The Bulletin of the Competitive Intelligence Division

Competitive Intelligence

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Message from Our Chair, Deborah Hartzman

What are the benefits of Division Membership? Divisions offer a built-in community of like-minded professionals with whom you can share ideas and interests. The Discussion Lists are a place to post requests for assistance when you've exhausted your local resources. Programming at the Annual Conference gives you the opportunity to learn new things, spark ideas and creativity, and put a face to the email signatures you see on the web.

I mention this because the CI Division Board has spent a lot of time thinking about what our members need, and how we can fill those needs. The Division is still young and still growing, and we want to ensure success for the future. Our track record may be short, but based upon participation at the Annual Conference, we're providing good opportunities for the membership to learn and share.

I hope you're planning to attend the conference this year. Our programming chair, Barbie Keiser, has done an outstanding job in crafting sessions with wide appeal. Monday's theme is globalization, with topics on emerging markets and a look at how CI is practiced in other countries. Tuesday morning continues this theme at our breakfast Board Meeting when Alexey Panchenko shares his experience working on a project in Russia. There are also sessions on new tools, educating the next generation, and best practices.

Our CE courses also range in scope. Members have asked for education tailored to the newly minted CI Information Professional as well as to those who are seasoned practitioners. Be sure to take advantage of these while you're in Denver.

And while you're enjoying the Mile High City, please stop by our Networking Reception on Sunday night to enjoy local microbrews and bluegrass music. This relaxed setting might be your only opportunity for down time at the conference!

Best regards,
Deborah Hartzman
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Effective and Efficient Communication in CI Departments

Christine Wunderlin, Co-managing Partner and Principal Consultant, MarketSmart Research Services

Open any newspaper or magazine and you will find an article about wikis, blogs, podcasts, social networking, and other types of communications tools for corporations large and small. The competitive intelligence (CI) and knowledge management (KM) communities are certainly abuzz with these new and sometimes not so new tools to manage information and communications among teams and internal or external clients.

So when I was asked to participate in the CI Division's panel discussion on "Discovering how successful organizations use Communities of Practice (CoP's), Intranets, wikis, blogs, and podcasts to strengthen the cohesiveness of their CI and KM teams, as well as communicate more effectively and efficiently with clients," I thought, this is great, I can share my knowledge about these tools with other like-minded researchers and hopefully share some insights regarding when and how to use these tools.

It eventually occurred to me that I not only need to discuss my past corporate CI experience and knowledge about my clients' uses of tools, but I also needed to bring a perspective from other large national and international corporations relative to their use of these tools in their CI departments.

My quest began, as any good researcher's should, with a search on the internet and in several databases, to see if there was any information about best practices or use of these tools

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Letter From the Editor

It seems with each issue, ***Intelligence Insights*** has been expanding with our membership and our Division offerings. This month, we bring you this year's SLA Annual Conference Preview, featuring an exciting – and expanded – program of CI Division-sponsored workshops and program sessions. We hope you will use this as a handy guide for your conference planning and registration. If you won't be able to attend this year, we bring you two of our Division speakers in this issue's featured articles. I am pleased that **Christine Wunderlin** and **Stephen Schulz** share their experience, insights, and tips with our readers this month.

Christine will be co-leading a workshop and participating in a program session at the conference. As long-time, multifaceted, and honored leader of SCIP, a former information industry professional, and an SLA CI Division member, Christine's article complements her conference sessions on research and CI & KM by defining the context of these functions and the vital components towards the successful implementation of the information and knowledge management initiative to support CI.

Also a SCIP leader, Steve draws on his experience as a CI practitioner and in a range of business functions in his article on CI and the sales function. This article lays a helpful foundation for his conference program session, designed to stretch our awareness, skills, and techniques beyond published sources. Steve reminds us to extend our standard practices by connecting with our users and colleagues in ways that resonate with them; and he provides useful suggestions for achieving this.

I am delighted to present **Bonnie Hohhof** as our guest columnist for **From Info to Intel**. As our first guest columnist, Bonnie's contribution holds significance for us in a number of ways. In addition to her insights based on years of experience, Bonnie is among the pioneers in the competitive intelligence profession. She is a charter member of SCIP, a distinguished member of its Women's Leadership Council, a recipient of honors, and Bonnie continues to lead in the many key roles she holds in the CI community. We can proudly look to her as among the first info pros who made the successful leap into CI. And through her achievement, we can find example and inspiration in our efforts in supporting intelligence and in making the transition from information to intelligence roles. And like Christine, Bonnie is also a member of SLA's CI Division.

Finally, we continue our expansion of ***Intelligence Insights*** with the launch our regular reviews feature, **The Intelligence Bookshelf**. Each issue, **Teresa Wilkins** will bring us insights on publications and other material that aim to support and enhance the practice of intelligence and intelligence research. Terri will be our guide on what's new, what's what, and what should be on our intelligence bookshelf.

Looking ahead, whether you are able to attend the SLA Conference, look out for next issue featuring our Post-Conference highlights, in which we will present coverage of both the SLA

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Engaging Your Sales Force: Starting the Conversation About an Information Partnership

Stephen Schulz, Principal, Line of Sight, LLC

When I built my first Competitive Intelligence function over ten years ago, I did not realize that, at the time, I had a decided advantage over most CI analysts when it came to working successfully with the sales organization.

My advantage was that I had spent eight years as a sales rep for the company. When I later began creating a CI competency for the entire organization, I was able to quickly integrate the sales force into the CI program because I could "talk the talk and walk the walk."

This year's SLA conference is special for me because it is being held in the heart of my former sales territory – downtown Denver. It was here that I walked the 16th Street Mall calling on the largest Colorado financial institutions for Deluxe Corporation, the nation's largest printer of bank checks and forms.

The Challenge
For many CI and information professionals, the sales force is recognized as arguably the most important source of competitive information, yet most of us struggle with it. To use a selling term, we run into a strong "customer objection."

The reasons are many, of course, and range from organizational to resources to personalities. The surprising news, however, is that the secret to working with the sales force lies within the sales force itself.

The Sales Process
Whether or not it is well documented within a company, all sales people and organizations follow a basic sales process. While it varies by industry and company, it generally looks something like this:

1. Establish the relationship.
2. Understand the customer's needs.
3. Present the solution.
4. Overcome objections and close the sale.

By learning and adopting your OWN company's sales approach, you accomplish two things: 1) you acquire a valuable skill for accomplishing your goals, and 2) you instantly create a level of trust by understanding the world in which they live and breathe.

Establish the Relationship
Ask any sales person and they will tell you their secret to success is their relationship with customers. Now turn this around. Think about how you buy important products and services such as a home, car, child day care services or financial planning advice. Would you buy from someone you didn't trust? With few exceptions, it is only after you feel comfortable with the salesperson that you can make a buying decision.

So if you want the sales force to "buy" your involvement with them, they must first trust you. Therefore, work to learn some of the relationship development techniques that THEY use. See if you can attend a training session or borrow some material. Contrary to popular belief — and lucky for us non-sales people — sales skills are learned just like any other.

Understand the Customer's Needs
Just as a good salesperson does research on a big account before approaching the prospect, you must also demonstrate knowledge of the "customer." Do some research on your own sales force. How is it organized? How does it compare to competitors? Who are the heavy hitters? Where are the challenges? By understanding the "pain points" of the sales force, you are ready to develop a value proposition.

Present the Solution
Think about how you buy a product or service. You are interested in what it will do for you and how it will make your life better. The solution you develop must be presented in a series of benefit statements. Simply asking sales people to contribute information without articulating the benefit for them dooms your efforts to failure.

Overcome Objections and Close the Sale
While this step sounds scary to most non-sales people, it is really just part of the buying process. For example, if your aim is to conduct a CI breakout session at the next sales meeting, you would present the solution in terms of benefits as described above and simply ask for time on the meeting agenda. However if you encounter questions about its value, relevance or outcome, it simply means that the decision maker needs more information in order to make a decision.

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Letter From the Editor

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Annual Conference ***and*** the SCIP Annual Conference. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this issue and our "conference season." And, as always, I look forward to hearing from you!

Very best,
Cynthia Cheng Correia
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Engaging Your Sales Force

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Set Expectations
Top sales people know that they don't usually win the big account the first time. Rather, they usually start with a small piece of the customer's business, and work to expand it over time. If you are just getting started, don't expect to win over the entire sales force in one grand shot. Whether you start with one region, one market, or just one person at a time, use a strategic approach and measure your progress over time.

Go For It
There is a selling truism that "every 'No' eventually leads to a 'Yes'." Working with the sales force to establish an information and knowledge sharing relationship is not easy, but it can be done successfully with some learned selling skills and a lot of commitment.

Adopting the approach that your own sales organization uses helps you acquire those skills and demonstrates your commitment. Learn the process they use and practice the relationship building skills they employ with customers as you interact with them. Yes, they will recognize their own skills being practiced on them and yes, they will appreciate your sincere effort to know and understand their world. You will then be well on your way to accomplishing your goals with the sales force.

Stephen Schulz is President of Line of Sight, LLC. Prior to founding Line of Sight, Steve was Director of Market Research and Intelligence at Optum, a division of UnitedHealth Group (UNH). Steve has created and managed competitive intelligence programs for a number of leading companies; and his background includes sales, consulting, product management, business development, and international cross-cultural training in Japan. Steve has an MBA in Marketing from the University of Colorado and an undergraduate degree in Business Administration and Finance from Iowa State University. He leads SCIP's Minnesota chapter. Steve can be reached at 651-204-6813 or steve.schulz@lineofsightgroup.com.

Steve will be presenting at a CI Division program session at the SLA 2007 Annual Conference in Denver. See Conference Preview (starting on page 10) for more details.

Communication in CI Departments

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in large corporations. I also decided to interview CI professionals in local and national companies, questioning them about their habits when it comes to communications in their respective businesses. The findings may surprise you!

The first issue that came to light, which has also been discussed in some articles, is the existing confusion about the use of "Business Intelligence (BI)" and "Competitive Intelligence (CI)" for both Knowledge Management and Competitive Intelligence disciplines. Even though both disciplines have been around for some time now, corporations are still unclear of the differences. So let me begin by sharing definitions for both from Wikipedia:

> **Business intelligence** (**BI**) is a business management term which refers to applications and technologies that are used to gather, provide access to, and analyze data and information about company operations. Business intelligence systems can help companies have a more comprehensive knowledge of the factors affecting their business, such as metrics on sales, production, internal operations, and can help companies make better business decisions. Business Intelligence should not be confused with *competitive intelligence*, which is a separate management concept.

> **Competitive intelligence (CI)** is the process by which organizations gather and use information about products, customers, and competitors, for their short term and long term planning.
>
> Competitive Intelligence is an ethical and legal business practice. (This is important as CI professionals emphasize that the discipline is not the same as industrial espionage, which is both unethical and usually illegal). The focus is on the external business environment. There is a process involved in gathering information, converting it into intelligence and then utilizing this in business decision making. CI professionals emphasize that if the intelligence gathered is not usable (or actionable), then it is not intelligence.

What I gathered through my research is that a number of knowledge management departments use the term, "Business Intelligence." However, there are also competitive intelligence professionals who use "business intelligence" to describe their functions, mainly because they feel that "Competitive Intelligence" is too limiting and "Business Intelligence" indicates a larger perspective. Unfortunately, this causes confusion in message deliv-

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