

Developing Competitive Intelligence Strategies **Defining CI Requirements – “Key Intelligence Topics”**

The goal in defining CI requirements is to meet business leader's CI needs while ensuring efforts are proactive, anticipatory and strategic. Intelligence requirements need to be defined by decision makers, typically senior management. The final report should answer all user questions.

Getting Started

Once they are defined and resources are assigned then they generally fall into 3 different categories of intelligence topics (referred to “Key Intelligence Topics or KITs”) that support these business leaders:

- 1) Strategic decisions and actions
- 2) Early warning topics
- 3) Profiles and descriptions of key players

A. CI Requirements in Support of Strategic Decisions and Actions

These requirements aid business leaders in strategic decision making, resource allocations and investments. Requirements at the strategic level include:

- 1) Product development – and strategies to improve competitive advantage.
- 2) Inputs for strategies and tactics.
- 3) Sales, marketing and promotional emphasis.
- 4) Investment decisions, dispositions and resource allocations.
- 5) Strategic alliance partner identification, evaluation, selection and relationship management.
- 6) Distribution and reseller partner relationship management.

B. Early Warning Topics

- 1) Develop a so-called “radar screen” enabling systematic competitive intelligence regarding your key competitors’ Strategic Decisions and Actions topics 1 – 6 above.
- 2) Changes in the marketplace, political and regulatory environment.
- 3) Financial initiatives and changes in resource allocations.
- 4) Takeover, merger and acquisition activity
- 5) Changes in international policy.
- 6) Companies and combinations of companies into markets and/or businesses.

C. Key Players – Competitive Reviews and Profiles

- 1) Provide competitive reviews and profiles regarding strategies, marketing, branding, R&D, operations, key personnel, organizational structure, etc.

- 2) Assessments of Key Competitors:
- a. Their intentions via major customers and/or customer groups.
 - b. Strategic plans and goals.
 - c. Key strategies
 - d. Current operational capabilities
 - e. Sustainable competitive advantages
 - f. New customer profiles – needs and future interests
 - g. New and/or emerging Industry players
 - h. Investment and financial community assessments, attitudes, perceptions regarding the branded value of their products and services. ¹

¹ Prescott, John E. (2001 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.) Proven Strategies in Competitive Intelligence – Lessons from the Trenches, p240-255.