

# INTRODUCTION

**Kenneth Sawka and Bonnie Hohhof**

The book you are holding represents the collective wisdom of more than forty seasoned and experienced competitive intelligence practitioners. These contributors have started, worked in, managed, and developed competitive intelligence (CI) functions in companies all around the world. They have served as educators of the discipline, and have delivered products and services to the industry. They know what works (and what doesn't work) when you are starting an intelligence function.

## BACKGROUND

*Starting a Competitive Intelligence Function* is the third volume in the Topics in CI series, published by the Society of Competitive Intelligence Professional's (SCIP) Competitive Intelligence Foundation. Its contents present an overview of the necessary elements that create an effective competitive intelligence function for your organization. Whether you are new to CI, an experienced practitioner starting a new function, a manager involved in designing or overseeing an intelligence effort, or an academic teaching a CI course, this book provides a comprehensive overview of the key elements that produce a successfully designed intelligence function.

Like many endeavors that carry significant potential benefits, there are no common approaches or standard answers to starting a CI function. In the almost forty collective years in the competitive intelligence business, we have yet to see two companies follow the same set of procedures. No two companies are alike, and as a result, no two intelligence functions are alike.

## ORGANIZATION

We've organized the book's 35 chapters into three main parts: building a system start to finish, providing an industry focus, and specific case studies. **Part One** provides practical advice on all facets of establishing a new CI function, from defining initial decision-based needs all the way through evaluating the impact and benefit gained from the intelligence function. It starts by reinforcing the premise that having a strong decision-orientation is critical to the success of any intelligence function. **Section 1** covers the critical success factors for planning an effective intelligence system, from developing and selling your business case, to creating sound ethics.

**Section 2** then addresses the proven methods companies have used to leverage library and information services to support the CI function. This section also discusses best practices for developing both internal

and external human networks for intelligence gathering. **Section 3** presents valuable “how to” instruction on some of the most popular intelligence analysis methodologies and effectively communicating your intelligence finding to top decision-makers. **Section 4** goes on to cover staffing and professional development of CI practitioners, the pros and cons of using consultants, and the role of technology. And **Section 5** provides perspectives on how to measure the impact of competitive intelligence.

**Part Two** offers insights into starting an intelligence function in four industries where competitive intelligence is most prominent – financial services, information technology, pharmaceuticals, and professional services. Each industry chapter talks about the unique nature of these sectors and the impact of industry-specific structures on intelligence practices.

**Part Three** provides six case studies – real-life descriptions of how companies like TelCom South Africa and Boehringer-Ingelheim launched and managed their competitive intelligence functions. Here, readers will obtain “real life” glimpses of the specific company factors – such as culture, decision-making style, and corporate performance – that affect the way companies develop and implement CI functions.

Starting a new CI function could very well be one of the most important activities your company engages in this year. This book makes it easier for you to develop and implement a system that avoids generating more nice-to-know information. The chapters’ contents help you envision, develop, staff, resource, maintain, and, most importantly, benefit from a CI function that offers true decision-support and insights with the active participation of company decision-makers.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Ken Sawka, Outward Insights  
Bonnie Hohhof, SCIP