the most (American) literature about Competitive Intelligence is more concerned about where to find information or which web sites are the best to find information about your competitor. This type of literature (e.g., Burwell, 1999) focuses more on how to find data rather than the CI processes. Other literature approaches the area rather to theoretically to be valuable for a practitioner. Naturally, all books define CI (or however they call it) in a different way. Consulting firms tend to reinvent the CI wheel as well as they like to give CI other (branded) names. The definitions of the steps in such a process are likewise described in a wide variety of models.

Competitive Intelligence gets more into the focus of interest of today's managers as Strategic Planning became one of the top management tool. In a study done by Bain & Company (Boston, MA, USA) called "Management Tools & Techniques" (presented by Darrel Rigby, 1999.04.19) the leading Management tool / technique (leading since 1996 with > 90% usage) was Strategic Planning (with 92 % usage in 1998) :

Tools & Techniques

BAIN & COMPANY

		1993 Usage	1998 Usage	1998 Rank
Tool Popularity has Shifted	Strategic Planning	N.A.	92%	1
	Mission and Vision Statements	88%	86%	2
	Customer Satisfaction Meas.	86%	80%	3
	Benchmarking	70%	79%	4
	Outsourcing	N.A.	78%	5
	Pay-for-Performance	70%	77%	6
	Strategic Alliances	62%	69%	7
	Growth Strategies	N.A.	66%	8
	Core Competencies	52%	63%	9
	Reengineering	67%	60%	10

(Source: Rigby, Darrel – Bain & Company; 1999; Presentation "Management Tools & Techniques, Boston, URL: www.bain.com/capabilities/tools/slide20.gif, 2000.04.29, EN) Other "Top 10" Management techniques like "Mission and Vision Statements" and "Growth Strategies" are closely related to the Strategic Planning and Decision-Making processes so they could utilise the input of a Competitive Intelligence process as well.

Aims of the dissertation

For this dissertation there is a limit in time and length. The focus / scope will be on the Competitive Intelligence process. This process is rather independent from the Decision - Making or Strategic Planning process which uses or relies on the information delivered by the CI process. The main question which has to be answered is how to implement or deploy a Competitive Intelligence process.

Competitive Intelligence (CI) is capturing more and more interest. A search at Northern Light (a search engine) returned 382 hits for the last year (a total of 656 hits within the last two years, i.e. a 39,5% increase within last year). This high number of hits was found even when the search had been limited to City & regional newspapers, College newspapers, Newspapers, wires & transcripts and Press releases.

As mentioned in the section above it is evident that the use of Strategic Planning as a Management tool is very high (since 1996 > 90%). CI could be seen as a somewhat necessary process to support the Strategic Planning. These facts make CI an interesting topic for a Consulting firm as well as for In-house / Internal Consultants.

The dissertation project will cover the following points :

- A brief description of the connection between the Strategic Planning & decision-making processes and Competitive Intelligence (CI).
- A summary of a selected group of CI definitions and CI process descriptions.
- Design of a questionnaire for a survey or interviews of CI practitioners and CI Consultants
- The different Approaches (e.g., hands on CI, CI consulting products, theoretical approach to CI)
- Definition of an implementation / deployment concept for a best of breed CI process
- Confirmation of the concept with a limited number of interviewees
- Evaluation, discussion and presentation of the results

The main focus will be the CI process and not the other management tools or techniques used within this context (e.g., software, key performance indicator systems , on-line databases, ...).

Expected results

The result of the dissertation project will be presented and is depending on the participation and the outcome of the survey and the interviews. The results will be described and discussed. The main result should be a definition of an implementation / deployment concept for a best of breed CI processes.

Depending on the participation in the survey and the interviews it might be possible that the scope has to be adapted to the material or refocused. This will be coordinated with and under guidance of the supervisor in Germany.

Methodology

This section is used to present the different methods used to acquire information about the dissertation theme.

The concept used to identify the necessary tools and methodology was based on the Intelligence Cycle as described by Kahaner, 1996 (page 44) :

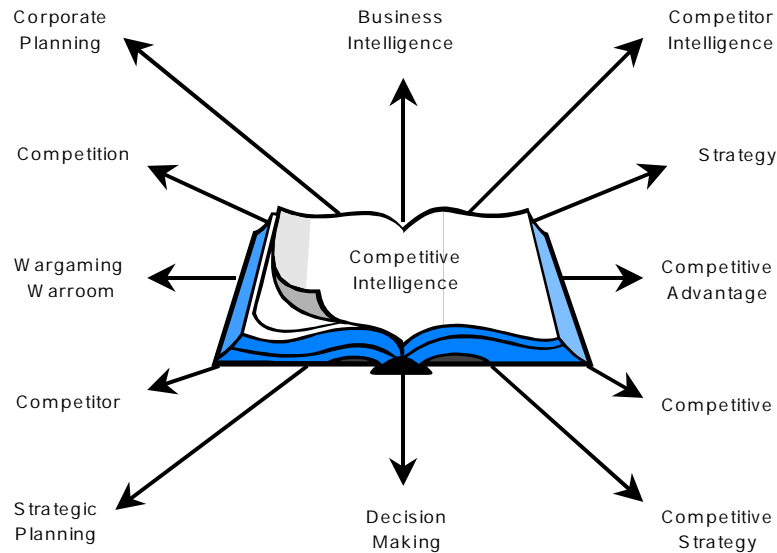
- Planning & Directions – preparation of the proposal and narrowing down the scope of the dissertation
- Collection – using the methodologies described below the necessary information will be gathered
- Analysis – critical discussion of the result and (optional) confirmation of the results
- Dissemination – preparation and presentation of the dissertation

To collect the necessary information for this dissertation the following approach will be taken :

Library & Internet research

By starting from the term "Competitive Intelligence" it is fairly easy to locate some books dealing with this topic. By using web sites like the "Library of Congress" (USA) or Amazon.com (USA) the first set of books dealing with CI can be found.

By using the keywords assigned to these books it is possible to locate other relevant books :



Besides this way of identifying information sources there are organisations like the "Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals" (SCIP) which makes listings of publications related to CI available.

Most books, papers and reports itself helps to locate other relevant sources by having a list of the used reference material, their bibliographies or "further reading list's". This also can be used to evaluate the value of the material (i.e. a book or an author quoted by many others can be considered as kind of a standard).

A similar approach can be chosen to identify periodicals like magazines. This "keyword approach" can also help to locate specialists or consultants in this field. In case of conferences it is also possible to find, e.g., speakers which are recognised experts in this field.

Using Internet search engines like Google, Altavista and Alltheweb or the search mechanism of the web sites from, e.g. magazines , Universities or consulting companies it is feasible to assume that available material can be located. The quality and how accurate the material is should be seen as an important decision which has to be made before considering material found on the Internet. The quality and how trustworthy the information source is determines the quality and usability of the material found on this site.

All the material found has to be grouped in to topic clusters. Then it will be examined if it can be used for this dissertation.

Surveys via e-mail / Internet

After identifying the target groups for the surveys and developing the different questionnaires it would be possible to run the survey(s) via the Internet. The attention of the target groups can be reached by sending out e-mail (if the e-mail addresses of the target audience are known, e.g., via a mailing list or topic specific newsgroup), announcing the survey through a posting in a related newsgroup (e.g. for consultants), by informing CI related web sites or mailing lists or by traditional PR which could be sent out to newspapers, magazines or organisations like SCIP, Consultant organisations (e.g. BDU),

The survey questionnaires will be designed to identify specific information or to confirm assumptions about the CI processes with the target group. If someone participates in a survey it would be possible to ask for permission to request them to participate in another survey at a later point in time. To increase the willingness to fill out a questionnaire it would be appropriate to offer them at least a management summary of the results of the survey / dissertation (e.g. via Internet download).

Interviews

Identifying persons involved in the field of CI, e.g. :

- CI experts / consultants
- persons working in the CI area
- through CI job advertisement
- CI authors
- speakers about CI related topics
- ...

via, e.g. conference announcements or speaker databases of the various organisations, would make it possible to ask them for their participation, not only in form of a survey, but also in form of an interview. The interview could be performed as face-to-face interview or over the phone. During the interview it would be possible to concentrate on some key questions and have a free form chat with the expert as well. In some cases a form similar to a questionnaire could be used.

Limitations of the chosen methodology

For the Library & Internet research field there are fewer limitations than in the more traditional desk research style. Most library catalogues are available on-line which allow to search many library catalogues in a short time and request only the material needed or travelling only to the libraries which hold the important publications which are neither available on-line nor through the Inter-Library-Loan-Service. One of the limitations could be from which date the library records are available in the systems (usually starting around the 70's). Another problem is how accurate the data in the catalogues is. By searching in several catalogues following the same approach this problem could be eliminated.

For the Internet or e-mail survey approach the obvious problem is reaching the target audience. Depending on the efforts undertaken to publicise the survey by using the appropriate channels (e.g. mailing lists, web sites, newsgroups, traditional PR, mailings to organisations in this field, ...) it should be possible to get a decent response rate to get representative results. By a direct e-mail shot to a certain target audience (e.g. consulting companies in the field of CI) the return rate of the survey could be higher as well.

To identify the right persons to interview is linked to the e-mail and Internet survey approach. Some organisations might be able and willing to provide contacts to Competitive Intelligence specialists which could then be interviewed. Also by reviewing articles in specialised magazines, contact information authors or in case of a case study the head of a CI department can be identified. During the surveys it would also be possible to ask if the person would be willing to participate in an interview as well. Deciding by using the personnel contact information if the person fits into one of the focus groups.

In principle all methods have some limitations which could be minimised by hard work and an increased number of contacts. As there is only a limited number of Competitive Intelligence surveys publicly available in this field. It could be difficult to judge if the response is a representative response which could be used to generalise the results. This would have to be evaluated by the answers given, e.g., on company size, country, position, By using this information the results could then apply, e.g., only to SME companies or global companies. On the other hand this information can be used to specifically approach the group of survey participants which is underrepresented.

Plan of work

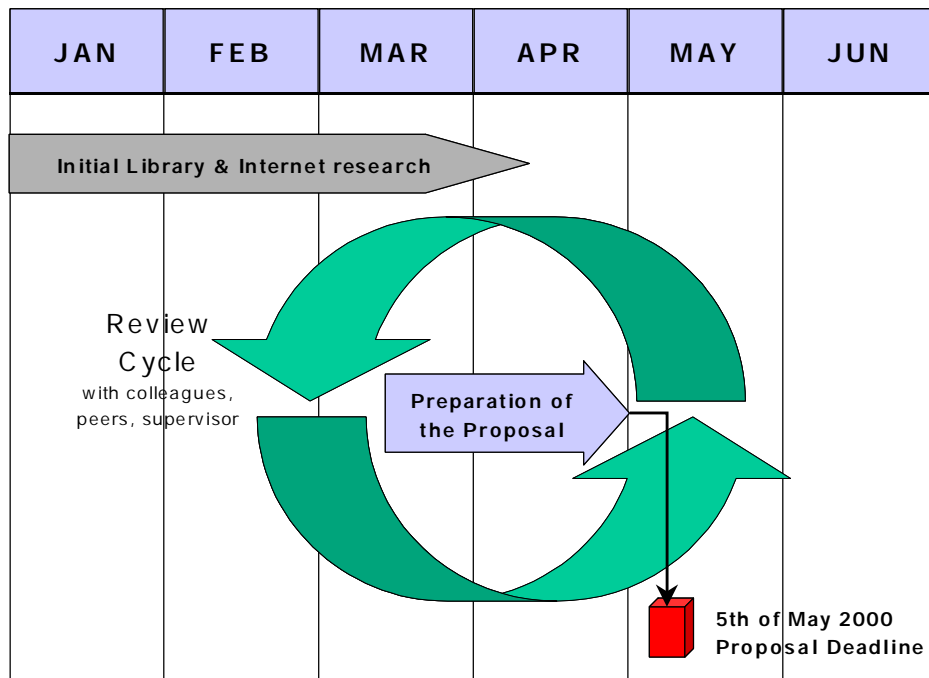
The work for this dissertation is divided into several phases :

1. Initial Library & Internet research

After deciding the field of interest for the dissertation an initial research phase had been conducted. The findings were used to →

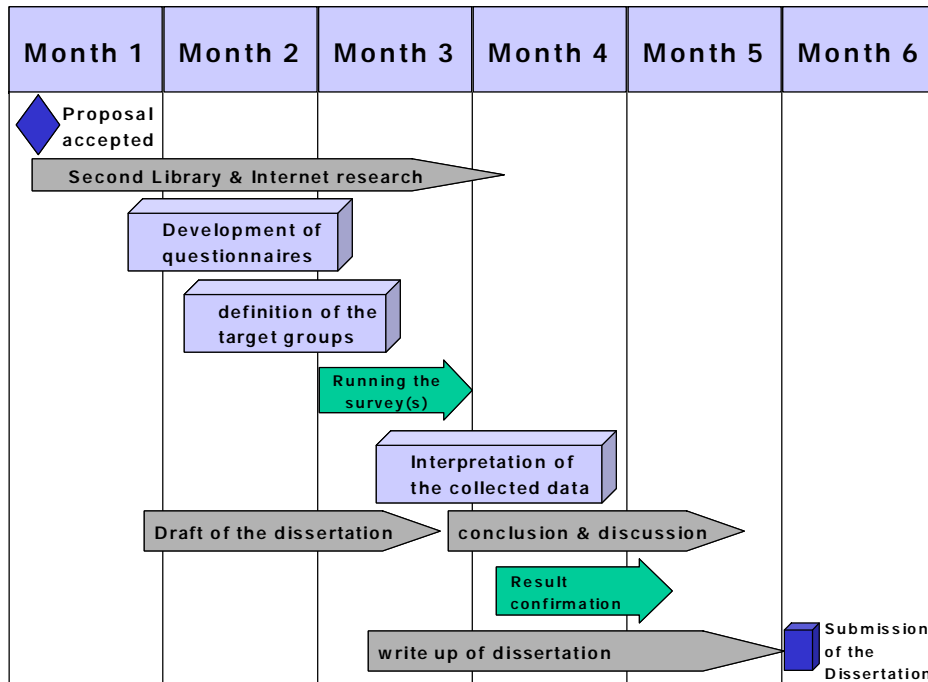
2. Narrowing the scope of the project – writing the proposal – review cycle

After the initial research the project scope will be narrowed down to a dimension which can be handled in a dissertation with it's, e.g. time limitations. The proposal gets written based on the material found during the research phase. The draft of the proposal will be circulated around colleagues, peers and the supervisor for comments. After the proposal has gone through some review cycles it will be submitted according to the deadline :



3. Acceptance of the proposal – Start of dissertation work
4. Second phase of the Library & Internet research
5. Development of questionnaires / survey – definition of the target groups
6. Evaluation / interpretation of the collected data
7. Draft of the dissertation – conclusion & discussion of the results
8. (optional) confirmation of the results with a smaller focus group
9. write up of the dissertation
10. Submission of the dissertation

The timeline after the acceptance of the proposal could look like this (see next figure) :



Some of the task can be undertaken in parallel, e.g., if a survey is running it would be possible to work on some more theoretical based parts of the dissertation. Like during the creation process of the proposal it would be very valuable to get input on the dissertation as it is developing. To allow this the draft versions of the dissertation could be made available on the Internet for download by colleagues, peers and the supervisor team. After this review cycle(s) the dissertation would be submitted.

Resources required

The Internet, the Internet, the Internet – did I forget something ?

Today most of the material is available through the internet. If the full text is not available the library catalogues of the universities certainly are. By using the OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) or Z39.50 library catalogue interface of different universities around the world, the catalogues of libraries like the British Library, the Library of Congress (USA), libraries of the American Consulates, the Deutsche Bibliothek, virtual libraries or other specialised libraries material can be identified. Many magazines are available on-line as well (either by the magazine publisher itself or by special full text database services).

Large traditional libraries which are accessible or access can easily be obtained are, e.g. :

- Deutsche Bibliothek
- Libraries of the American Consulates
- University libraries in : Frankfurt, Mainz, Gießen, Darmstadt, Mannheim, Ludwigshafen, Marburg, ...
- ...

In other case's books & magazines can be obtained by the Inter-Library-Loan-Service of the German University Libraries.

I hold a number of subscriptions to topic related magazines and can get access to others via the Internet or full text databases. I would be extremely helpful to get access to full text databases through the Fachhochschule Ludwigshafen or the University of Lincolnshire & Humberside (e.g. Anbar) as they require a paid subscription.

Some Universities, e.g. in the USA, offer copying and clipping services or collections of topic related material which could be used or purchased as well.

By accessing analyst services like Meta Group, Gartner, Dataquest, Sievers Express, Forrester Research, ComputerGram, IDC, G2 Research, Ovum, Inteco, ... it is possible to get the reports of these companies about various topics. These services are available and accessible on-line as well.

Face-to-face interviews can be conducted in person if the interviewee lives in Germany or Europe but it is more likely that interviews will be done over the phone and recorded (with the knowledge of the interviewee) as future reference.

Other ways to gather or request information is e-mail, a survey via e-mail, Usenet postings or the web site for this dissertation (www.competitive-intelligence.de).

By building up contact lists in different categories it will be possible to have access to people involved in various aspects of CI work (e.g. CI People, CI Consultants, Academics, ...). The necessary contacts can be found on the Internet, e.g. through membership directories or the speaker database of SCIP and other CI related organisation.

A very important point is that the supervisor team will get access to the work while it is created so that they can provide their input whenever they think it is necessary.

Bibliography

There is a first version of the bibliography in the appendix. It should be considered as the first library research approach to this topic and lists only books. These books have not yet been fully analysed. During the progress of this work some of the books will be dropped from the list. Other, more appropriate books will be added to it.

Additionally magazine articles (printed as well as from on-line sources), reports, studies & surveys, brochures & presentations, conference proceedings, web pages and transcripts of interviews will be included. Some of this material is already available and has to be classified. Other material must be located or is in the process of being requested.

Form of presentation

The work will be presented in a printed traditional form as well as in electronic form (PDF on CD ROM or available for download via the Internet). Information supporting the dissertation (e.g. data gathered during a survey) could be presented in form of a CD ROM. The format of the work will probably follow this chapter outline :

- Title page
- Acknowledgements
- Preface
- Abstract / Management summary / Introduction
- Table of Contents & Table of Figures (i.e. Tables & Graphs)
- Main Chapters & Sections, Sub Sections
- Conclusion
- Discussion of the results
- List of References
- Bibliography
- Appendices

As the work is evolving while its creation it can be considered as not useful to show a fully detailed chapter & section structure here.

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In this part the initial bibliography is listed (in the books section the last information refers to the language with EN = English and DE = German - following the ISO standard) :

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SCIP Code of Ethics for CI Professionals

This Code of Ethics was found at the SCIP web site URL www.scip.org/ci/ethics.html at the 2000-04-29

- To continually strive to increase the recognition and respect of the profession.
- To comply with all applicable laws, domestic and international.
- To accurately disclose all relevant information, including one's identity and organisation, prior to all interviews.
- To fully respect all requests for confidentiality of information.
- To avoid conflicts of interest in fulfilling one's duties.
- To provide honest and realistic recommendations and conclusions in the execution of one's duties.
- To promote this code of ethics within one's company, with third-party contractors and within the entire profession.
- To faithfully adhere to and abide by one's company policies, objectives, and guidelines.