How to create a Competitive Intelligence Unit in your Company
The Audit process
The structure of the Unit
The development of the Unit
Example of the Groupe Seb

The best way to develop a Competitive intelligence Unit in a company or in an institution is to follow the main steps of the competitive intelligence cycle.

Let us remind that all the steps of the cycle should be fulfilled to ensure the best efficiency of the Unit.

It is also important to note that a Competitive Intelligence Unit should be close from the decision makers of the company. This means that during the first steps of the development of the Unit, the decision makers must participate to show clearly to all the hierarchy of the company the importance of the Competitive Intelligence.
The place of the Competitive (Technical) Intelligence Unit in the Cycle of Intelligence

- Vision, Strategy and questions from the decision makers (Institutions, Companies, Policy makers ...)
- Information Sources analysis
- Strategies for Information collection
- Information Management
- Platforms of cooperative work
  Processes to create Actionable knowledge
- Information analysis and understanding
- SWOT
- Recommendations provided to the decision makers
- Experts

Creating knowledge is a mixture of human skill and workflow technology

The AUDIT Process

If a company exists, that means that part of the elements of the intelligence cycle are operating in the company. It is necessary to understand all the processes of information gathering, dissemination and use into the company.

This is done through an AUDIT process which is organized into the company and which is seconded by the decision makers of the company. During the AUDIT most of the practices and people involved into the information process and use must be detected and interviewed.

All the steps detected by the AUDIT will be compared to the intelligence cycle to be able to detect what match with the cycle and what can be created or improved.

The result of the AUDIT will be submitted to a debriefing. It is suitable that during the debriefing the decision makers of the company be present.

At this occasion, the main lines of the Competitive Intelligence unit of the company will be presented. It is also important that all the people involved express their points of view.

The conclusion, on the form of a road map, will be the starting point of the development of the Unit.
The Critical Factors of Success

It is not possible to observe everything. Then the person in charge of the CI Unit should determine with the help of some company’s experts the CFS (Critical Factors of Success) of the company. The CFS are the points: research, development, operations, CRM, practices, patents, technologies, competitors, raw materials, customers … where key Activities are developed. These key activities are those which help the company to maintain or to create its competitive advantages.

The CFS may be very different according to the services of the company, or its Activities, or the products which are sold. The CFS may change with time according to the customer needs, the technologies, the geographic areas of the company activities.

CFS must be carefully determined, as well as the information sources where Information can be obtained. (Formal or Informal) For each CFS a group of observers will take care of the information gathering. This information will be directed to the CI Unit (platform to create knowledge) and analyzed by various experts (SWOT) to determine the impact of the Information upon the activities of the company.

What are the CRITICAL FACTORS OF SUCCESS

The Critical Factor of Success are not general
They are precise and specific, they go in details if necessary

What helps my company to maintain its Competitive Advantages

Information collection Recommendations
Experts Information analysis (SWOT)

CFS Must require all your attention ATTENTION, AND must be the object of a PERMANENT MONITORING
What is a Competitive Technical Intelligence Unit

In your company, institution, pole of competitiveness

Example of the Groupe SEB

Developed and presented by Serge Miard, a former student of the CRRM in 2004. In this example and for security reasons only part of the presentation has been used.
The SEB Group: history and growth

household appliances

Increase the products offer

Internationalization

CTI organization became a key issue

1953

1967 - 1987

1988-1998

1999-2000

2001

4 Electronic fry pan
4 Tefal
4 Calor

4 Rowenta
4 Factory in Mexico
4 Opening of offices of trades in the world
4 Arno
4 Volmo

4 Krups-Moulinex

2004 Serge Miard

A Strategy through brands

6 global brands

KRUPS Rowenta
Tefal Moulinex

Growth through brands

AirBake ARNO calor

14 local brands

clock MIRRO Rochedo
PANEX PENEDO SEB
REGAL SUPOR WearEver
SAMURAI T-fal

February 2009

Groupe SEB presentation -
Intermediate version
The strategy of Groupe SEB

Groupe SEB’s value creation strategy consists of:

- Focusing on growth by:
  - Innovation
  - Brands
  - Distribution
  - International expansion

- Maintaining its competitiveness by:
  - Continuous and responsible adaptation
  - Rigorous management

Growth through innovation

- One hundred patents a year
- 450 people in R&D
- A budget of more than €40 million
- 200 new products each year
The Competitive Technological Intelligence Unit

The observers are specialized in one key area. See the CFS assessment.

Observers

Observers

Observers

Observers

TW Unit CTI

Observers

Observers

Observers

2004
Serge Miard

Creation of the network
A key factor to succeed

- Education came first

  - The observers are taught to assimilate the methods and tools of the Competitive Technical Intelligence. If the number of experts is too important several sessions are done.

  - The sessions are done each year to keep the observers accurate with the latest development of CTI.
The Platform to disseminate information and to create knowledge

Hélios = 9 universes

- 4 for the information and external knowledge
  - Techno telex
  - External Competences
  - Web sites
  - Databases online (such as Dialog .... They are used by the observers themselves)

- 5 for the information and internal knowledge
  - What is new ?
  - Internal expertise (links with KM)
  - Technological files
  - Communities of interest
  - Documentation sites of the SEB group’s companies
Now, so what?

Output of the Competitive Technical Intelligence System

From the magazine Capital
n° 198, may 2008

Capital is a well know French magazine dealing with business
SEB recipe to hold out the Chinese products

How to keep your Competitive Advantages in spite of the competition with low cost products.

200 new innovations are going out of the SEB laboratories each year

Intelligent people scale

Expreso at home

Ultra-fast kettle

1 liter water 80°C

In 3 seconds!

Silent vacuum cleaner
Differenciation through various names and various prices, but with high quality standards

A Deep fryer without oil!

French fries with no oil, keep ourself thin!
External growth

I thank you for your attention