The contribution of market intelligence to tactical and strategic business decisions

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Introduction
Implementing a strategy is not an easy task for American industrial organizations. Many US companies survived in the past even though they did not have a clear sense of where they were going, since the resource pool seemed to be unlimited. But today resource allocations are much different and competition is often fierce for the scarce resources that exist. Firms today will not exist without a clear strategic direction. Regardless of company size, the planning process is the same. This process is a clear continuous process driven by market strategy that is dictated by customers and the portfolio mix of the customer (Warner, 1987). One of the drivers of both strategy and success in the marketplace is the role of market intelligence.

Background
All businesses have strategies, which are the methods used to make and sell products or perform services. Often, strategies are determined by a company's reaction to events beyond its control rather than by solid market intelligence and strategic planning. But the question asked is why do firms plan? The answer is simple: competitive advantage (Day, 1984). Several factors contribute to organizational growth in both size and complexity. Decision making gets more and more complex as the size of the business and market share increases, as does the inverse when downsizing and market share decreases. This implies a critical need for strategic focus - focusing on customer/competitive analysis. Both elements are critically dependent on rigorous marketing intelligence (Bernhardt, 1994).

In order for companies to maximize opportunity, they must first assess their strategic position. Only then will management be able to decide where and how the company should position itself. Evaluations of past performance, marketing strengths and weaknesses, reputation for quality products, utilization issues and mission need to be addressed. All of these issues can be addressed by strategic planning and good marketing intelligence (Jaworski and Wee, 1993).

If a company utilizes marketing intelligence systems, the output can result in sound marketing decisions which can be one of the best sources of competitive advantage. The relative importance of planning and marketing intelligence is absolutely required if a firm wants to stay in step with dynamic market conditions. Marketing intelligence provides a meaningful input by providing firms with information that allows for sound decision making (Gilad, 1991). The goal of business is usually clear: maximize profitability and return on investment. Just as a team without a game plan is unlikely to win, a company without clearly defined strategies will not likely meet its objectives for growth and profitability (Holloway, 1986). A driving force in meeting strategic objectives is the marketing intelligence system.

Issues
The value of a marketing intelligence system can be substantial since decision making...
regarding strategy has a direct impact on the bottom line. If the intelligence system provides timely and relevant information, then the value added by the system can be measured in terms of risk aversion.

Minimizing risk and maximizing profit are a natural extension of the system. A basic tenet can be drawn that MI adds value to strategic decision making and its importance has not diminished. To support this position, a survey of a cross-section of 50 consumer, industrial and service firms were surveyed in southwestern Pennsylvania. Over half the firms were industrial firms. Four key issues were evaluated in the effective deployment of a marketing intelligence system:

1. activity and value of MI in the support of customer/competitive analysis;
2. value of data sources integral to MI;
3. location of MI accountability in the organization;
4. level and trend of MI resources.

### Findings

#### MI value

Regarding issue 1, MI activity and value to consumer/competitive intelligence, two-thirds of the companies indicated a dramatic increase in level of activity and nearly three-fifths (64 per cent) said the impact of MI contributes heavily to tactical and strategic decision making. One third said activity was level, while none indicated a reduction; 44 per cent indicated MI contributed somewhat to decision making and only 2 per cent felt MI contributed little.

Value ratings for the strategic planning functions in the areas of consumer/competitive intelligence are shown in Table I. High ratings here are defined as percent of respondents rating MI value primary. Five of the ten functions received high ratings with No. 1 providing focus on marketing and sales at 84 per cent No. 2 determining market potential, and No. 3 forecasting product demand at 67 per cent.

Low rated functions include guiding production and distribution adjustments (27 per cent) and industry sales forecasting (23 per cent). The highly valued functions focus around the front end of planning, i.e. target market definition, while the low rated functions cluster around the back end of planning, i.e. implementation adjustments in production and distribution, and sales conversion improvement. This suggests that MI effectiveness needs to be increased in the back end planning functions (Prescott and Bhardwaj, 1988).

#### MI data sources

Regarding issue 2, value of various data sources integral to MI, value was measured by a rating scale (5 – very important, 4 important to 1 – not important). Table II lists each data source and reports in rank order the percentage of companies rating high, i.e. at a 4 level or above.

Regarding internal data sources, the main players found on cross functional buying teams – customers, manufacturers and R&D – are universally rated at 4 or above. Following closely behind at a near 80 per cent rating is the sales force and physical product at 64 per cent. The remaining sources are all near 50 per cent – ranging from 58 per cent down to 43 percent. Seven of the nine sources scored 50 per cent or better in high ratings.

Only five of nine external sources scored 50 per cent or better in high ratings. Clients, dealers, and customers topped the list with a more than two-third high rating. Only half of market research projects garnered high ratings, while hard copy publications (periodicals and government sources) were at or below 40 per cent in high ratings.

#### MI accountability

Regarding venues of MI accountability, about half (46 per cent) of the firms assign MI accountability to marketing. A quarter assign MI to sales. The remaining quarter is scattered among finance, planning, and other, i.e. corporate division management.

This is surprising, given MI is a subset of the marketing function and perhaps is a proxy for dissatisfaction with marketing-housed MI on the part of corporate users (Prescott and Smith, 1989).

#### Level and trend of MI resources

About three-quarters of the sample companies have MI employees; 85 per cent of these are full time. Only one third of the companies farm out their MI demands to outside consultants and in most of these cases the incidence was less than 10 contracts; 42 per cent of the companies
reported that their MI expenditures had risen dramatically (over 25 per cent). The remainder reported flat expenditures with none reducing expenditures.

**Implications**

Many companies recognize the critical connection between strategic planning and MI. Two-thirds of those sampled have increased MI expenditures dramatically and three-fifths said MI had a heavy impact on their tactical and strategic decision making. Companies that realize the advantages to be gained through MI usually have a strong foothold in the market in which they operate, depending on the quality of the data and consistently updating the data. It is our belief that the trend to use MI will continue to rise and companies that fail to recognize the need for MI will lose their strategic and competitive advantage. The backward thinking firm that believes downsizing MI will increase profits through cost reduction will find just the opposite, as weak MI reduces its visionary capability, and therefore its market leadership. Furthermore, MI’s highest contributions are to the front end strategic planning functions - market targeting, estimation of market potential and forecasting product demand. Research shows that strategic success is most highly dependent on strong planning capabilities in the front end (Gilad, 1991). To ignore the potential of MI’s contribution is to weaken this most critical input component of planning, thereby weakening one of the most important activities of the firm.

**Table II**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Percent rating 4 or higher – rank order</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Customers</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Manufacturers</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Research and development</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Sales force</td>
<td>78</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Physical evidence (product or prototype)</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Sales quotes</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Sales records</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Trade shows</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. New hires</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Client meetings</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Dealers/distributors</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Customers</td>
<td>67</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Business associates</td>
<td>58</td>
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<td>5. Market research projects</td>
<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Suppliers</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. On line services</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Periodicals</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>9. Government publications</td>
<td>33</td>
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**References**


From marketing research to competitive intelligence: useful generalization or loss of focus?

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A child of marketing
Competitive intelligence, as a distinct field, started out as a specialized activity nested under marketing research and known as “marketing intelligence”. In this role, the field applied specialized tools of investigation (many of which were inspired by espionage) to examine the marketplace. This paper uses the term espionage in a different way than many competitive intelligence writers. In the jargon of the field, espionage refers to illegal techniques of gaining information; although I do not quarrel with that definition, I use the term espionage to refer to intuitive and qualitative methods which result when diverse forms of information are used in a “catch as catch can” way. Members of the marketing profession have long been interested in understanding the strategies, capabilities, and options of their rivals. Gaining these insights is the essence of competitive intelligence.

Indeed, by carefully and systematically monitoring a rival’s activities, valuable clues can be gathered. If you are aware of a competitor’s “test marketing” activities, for example, it may be possible to predict the rival’s future products and strategies. Go to a trade show and hang around the cocktail parties; one of the legends you will hear concerns a company that discovered when and where a rival was “test marketing” new products; by secretly monitoring the competitor’s own research, it became possible for a rival to develop attractive alternatives which, thereby, succeeded in the marketplace. Most of these cocktail party anecdotes, incidentally, are set in the past because today’s competitive intelligence practitioners have devised ways of protecting their organizations from this kind of spying. In the final analysis, intelligence performs two separate tasks; one offensively seeks information about competitors while the other is defensive in nature and works to protect the organization’s proprietary information from prying eyes.

Although competitive intelligence evolved out of marketing (with the aid of espionage), the activities of the discipline have come to serve all business functions. “Research and development” people seek to monitor rival organizations while safeguarding their own data. Possessing information such as the production capabilities of a competitor’s factories, furthermore, can provide valuable insights. The financial health of a competitor may influence a decision to confront the rival “head on” or (as an alternative) to strategically avoid direct conflict. Although competitive intelligence began as a special area of marketing research, it has grown beyond its origins and today it provides information in all these areas.

Parallels between competitive intelligence and marketing research, however, remain; the real trick for both marketing researchers and competitive intelligence practitioners is to appropriately envision how and why competitive intelligence has expanded beyond its original roots and missions. A good first step in this process is to consider a brief history of the evolution of the field; this will be our point of departure.

A thumbnail history of competitive intelligence
Certainly, some activities associated with competitive intelligence go back thousands of years; thus, Judas Iscariot was bribed into revealing Christ’s location. In the past, however, the techniques of intelligence were not systemized and the people who performed this sort of work were not a distinctive group with unique methods and traditions. It was not until our era that competitive intelligence emerged as a distinct discipline in its own right. The work of William T. Kelley can be used to suggest the
The origins of competitive intelligence as a distinct entity. In specific, Kelley’s book *Marketing Intelligence...* (1965), introduced the field of intelligence, while his influential article in the *Journal of Marketing* (Kelley, 1966) provides a short and readable account which was easily available to management. Kelley’s seminal work was quickly followed up with Richard L. Pinkerton’s influential five-article series (Pinkerton, 1969) in *Industrial Marketing* entitled “How to develop a marketing intelligence system”. These documents can be seen as representative of the pioneering intellectual foundations of the field. Although the general paradigm employed by intelligence stemmed primarily from marketing research, some early observers noted that the field transcended its roots. William T. Kelley, himself, observed on the first page of his seminal work “Marketing research is a tool of great value to the marketing intelligence worker. However, there is a considerable difference” (Kelley, 1965, p. 1). Having made this point, Kelley goes on to discuss the traditions of spying and espionage which he notes go back thousands of years.

The next generation in the evolution of competitive intelligence, can, perhaps, best be discussed with reference to the work of Michael E. Porter. Porter’s first book, *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors* (Porter, 1980), and his later *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance* (Porter, 1985) were aimed at practitioners, not academics, and they drew the attention of executives to the fact that competitive intelligence was a much needed business function. Still, Porter’s work primarily provided guidelines on how to process existing intelligence information in useful ways, and it tended to covertly assume that Intelligence information (and/or the tools required to professionally gather it) already existed. Nonetheless, the field of competitive intelligence was enjoying a high profile as a distinct business function; as a result, it was gaining a reputation as a valuable organizational activity.

In the 1980s and 1990s, practitioners (while continuing to focus on how decision makers can use business intelligence in strategic ways) have begun to concentrate more and more upon the techniques of the field. Various thinkers have become identified with specific perspectives. Vella and McGonagle (1987) center upon the use of computers. Writers like Tyson (1990) provide “how to” manuals which are reminiscent of Pinkertion’s pioneering series of articles. Today, a wealth of useful publications are emerging which help organizations to more effectively pursue activities related to intelligence; examples include Paula Bernstein’s (1986) *Finding Statistics Online* and Carole Lane’s (1988) *Naked in Cyberspace: How to Find Personal Information On line.*

The work of Leonard Fuld, however, is perhaps, most representative of the current state of the art of competitive intelligence. Fuld’s definitive work is his *Competitive Intelligence: How to Get It, How to Use It* (1985); it is a seminal book which helped revolutionize the field. As the years went on, Fuld has emerged as a key figure, not merely because of his writing but also because he is the founder of a major consulting firm dedicated to competitive intelligence; this organization provides training, performs consulting services that are tailored to the needs of specific clients, and the Fuld organization has a Web site which provides a wide range of information and advice. (The address of the Fuld Website is WWW.fuld.com – much useful information can be found there free of charge and it is highly recommended.) Fuld’s orientation also represents the emerging generalization of the discipline of competitive intelligence in ways that transcend its roots in marketing research. Not only are conceptualizations, such as those represented by Fuld, broader and better able to serve in a wider arena of strategic circumstances, the resulting visions of competitive intelligence have helped popularize a number of metaphors for competitive intelligence (such as those based on military analogies). While looking to links between espionage and competitive intelligence goes back at least to Kelley’s pioneering work (1968), it has become more refined and focused in recent years.

Because competitive intelligence has roots in marketing research, marketers will feel at home with the field. Marketers, however, should be careful to avoid the seductive sense that competitive intelligence is little more than a superficial refinement of their field and that (aside from a few *ad hoc* details) they already understand it. Here, while acknowledging similarities and borrowings, we will simultaneously center upon significant differences between marketing research and competitive intelligence. As a result, we will focus upon specific tools and orientations that make competitive intelligence unique.
A distinct field

As argued above, competitive intelligence started out as an extension of marketing research. As time has gone on, however, the field has developed its own traditions, methods, and universe of discourse. Here, we will concentrate upon these developments and why they are important for executives, decision makers, and strategic planners.

First, although competitive intelligence evolved out of marketing research, it has developed its own methods and tools. The field has been spurred by the computer revolution, the wealth of data available via the Internet, and the need for techniques that have been specifically designed around the current situation. Other technological developments (such as the availability of satellite photographs) make it possible for competitive intelligence professionals to study a wealth of empirical data which until recently was completely unavailable. Owing to the nature of much of these data, furthermore, special methods for analyzing them have been created. In general, these techniques (following Kelley's lead) are inspired by the methods of espionage. Another way in which competitive intelligence has become distinct from marketing research is the fact that competitive intelligence practitioners are responsible for protecting the organization's own proprietary information, not merely gathering data. Thus, the field has both offensive and defensive responsibilities.

While marketing research tends to be envisioned merely in terms of the marketing function, furthermore, competitive intelligence has come to be viewed as a more generalized discipline that simultaneously serves several business functions. As a result, the field often performs specific research projects on demand for various divisions within the organization. Since this is true, practitioners might actively seek to combine projects in useful and/or more efficient ways. Working for many masters, competitive intelligence practitioners may need to prioritize their assignments. It is not at all unusual for corporate intelligence professionals to publish an ongoing "organ" or newsletter to disseminate their findings. We can see, therefore, that corporate intelligence, while evolving from marketing research, has mutated itself into a significantly different entity and one which serves the entire organization, not merely the marketing function.

Today's competitive intelligence professionals are often resent being equated with spies. They, in contrast, tend to view themselves as information monitors and research practitioners; most of their professional life, furthermore, may be spent "online" getting electronic information or "writing up" the results. This generalization is true even though a certain amount of clandestine work may be performed. Unlike a spy movie, however, competitive intelligence work tends to be fairly routine and performed within the limits of the law. It is legal and mundane, for example, to go to a factory and note if the parking lot is full during the second shift. Although this fact could be routinely and legally checked, it may prove to be an invaluable clue regarding the health of the company (or its ability to quickly raise production). By combining this fact with other bits of information which can be legally gathered by consulting the public record (such as seeing if a building permit has been issued to the company), it may be possible to extrapolate a mosaic that reveals a competitor's future strategies, strengths, and weaknesses. The conclusions drawn from the information made available via competitive intelligence are usually not based on "hard facts"; instead, they constitute a number of independent observations woven together with inference and intuition. If all the data at our disposal point in the same direction, however, fairly reliable conclusions can result, and these intuitive judgments can form the basis of a forceful strategic response. It is the discipline of competitive intelligence that gathers and processes this kind of qualitative, intuitive information.

If there is an ethos of competitive intelligence, it is the "warfare" atmosphere. Competitive intelligence professionals tend to think of strategy in the same way that military leaders do and they are prone to view their organization and its rivals as competing armies. Given the impact of espionage upon competitive intelligence, it is easy to see how a military analogy has gained a hold. And, no doubt, military analogies are appropriate in numerous situations. Still, this military focus and its influence has given competitive intelligence a specific personality, and one which may not be ideal in all situations.

The successes and unique contributions of competitive intelligence have resulted in the field being recognized as a separate discipline; today it exists as a formal and distinct entity within many companies. Not only that, the profession has its own literature (with
While some marketing researchers have embraced the social sciences, others have looked to the humanities for qualitative techniques that can be applied to marketing. Sidney Levy’s seminal article (1981) on the use of mythology in marketing research is an early example of this trend. In more recent years, consumer researchers have contributed to this research stream. In general, these scholars apply the techniques of literary criticism (another qualitative methodology) to marketing and consumer research. (Much of my work which has appeared in Management Decision can be roughly placed within this research tradition although it has evolved independently of it.) Combined, qualitative techniques from the social sciences and humanities have emerged within marketing research and they are being applied to a wide range of scholarly and practitioner problems.

In different, but somewhat parallel, ways, competitive intelligence has innovated its own qualitative toolkit and it has developed and deployed it in ways which can be usefully applied to both marketing and to other business functions. While marketing has looked to the social sciences and humanities for inspiration, however, competitive intelligence has borrowed techniques from the art of espionage. As we all know, those who make military decisions often must use incomplete, inferior, and “catch as catch can” information. Decision makers realize that the information at their disposal may be of questionable value, but these flawed data are usually all that is available. The enemy (or competitor), furthermore, may be “planting” information in order to trick its rivals. The decision maker must evaluate the available data and “factor in” the risks of both using and not using it.

Today’s business leaders are seeking relevant qualitative data. This is true both in marketing research and in competitive intelligence. As we have seen, although competitive intelligence and marketing research have diverged in many ways in the last 30 years, both fields are increasingly focusing upon the embrace of qualitative research methods. The qualitative agendas and methods of the two fields have developed separately and they have been inspired by different influences; in spite of this diversity, however, both competitive intelligence and marketing research are united by their increased qualitative emphasis. Thus, although marketing research and competitive intelligence have diverged in many ways, they have converged in other directions.
The warfare mentality

Ask a male executive (from the USA who is in his 50s or older) about a management/inspirational film entitled Second Effort that was popular during the 1960s. Not only will he probably remember the film, the odds are good that he will also be able to recite a couple of its more compelling examples. By considering this film and the method of presenting its message, perhaps we can learn something about the managerial elite, how it thinks, and how to most effectively communicate with it.

Second Effort is narrated by Vince Lombardi (legendary coach of the American-style professional football team The Green Bay Packers). Sports analogies, of course, are very popular with executives and business thinkers. Sports analogies, furthermore, tend to be overtly intertwined with military or warlike metaphors. Key players are equated with field-commanders and the struggles of athletes are compared to the anguish of the battlefield. Most significantly, athletic tactics are depicted in terms of military strategy. Skilled generals (or sports heroes) are presented as possessing universal leadership skills which should be emulated in generic ways by corporate leaders and decision makers.

Intelligence and spying, of course, are closely intertwined with military strategy. As competitive intelligence began to gain an identity separate from marketing research, the field increasingly embraced the military metaphor. Competitors came to be depicted as military foes; the activity of intelligence was increasingly depicted using a warlike models or parallels. These characterizations are useful in two separate ways; first, much of the strategic work that executives perform actually does correspond to the efforts of military commanders. Second, and possibly more important, the military analogy is attractive to decision makers and it is well received by them. No doubt military comparisons are useful and they will continue to serve and influence corporate leaders.

Limitations of the warfare model

All models abstract reality. That is their nature and their purpose. Models, by culling our focus down to the bare essentials, are able to rivet the thinker's attention to what is "really important".

An anthropologist who is interested in knowing how social institutions interact with one another, for example, may study a tiny tribe since these variables are "pared down" to their most basic essence in a small-scale society. By studying a little society, anthropologists feel that they will be able to more clearly understand how the various institutions of a culture reinforce and/or conflict with one another. Simplifying the task of investigation (by studying a miniature culture), the researcher gained efficiently processed information about how a larger society will probably function under analogous circumstances. Just as a model airplane might cheaply depict the behavior of a jumbo jet, the functioning of a tribe is used to predict the response of mass society.

But what if it is the very complexity (or lack of complexity) of the culture (not universal aspects of organizational response) that exerts the impacts which concern us? If this is the case, studying the small-scale culture would not provide any useful information regarding how the large society will respond. In fact, if we choose to abstract reality using a model which wrongly assumes that today's large cultures are merely small societies writ big, we could profoundly misunderstand the situations we face; as a direct result of the model used, we could make profound strategic errors. This example reminds us of two significant problems inherent in using any kind of model. First, once models are embraced, they tend to seductively direct our attention in their own direction. Second, a specific model may distort our vision in counterproductive ways even though we are not aware that this is happening.

By the same token, although the warfare model is useful in many contexts, it simultaneously has the ability to distort reality because it concentrates on only one set of considerations: conflicts between enemies. In addition to simplifying reality; it can degenerate into being simplistic if it narrows our focus in counterproductive ways. The military analogy is very seductive. And it often serves as a very useful and legitimate tool since rival organizations do "fight" with one another. And, as we all know, there are winners and losers in these "battles over the marketplace". Organizational leaders, furthermore, actually do deploy strategies and tactics in ways that are suggestive of a military campaign. Many organizational leaders, likewise, consciously model themselves after military commanders; as a result, their behavior and their thought is largely inspired by warlike analogies. All of these tendencies point to the usefulness of military comparisons.
From another perspective, however, the military model draws attention away from the true purpose of organizations. As every marketer knows, the purpose of any organization is to serve its clients. And, of course, this truth is best expressed in the "marketing concept", which strongly affirms that the only reason for any organization to exist is to satisfy the client's perceived needs and wants in the most efficient and/or appropriate ways.

The marketing concept does not concentrate upon competition between enemies; instead, it looks at the organization in terms of the degree to which it provides a sought-after good or service. This perspective, while not totally canceling out the value of a military analogy, is different and it channels our attention in different directions. Thus, according to the marketing concept (which is almost universally embraced by the marketing profession), organizations should primarily concern themselves with cooperation and collaboration between friends and allies; doing so, however, is the complete opposite of the military metaphor, which focuses upon strife and conflict between enemies.

My purpose here is not to discredit the military analogy, but simply to observe that (like the marketing concept) it is a specialized mode which is particularly useful under certain circumstances and when dealing with a particular variety of relationships. And outside of the special circumstances where the military analogy serves well, it might prove to be counterproductive. The marketing concept, the raison d'être of marketing, seeks to structure organizations around the happiness and welfare of its clients. We should not allow military metaphors (even though they are useful under some circumstances) to blind us to what marketing really does and who marketers really are.

**Conclusion**

Today, competitive intelligence has emerged as an increasingly independent and important business activity. Although the posture of the field is in a state of flux and although its methodological toolkit has yet to be standardized, competitive intelligence is showing all the earmarks of emerging as a distinct and freestanding business function.

As discussed above, competitive intelligence evolved out of marketing research. The field, however, has increasingly evolved on its own terms. A significant benefit of today's competitive intelligence is that it is geared around providing and interpreting certain kinds of "qualitative" research; in doing so, it embraces techniques from military and political espionage. In this way, the field of competitive intelligence helps to "flesh out" the full array of qualitative tactics that are needed by today's strategic planners (in marketing and other business functions).

Today's marketers (while borrowing from sources that are different from those influencing competitive intelligence) are also becoming increasingly involved with qualitative research methods. We are in an era when business leaders and researchers have come to recognize that gathering and processing an array of qualitative data are essential for the health of the organization. Although marketing research and competitive intelligence have diverged in profound ways since the 1960s, the mutual embrace of qualitative methodologies unites them once again in a number of revealing, suggestive, and intriguing ways.

Competitive intelligence is largely concerned with the gathering and processing of qualitative information. Owing to this fact, competitive intelligence parallels developments in marketing research, even while the two fields are very different in some respects. As long as organizational leaders remember that their primary goal is cooperating with and serving friends (not competing with enemies), marketers will be able to make good use of the military analogies and the methods embraced by competitive intelligence. We, however, should continue to view the marketing concept as the organization's guiding light.

If organizations continue to center themselves on the marketing concept, they will not abandon their customer orientation and, thereby, benefit from competitive intelligence without losing our strategic focus.

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**Application questions**

1. How much has the theory on competitive strategy made an impact on organizational practice in the last few years?

2. Do you agree with the author's assertion that organizations should be concerned with cooperating with friends rather than competing with enemies?
PERSARAN

Yasrin Zabidi

COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE PROGRAM (CIP) : PERANANNA DALAM
MENGHADAPI DAN MEMENANGKAN PERSAINGAN

Persaingan yang semakin ketat dan munculnya pesaing-pesaing baru menuntut perusahaan akan suatu model konseptual untuk memenangkan persaingan, CIP adalah solusinya. Competitive Intelligence Program (CIP) merupakan suatu proses secara konseptual untuk mengumpulkan informasi pesaing menjadi intelejen yang digunakan menghadapi pesaing, menghancurkannya, merubah pangsa pasar.

SESEORANG dari perusahaan lepon seluler melakukan perjalanan enjalajah Philadelphia sambil menyendiri, melalui telepon seluler seangnya. Yang disadap bukanlah wakil perusahaan lain ia adalah sesuatu yang melanggar aturan atau yang tidak etis, tetapi dia adalah pengumpul informasi spionase yang sedang mengumpulkan informasi dan kegiatan pesaing mereka.

Seubah perusahaan minuman mengumpulkan informasi tentang kegiatan perusahaan pesaingnya. Tujuan ini adalah untuk menghentikan persaingan dan tidak dilakukan dengan cara yang melanggar aturan atau yang tidak etis. Informasi ini kemudian disaring, dievaluasi dan dianalisis, bisa juga disebut dengan pengetahuan.

Perbedaan CIP dengan Bisnis Spionase (Mema-matai) : CIP menggali dan mengumpulkan informasi secara legal dan etis (media, observasi, database, dll). Bisnis Spionase menggali dan mengumpulkan informasi secara ilegal dan tidak etis (menipu, memata-mata).


Contoh, Mitsubishi, memiliki kantor di seluruh dunia yang dihuni oleh mata-mata perusahaan, termasuk di Amerika Serikat. CIP sebagai amunisi dalam persaingan menjadi tujuan perusahaan.

Definisi Competitive Intelligence Program (CIP) : Secara umum: CIP adalah proses secara konseptual untuk mengumpulkan dan menganalisis informasi tentang kegiatan pesaing dan kecenderungan pemasaran mereka, untuk dipastikan bahwa informasi yang digunakan sebagai amunisi dalam persaingan.
Bar 1. Perkembangan CIP

Permesinan
Th. 1940-an

Modal dan Buruh
- Th. 1950-an
- 1960-an

Informasi
Th. 1980-an

Inteliens
Th. 1990-an

Teknologi
Penanaman
Optik
CIP

Latar Belakang Dibutuhkannya CIP

Pada masa sekarang ini banyak perusahaan-perusahaan yang membutuhkan CIP dibandingkan masa sebelumnya. Dibutuhkannya CIP pada masa sekarang dilatarbelakangi oleh:

a. Laju bisnis bertambah cepat
Laju bisnis dalam kehidupan sehari-hari meningkat secara dramatis. Banyak sekali bisnis-bisnis yang sedang berkembang harus dihadapkan dengan munculnya bisnis baru yang lebih menantang dan memiliki prospek yang cerah. Agar supaya perusahaan tidak ketinggalan dengan laju bisnis sekarang ini, maka diperlukanlah manajemen yang efisien dan CIP.
b. Terlelu banyak informasi
Hanya menyulitkan para pengambil keputusan adalah banyaknya informasi-informasi yang diperoleh sehingga bingung menentukan informasi mana yang valid dan andal. Dengan CIP tidak hanya mengetahui tentang mengumpulkan informasi tetapi juga tentang menganalisis informasi, menyaringnya dan mempelajari mana yang bermanfaat dan yang tidak bermanfaat untuk kepentingan perusahaan sendiri.
c. Persaingan global yang meningkat dari pesaing baru
Dimasa globalisasi ini sangat dimungkinkan perusahaan-perusahaan untuk bersaing dan akan banyak muncul pesaing-pesaing baru yang mungkin lebih baik dari perusahaan yang ada sekarang ini. Dengan CIP, perusahaan dapat mengenal/ mengetahui serta memantau pesaing baru.
d. Persaingan yang telah ada menjadi lebih agresif
Dengan mulainya perdagangan global, negara-negara industri maju seperti Amerika Serikat akan menjadi lebih matang, artinya mereka akan meningkatkan pangsa pasar dan mengobarkan pesaing-pesaingnya. Banyak perusahaan bersedia mengobarkan keunggulannya demi perluasan pangsa pasar. CIP dapat membantu perusahaan dalam memantau perusahaan lain yang beroperasi di sekitar perusahaan sendiri.
e. Perubahan politik yang cepat dan kuat mempengaruhi perusahaan.

Gambar 2. Aliran Informasi CIP di Jepang

CIP masing-masing Perusahaan

Pemerintah
- JETRO
- MITI
- Kedutaan Besar
- Atase

Perusahaan Dagang
Dengan CIP, perusahaan dapat mengetahui akan perubahan politik yang mempengaruhi bisnis, sehingga perusahaan dengan cepat dan sigap dapat melakukan perubahan dan langkah-langkah strategik lainnya. Perubahan teknologi yang cepat

Dahulu orang melakukan kegiatan perusahaan menitik beratkan pada paper and pen, kemudian mengalami perubahan teknologi dengan munculnya mesin ketik dari yang manual sampai yang otomatis. Lambat laun dunia komputer mulai memasuki dunia industri dan bisnis sampai sekarang yang telah mengalami perubahan-perubahan teknologi komputer. Dengan adanya CIP, perusahaan dapat melacak perubahan teknologi dalam industri dan bisnis sehingga perusahaan dapat menetapkan kebijakan mengikuti perubahan teknologi lain.

1. Sikap, cara berpikir manajer
   Cara berpikir manajer yang menyeabakan menolak CIP adalah:
   "Tidak ada sesuatu pun yang terjadi dalam industri ini yang belum saya ketahui"

   Sifat kerendahan hati bukan merupakan ciri dari manajer Amerika. Ada kecenderungan dari para manajer bahwa dengan membaca Will Street Journal, koran, membaca sepintas harian dagang, Jurnal, dikemudian beranggapan bahwa mereka mengetahui segala sesuatu yang sedang terjadi dalam industri.
   "Tidak ada sesuatu yang terjadi di luar perusahaan ini atau di luar negeri yang patut dihati-hati"

   "CIP sama dengan memeta-mata, itu tidak etis"

2. Cara manajer memperoleh informasi

   Kebanyakan para manajer masih menerima informasi dengan cara yang lama yang mengandalkan informasi bukan intelejen. Cara-cara tersebut adalah sebagai berikut:
   a. Teknik produk sampingan (by-product)
   Semua laporan dan studi yang dihasilkan oleh masing-masing departemen sampai ke mejak eksekutif. Metode

Kegunaan/Manfaat CIP

a. Mengantisipasi perubahan di pasar

Perusahaan yang memanfaatkan CIP untuk melakukan perubahan di pasar akan lebih cepat dalam menjawab perubahan bisnis mereka. Sebaliknya, tidak memperhatikan dapat mengakibatkan kerugian besar. Contoh kasus ini menunjukkan bahwa mereka tidak memperhatikan dapat memperbaikinya.

b. Melaporkan informasi ke kunci khusus

Kunci kunci ini memiliki pendekatan yang berbeda. Selain memberikan laporan yang sama, mereka tidak dapat diletakkan. Namun, dalam laporan eksekutif yang sesuai dengan spesifikasi komputer dan konteksual, artinya laporan yang tidak memberikan dampak apapemasan. Oleh karena itu para manajer yang mengeluh akan laporan lama terus menghabiskan waktu.

c. Menemukan pesaing yang baru dan potensial

AT & T adalah satu perusahaan yang memiliki CIP yang paling maju di dunia usaha. Satu segi yang dikenal sebagai Akses ke Ahli Analisis QT & T, adalah basis data yang terdiri atas para ahli dalam perusahaan. Satu bagian dari laporan tersebut adalah sistem pelacakan yang melacak perilaku perusahaan yang berubah dari tahun ke tahun. Jela CIP telah menunjukkan bahwa mereka tidak memperhatikan dapat memperbaikinya.
I Unya, merupakan aneaman, tetapi Meurisse Hkembangan perusahaan sendiri, menghentikan program karena engelolanya. Dalam kasus, ternyata keuntungan yang besar, memanfaatkan hak Administration dan engelolanya dengan sangat murah.


Seandainya Amerika memandang praktik bisnis Jepang dengan pikiran terbuka, atau memperhatikan konsep berapa yang berjalan-jalan di sekitar geladak. Mereka memantau orang-orang yang bersantai di sekitar kolam renang dan di kursi malas.

Mereka membuat catatan tentang sebala sesuatu yang dapat diamati secara visual dari memasuki angkakan ke basis data untuk dianalisis. Setelah beberapa tahun berpamleri secara inti. Setelah memanfaatkan konsep kompetitif "Crystal Harmony", versi 49.000 ton dari "Queen Elizabeth 2" mengarungi dunia. Pemusik Jepang dalam bisnis kapal pesiar telah nyata berhasil.


Seandainya Amerika memandang praktik bisnis Jepang dengan pikiran terbuka, atau memperhatikan konsep
ng dahulu ditahun 1940-an, mereka menerapkan sarana manajemen yang mutakhir, yakni perusahaan yang kesulitan menangani pelanggan atau kemacetan informasi. Artinya tanpa prasarana intelejen yang memengangkan keterampilan karyawan, hal ini dapat mengganggu kinerja perusahaan.

Membantu proses Benchmarking, CIP, perusahaan dapat melakukan kekuatan, kelemahan, dan peluang yang akan dilakukan oleh perusahaan lainnya. Sehingga hal ini dapat bermanfaat dalam kegiatan marking.

**Jologi / Siklus CIP**

It dasar dari CIP adalah siklus penting, yaitu proses yang mengubah perusahaan dalam kegiatan marking. Dalam siklus CIP yang merupai proses yang terus menerus (tidak berhenti), yaitu:

1. Perencanaan dan pengarahan
2. Pengumpulan informasi
3. Evaluasi dan analisis
4. Penyebarluasan/penyajian hasil analisis

**encanaan dan pengarahan**

   - Sekunder: koran, buku, pidato, wawancara, laporan publik.

   - Informasi nonpublik (informasi diperoleh dengan usaha yang keras dan jeli): wawancara, force sales, pengamatan survey.

3. Berdasarkan sifat:
   - Informasi lunak (kualitatif): kabar angin, opinion pelanggan, surat ini, dan lain-lain.
   - Informasi keras (quantitatif): fakta, statistik, data mentah, informasi finansial.

Langkah ini merupakan kegiatan pengumpulan informasi dan pengarahan yang akan diterapkan di dalam perusahaan. Informasi yang telah dikumpulkan, informasi tersebut harus dapat diakses oleh stakeholder perusahaan sebagai perencanaan taktis, membuat keputusan segera, atau hanya sekedar mempelajari informasi tersebut. Namun demikian, informasi tersebut tetap harus dilakukan oleh unit CIP.

b. **Pengumpulan informasi**

Langkah ini merupakan kegiatan pengumpulan informasi yang akan diterapkan di dalam perusahaan. Informasi yang telah dikumpulkan, informasi tersebut harus dapat diakses oleh stakeholder perusahaan sebagai perencanaan taktis, membuat keputusan segera, atau hanya sekedar mempelajari informasi tersebut.

Namun demikian, informasi tersebut tetap harus dilakukan oleh unit CIP.

c. **Evaluasi dan Analisis**

Setelah data-informasi dikumpulkan melalui sumber-informasi lainnya, adanya evaluasi terhadap informasi tersebut. Dari hasil tersebut, informasi dapat diambil untuk keputusan strategis perusahaan. Informasi yang digunakan melalui pelaksanaan kegiatan analisis, seperti SWOT, CSMM, QFD, TRIZ (Theory Inventive Problem Solving), dan lain-lain.

d. **Penyebarluasan/penyajian hasil analisis**

Langkah terakhir adalah penyajian hasil analisis (intelejen) yang merupakan suatu keputusan strategis perusahaan dalam menghadapi kegiatan pesaing.
ntelijen, yaitu pelaporan jawaban atas pertanyaan/kebutuhan eksekutif, seperti:

- Apa yang akan dilakukan oleh pesaing A.
- Bagaimana pesaing B menanggapi kenaikan harga kami.
- Kapan pesaing C akan meluncurkan produk baru, dan lain-lain.

Dalam melakukan penyajian harus memenuhi kriteria-kriteria sebagai berikut:

1. Responsif terhadap kebutuhan pimpinan
2. Terfokus (tidak umum)
3. Tepat waktu
4. Tingkat kepercayaan tinggi
5. Bentuk penyajian terbaik (visual, audio, kinestesi)

**Posisi CIP – Unit dalam Struktur Organisasi Perusahaan**

CIP – unit adalah suatu unit atau agian dalam perusahaan yang mengangani CIP. CIP unit harus diletakkan pada lokasi yang tepat (ke dekat dengan pimpinan) dan bagian perencanaan strategis tetapi juga dapat dijangkau oleh setiap orang di perusahaan.

**Gambar 4b.**

Posisi CIP-Unit dalam Struktur Organisasi Perusahaan

**Faktor Penyebab Kegagalan CIP**

a. Manajer puncak tidak terlibat dan mendukung.

b. Tugas-tugas tidak terfokus/tidak berorientasi pada pokok permasalahan.

c. Terlalu banyak penekanan pada langkah pengumpulan.

d. Tidak melibatkan setiap orang dalam perusahaan.

e. Tidak menetapkan petunjuk-petunjuk etis/aturan.

f. Terjadi kebocoran informasi.

g. Ulah para pesaing (mata-mata): phantom interview, bendera pencari kerja, bajukan.

h. Penyebab lain: siaran pers, karya tulis teknik, pidato, tur pabrik, pemasok, distributor, dokumentasi yang dibuang, peradilan.

Kesimpulan

**Competitive Intelligence Program** sangat berguna bagi perusahaan dalam memerangi dan memenangkan persaingan dalam era globalisasi ini. Keberhasilan perusahaan membangun CIP tertanggung kepada kesadaran perusahaan akan betapa pentingnya CI. Adapun langkah-langkah dalam membangun sistem CIP dalam perusahaan adalah:

a. Memilih seorang direktur CIP dan tempatkan pada lokasi yang tepat.

b. Direktur CIP menetapkan siapa-siapa pemakai kunci CIP dan untuk apa mereka memakainya.

c. Melakukan audit tentang informasi yang ada dalam perusahaan.

d. Menetapkan etika dan hukum dalam CIP.

e. Merancang jaringan untuk menggerakkan informasi dan intelijen dalam perusahaan dengan fasilitas yang ada.

**Referensi**

ANALOGI KONSEP PENGUKURAN

Kesahihan (validitas): kemampuan pengukuran dimengungkapkan sesuatu yang menjadi sasaran pokok

Substantive validitas:
- content validitas: informasi yang dikumpulkan berupa aspek kritis pesaing (aktivitas, keuangan, market, dll)
- empirical validitas: informasi yang dikumpulkan tidak hanya dari pesaing tapi dari lingkungan lain (trend, perkembangan politik, ekonom, teknologi, dll)

Struktural validitas:
- hubungan antar item

External validitas:
- korelasi item-item

Keandalan: konsistensi dari pengukuran dalam mengukur variabel

COMPUTITIVE INTELLIGENCE PROGRAM

Validitas: informasi yang akurasi (akurat & lengkap)

Substantive validitas:
- content validitas: informasi yang dikumpulkan berupa aspek kritis pesaing (aktivitas, keuangan, market, dll)
- empirical validitas: informasi yang dikumpulkan tidak hanya dari pesaing tapi dari lingkungan lain (trend, perkembangan politik, ekonom, teknologi, dll)

Struktural validitas:
- hubungan antar informasi

External validitas:
- korelasi informasi

Keandalan: kepercayaan dari sumber informasi atas performance

Informasi pesaing & lingkungan lain

CIP - Unit

CI - Tool & Teknik

Evaluasi & Analisis

Peneliti

Instrumen (alat ukur)

Teori, Konsep, Data

- kumpul data
- evaluasi
- analisis
- presentasi

Kumpul data evaluasi analisis presentasi