

COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE BY RAINER MICHAELI

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Competitive Intelligence: Strategische Wettbewerbsvorteile Erzielen durch Systematische Konkurrenz, Markt und Technologieanalysen, 2nd edition, by Rainer Michaeli, Die Denkfabrik GmbH, managing director. Springer Verlag, Heidelberg 2005, 629 pages, Euro 79.50. In German.

Rainer Michaeli's book, *Competitive Intelligence: How to Achieve Strategic Competitive Advantage through Competitor, Market and Technology Analysis*, makes it easy for readers to understand how to ethically and legally integrate competitive intelligence (CI) into their company, and how to convert CI from theory to practice.

The competitive intelligence novice will find help with everything from the empirical question, "What is competitive intelligence?" to "How do I conduct competitive intelligence in my company, and what do I need to do to move it from a single-person operation, or focusing only on tactical decisions, to an integrated function within my company?"

What the reader will not get is a "cookie cutter" approach to competitive intelligence. There are no templates or outlines one can copy, just a lot of factual information to provide the backbone of a successful CI function, no matter where it operates.

The book also includes a targeted discussion of what differentiates CI and the various marketing functions, such as marketing research, as well as espionage issues.

MORE THAN A BEGINNERS' GUIDE

While it may sound as if this book is more of a beginner's guide, it is far

from that. Yes, it is true that part of this book outlines concepts, techniques, and applications for competitive intelligence, but who does not look for different or better ways to do his job? What seasoned professional could not benefit from a different point of view?

The book covers 24 case studies and professional articles, 37 of the most important CI methods, and 200 graphs and charts. I found the real strength of this book to be the case studies and professional articles from national and international companies (BMW AG, E.ON Sales & Trading GmbH, DaimlerChrysler Off-Highway, Siemens Medical Solutions, ZF Trading GmbH, Centerpulse Orthopedics Ltd., ENTRAS – Energy Trading Services, Evotec OAI AG, Deutsche Börse Systems AG, SAP SI AG, T-Mobile Deutschland GmbH) and the variety of theories versus practical applications discussed in those case studies. The refreshing points of view, sometimes contradicting each other, were a bonus for me.

Through quotes from notable legends, as well as current experts, Michaeli's book took on an inspirational factor as well. What better way to compare trials and tribulations than through a quote by Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, Sherlock Holmes, or "our own" Cliff Kalb?

ALSO A REFERENCE GUIDE

The book's organization is such that it can be used as a reference guide, as well as a textbook for class or self-study. It is easy to navigate and has an extensive index and a very detailed glossary that enhance targeted searches on methods, terms, or statistics.

This is a departure from the usual book reviews, because currently this book is printed only in German. But Michaeli's book is an important contribution to the competitive intelligence community in Europe, and SCIP as a whole. Its superb content and structure make it a great resource for any German speaking CI professional. It is this reviewer's hope that an English version will be available soon.

Christine Wunderlin is a principal at MarketSmart Research Services, which concentrates on delivering high-quality public source research to its clients. MarketSmart Research serves a number of businesses, including Fortune 500 and other large global companies, advertising and marketing firms, small established and start-up businesses, and other professional research firms. Christine is a SCIP chapter coordinator in Wisconsin, as well as chair of the Catalyst Awards Committee. She can be reached at cwunderlin@marketsmartresearch.com. ●