

# Competitive Intelligence experiences in companies: case studies on creative opportunities

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**Abstract**—The globalization of trade, the accelerated pace of innovation and the increasing segmentation and market transformation represent so many aspirations threats than opportunities for businesses. Indeed, it is vital to integrate more and more information in order to reduce the uncertainty generated by this new environment. The business intelligence reports although this fact by allowing these companies to make anticipatory listening weak signals of their socio-economic environment in order to discover the creative opportunities and reduce uncertainty in order to make the right decisions.

**Keywords**—Competitive Intelligence, Strategic Information, Strategic Intelligence, Protection, Companies, risk.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In a world characterized by fluctuating developments increasingly erratic and therefore very difficult to predict, it is necessary to be competitive, that is to say, to sell continuously and profitably products and services created. It is also important to be fit for continuous innovation. Competition is tough and globally. Moreover, the long-term business success requires more than adequate positioning in the current market it must also think of tomorrow<sup>1</sup>. In this context, it is essential to exercise constant vigilance for adequate decision-making to ensure the development and continuity of the business. Business intelligence is then presented as a powerful way to reduce uncertainty. It allows collecting reliable information on the environment and thereby powering the strategic thinking process among leaders.

According to Corine Cohen<sup>2</sup> "economic intelligence is as a formalized process of research, collection, processing of information and dissemination of knowledge in strategic management. Besides its informational function, strategic

intelligence main tasks to anticipate threats and opportunities of the environment (anticipatory function) to make recommendations to propose and / or take action (proactive) function in to help the strategic decision making and improve the performance and competitiveness of the organization. It requires an organizational structure in networks, useful, financial and technical ".

By its function, Economic intelligence seems likely to have an impact on the performance of the company as it provides essential information to its adaptation and competitiveness. However, despite this critical role that is expected to play competitive intelligence, little research has focused on its impact on company performance. Indeed, most studies have focused on information processing process by the management team in corporate and strategic uncertainty of the environment. Lesca<sup>3</sup> (1994) also stresses in this regard that "companies wishing to implement business intelligence is hampered by the lack of models, methods and tools that can help them." This lack of knowledge is likely to have more negative effects on businesses as their business environment is more complex and turbulent, resulting in a greater need for vigilance. To meet this need, we perform two steps. A tour of the literature on economic intelligence to clarify the concept and situate the research problem. The recommended research methodology will then be described, the study of several cases of companies showing advanced and innovative practices whose characteristic is based on the transferability of the methods implemented.

<sup>1</sup> Hamel G. & Prahalad CK.1996. Competing for the Future. Harvard Business Review Press.

<sup>2</sup> Corine Cohen. "Sleep and strategic intelligence" Lavoisier. Paris 2004, page 22-23

<sup>3</sup>Lesca H. 1994. Strategic Intelligence. Editions Aster, Villeurbanne Page 36.

## II. THE COMPANY AND INTELLIGENCE ECONOMIC

According to Carlo Revelli<sup>4</sup>, "Every organization must learn to control informational flows before making any strategic decision."

Indeed, the changing positions of competitors, new entrants coming into the market, technological areas open, not to mention the instability of suppliers and subcontractors, and of course changing customer desires. Faced with the speed of these multiple mutations, the quest for information to the relevant decision-making has become vital<sup>5</sup>. Nevertheless, the companies are facing formidable traps, such as lack or surplus of information, increased uncertainty and instability in the policy environment.

To solve these problems, companies are awakening to business intelligence to "circumscribe uncertainty, instability and partially control the climb to a global vision of the world and its changes." This watch allows the company to detect warning signs of change and prepare for their arrival.

### A. Socio-economic context

In recent decades, changes in the economic environment began to be taken into account and the design of the business changes radically. She spends a representation of black box, or closed system than an open system in constant interrelation with the environment. Knowing this environment to better interact with it appears essential to the survival and competitiveness of the company. The quality of information between the firm and its environment exchange will affect the viability of the company. From this period, the environment evolves into an increasingly complex and turbulent state.

- The volatility and complexity of the environment

This inevitable movement towards globalization generates a strong increase in competitive pressure and complex economic issues. In addition, the consumer has become more demanding and unfaithful, pushing companies to adopt more aggressive toward their competitors for the meet and loyalty.

The increase in global output in turn induces significant overcapacity problems in all industrialized countries resulting particularly severe social movements. Finally, protection of the natural environment has become a major concern in many countries, requiring firms to new standards and regulations.

Indeed, we have entered the era of cyber-economy, the information superhighway and the Internet. Newcomers, while working in the world of the new economy have become champions of the performance before the heavy weight of the traditional economy.

<sup>4</sup> Revelli C. 1998. Strategic Intelligence on the Internet. Dunod, Paris, page 21.

<sup>5</sup> Ruach, D. & Salmon R. The Technology intelligence and economic intelligence, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1999, page 39.

- Conditions of increasing uncertainty

Today, the business environment has become increasingly turbulent, plunging managers in a situation of increasing uncertainty. To cope with this problem, the first step must cross the manager, according to Corin, is to recognize the existence of uncertainty instead of ignore it, "while the ignorance of uncertainty leads to the error, knowledge of uncertainty not only leads to doubt but also surveillance. The uncertainty is not only the cancer that eats knowledge, this is also its close, it is what pushes investigate, verify, communicate, think, invent.

To cope with this permanent state of uncertainty, business leaders have therefore felt the need to put in place a monitoring device in their environment, in particular to protect against risks and unforeseen events such as anticipate crises.

- Protect themselves from risks

The risk is a potential danger more or less predictable or the possibility of an adverse event. In the business world, this concept is well known, especially in the context of decision making where the risk of error is often important. It is maximum when the decision maker is devoid of information in a situation where an unknown domain. This position emphasizes the need for surveillance and intelligence, which therefore can be seen as an insurance risk which, to prevent risk or protect against them.

Only those nations and firms that have a performance monitoring system have the ability to protect themselves from risks, anticipate crises, to avoid or limit their consequences).

### B. The organization of competitive intelligence in company

The Business intelligence is an approach that applies to all companies. Indeed, whatever its size, a business must sustain its activity in protecting certain information because they are sensitive (know-how, customer files ...), be attentive to the initiatives of its competitors, the expectations of its partners and clients, be responsive in ensuring that relevant information reaches decision makers ...

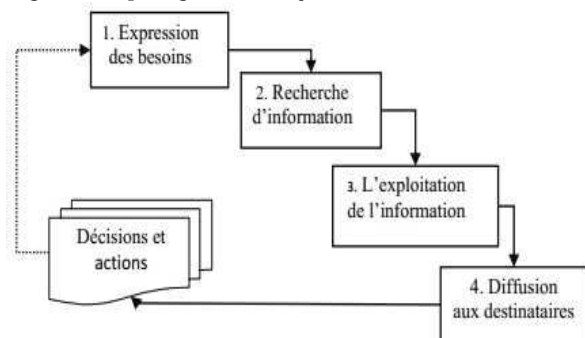
Therefore, we can distinguish three organizational business intelligence in companies.

#### 1) BI Model

The watch is a systematic approach to research, collection and dissemination of information. The day comes to the scientific, technological, legal and regulatory, institutional, commercial, environmental, etc. Diagnosis and monitoring of competitors are central to this approach; it aims to monitor and decrypt the competitive environment and to detect weak signals revealing emerging trends.

Strategy includes specific sleep stages<sup>6</sup> through which different actors are involved. The ultimate goal of this approach is to transform information into knowledge so as to facilitate decision making. The sleep cycle is divided into four phases: expression of needs, research and data collection, processing and analysis, storage and dissemination.

Fig. 1. Sleep stages in the cycle of information



Once the overall objectives for information arrested mission's collection, storage and analysis of information should be designed to assist the user in making its final decision.

It is then to transform the mass of data (available in various forms, often unorganized and collected through different channels) in information and then knowledge.

The methods and tools of economic intelligence nowadays allow to validate the collected data (from various sources believed to be reliable) into a coherent set of information adapted to the profile of the company and its needs.

## 2) Model protection or security

All businesses have important information and expertise that must be protected in one way or another: processes, objects, documents, data or files of commercial, industrial, financial, scientific, technical or strategic. The loss or disclosure of this information can have serious consequences, especially in terms of image, sales or market share.

Protections under both the legal strategy (patents, protection of trademarks and models, evidence protected by copyright, contracts, etc. creations) and Safety (Protection of strategic knowledge to through information systems, personal awareness of the company). Companies also have a legal duty to protect their staff as well as their location and ensure that their information is secure.

With the development of electronic commerce and the increasing use of Internet, more and more information is shared by trading partners and stored worldwide on servers (cloud computing, etc.) that may be vulnerable. There is a risk of tampering, alteration, erasure or fraud

The difficulty of implementing effective security solutions is the fact that they must be technological, procedural, regulatory, organizational, managerial and human. These are multi-faceted to seamlessly integrate and must be accepted and managed effectively by all stakeholders of the company.

## 3) Model of influence or lobbying

All Lobbying is a set of actions influence in place to guide public decisions because their consequences are unique to impact business activity. These actions influence must be made at the time and in the appropriate place, time planning is strategic. In sum, the lobbyist responsible actions influence is "lawyer" of the company and its activities.

It uses techniques that all are to provide information to the individual or group of individuals it wishes to influence, in the sense of defending the interests of the company. It must be understood through a symbolic component (since mobilizes springs make-believe) a technical component (since it passes through the media and mediation) and, finally, a strategic component (since it must be used to the implementation of a project or advocacy).

The influence covers several actions such as the construction of direct influence networks to make "activism" to obtain large contracts, development of operations management in order to enhance or transform its image, animation networks foundations, think tanks, universities, NGOs to enrich a relational fabric helping to improve the positioning of the company in the competitive arena.

Thus, the establishment of expert rewarding competence of the company and to consequently networks to establish its reputation among different categories of relevant professionals or opinion leaders and the organization and conduct of training targeted.

<sup>6</sup>Alquier AM & Salles Mr.1997. Methodological considerations for the design of business intelligence enterprise systems. Communication at the International Congress "The Industrial Engineering in a world without borders", Albi, France

### III. CASE STUDIES OF INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES

The case studies we will present purpose is to understand what the business of business intelligence in the companies studied, and know what they are doing in this area in order to obtain results.

#### A. Orange Telecom

Orange UK<sup>7</sup> is part of Orange SA (a subsidiary of France Telecom), a mobile operator and provider of service in Great Britain. The economic activity of intelligence Orange UK is managed by Andrew Beurschgens (BI Managers), in which business intelligence is an operation which must be at the service of decision making and focuses primarily on the operational level and tactics to develop a solid understanding of structure and a knowledge platform. Top management team strategic planning, the management group in the consumer segment and broadband business, employees responsible for sales, distribution and finance are the main actors of the economic intelligence business.

Two basic factors must be taken into consideration when setting up a business intelligence system, which is the culture of the organization and internal policies. It is therefore in this - in capital business- to understand the relationship between the producer of the intelligence and the end user, and it must first determine the outputs of economic intelligence process before considering the manner and tools in place. The steps for creating intelligence within Orange UK can be summarized as follows:

- Intelligence Briefing Packs

The collection of data by a combination of internal and sources, they focus on the micro and macro environment.

- Scenario Analysis Workshop

It is to identify and analyze the factors that have an impact on the present and the future of the business of Orange UK; and the impact of the event probability of each factor will be determined later. In the end, a set of scenarios to be determined that will -or will pas- updated after each scenario, threats and opportunities must be identified from the perspective of Orange UK.

- Reaction Competitor Analysis

This is to determine the possible actions of competitors (for each scenario)

- Reaction Competitor Analysis

Based on previous activities, Orange UK will determine strategies to achieve and maintain a favorable position in its various markets.

Dissemination of intelligence must be performed by several channels, face to face to documents and e-mails. Meetings between decision makers (end users of intelligence produced) and leaders of business intelligence enterprise is essential not

only to ensure effective feedback, but also to receive the views of its managers on this activity.

#### B. American Airlines

American Airlines<sup>8</sup> lost \$ 8.3 billion in 2001 and \$ 11.3 billion in 2002 after a net profit of \$ 23 billion between 1995 and 2000. As a result of these losses, efforts were focused on changing this situation characterized by a very sharp decline. The company has been obliged to adopt a hard and aggressive program, said M & E or "Maintenance and engineering operation" to reorganize, reduce costs and increase efficiency. Maintenance capacity and internal repair was high, employees were kept and looking for opportunities that generate long-term benefits has been increased. However, the company does not want to lower the level of work or maintenance. To do this, it has taken various measures such as research opportunity subcontracting for maintenance, reduce equipment inventory, repair instead of replacement as it is possible, open communication between the management and employees.

The activity of intelligence American Airlines was therefore facing these choices and tasks at the organizational level and operational level. By adopting the style of management "leave no stone unturned," the team of economic intelligence business was conducting investigations on several actors, direct and indirect competitors, industry leaders and subcontractors maintenance which it s 'strong interest while relating directly and openly and offering opportunities to exchange different types of data about their interests.

The vice president of maintenance highlights the traits of economic intelligence of American Airlines, saying "we wanted to see 'em thesis companies capabilities, and if they are growing, If we were going to incumbent on, how much it cost would ".

The company also ensures the exchange of information with other firms including maintenance, and with companies like Boeing and Harley-Davidson.

Benchmarking also has its place in this company. By the way Steve Glime (American's product support manager) expressed "We're looking at data to Identify Areas in All which the competitor does a better job And Then drive to see how we can improve. We Plan to close gaps those "the author goes on to say" The American's management mandate from was to observe, learn and exchange - Where and appropriates, to create dramatic change "; it shows that economic intelligence based on three principles and steps: observe to understand, remember and learn and eventually change to achieve. Forecasts were made were based on data collected by the team of intelligence.

The results of this work appear mainly on reducing the cost and time (Cost and Time) where a web-based implementation linking the various departments was established. The team of intelligence operates, following the same lines, both in Europe and in Asian markets and Latin America.

<sup>7</sup>Global Intelligence Alliance. 2008. Market Intelligence for the Strategic Planning Process- Case examples. GIA white paper. 1/2008. [www.globalintelligence.com](http://www.globalintelligence.com)

<sup>8</sup>R. Cormac (2007). Soaring to new heights: American Airlines' Rise in Maintenance and Engineering Operation.TMA International. [www.scip.org](http://www.scip.org)

### C. The company Shell

The economic intelligence unit within Shell<sup>9</sup> is to make strategic decisions. It aims to set priorities and strategic actions to optimize the timing of each of them which must be stable and constantly evolving without the departure of an employee have a negative influence.

The first step is to identify relevant sources and data collection, networks of internal and external experts should be established. A decision to change was made in this connection that the key success factors are interacting with the main decision-maker to create intelligence, understanding the information needs of decision makers, preparation for any change in the activity intelligence following the strategic guidelines.

The appearance characterizes forecast business intelligence business. To do this, she developed "a Play Technology Mapping" meaning understand the future of technology and key strategic factors. The steps in this phase are:

- Issue framing  
Communicate with top management to clarify the scope of study.
- Collection from internal sources
- Collection from external sources (publications, Internet, experts,)
- Analysis of patent data, partners, benchmarking, five forces...
- Workshops  
They are dedicated to the verification and confirmation of the analysis, synthesis and development of uncertainty and competition.
- Strategic choices

## IV. CASE STUDIES OF MOROCCAN COMPANIES

With the objective to determine the practical business intelligence in the Moroccan financial sector, identify its strategic information needs and measure its difficulties. A survey was conducted among 39 companies operating in this sector and distributed as follows:

Table 1 - Sample distribution

Business sectors	Population mother	Sample	
	Number	%	Number
Financial holding	25	20	5
Autres non-bank financial institutions	58	48	28
Insurance	22	18	4
OPCVM	17	14	2
Total	122	100	39

<sup>9</sup>Global Intelligence Alliance. 2008. Market Intelligence for the Strategic Planning Process- Case examples. GIA white paper 1/2008. [www.globalintelligence.com](http://www.globalintelligence.com)

The companies in the sample of our empirical study are considered among the most important elements in the Moroccan efficient financial sector (first class) in terms of sales, profitability or economic performance. The research instrument was used to collect data in the field is the questionnaire that was administered directly to the heads of departments responsible for information management, in order to diagnose their practices and especially their need for sleep. This questionnaire is built into five parts and contains thirty questions; the first part consists of the company's identity card and the presentation of the caller, the second concerns the resources for the implementation of a business intelligence system within the surveyed company, the third and the fourth part is to present the two functions of business intelligence which is the intelligence function and the protection function and the last part seeks to assess the informational problems in the company's activity and appropriate solutions.

The mode of administration chosen to lead our survey is the technique of the interview or face to face. This is an interview where the conduct of the various issues and content of these are developed in strict and predetermined manner. Finally, each interview resulted in a report that has been validated by the interviewee.

### A. Accounts rendered companies surveyed

#### 1) BMCE BANK

The Moroccan Foreign Trade Bank is the second largest private bank in the united flagship institution and in the Moroccan banking landscape. She is engaged in a process of growth both in Morocco and abroad. It is the heart of the Group Finance com, a private Moroccan group. BMCE Bank certified ISO 9001 for foreign operations, project finance, electronic banking, securities, loans to individuals and recovery.

BMCE has a well structured with members specifically assigned to monitoring activities of economic intelligence cell (librarians, archivists, watchmen ...) and it affects very substantial financial, material and human resources.

Information deemed necessary by the bank in decision making is information about the tastes and needs of customers, on competitors, financial / market information, on regulations / laws and technological information.

The collection of information in the bank is via formal sources (web, press and magazines, databases, directories, annual report and financial statements), informal sources (customers / competitors, students / trainees, internal company sources and events). The information collected is always validated before being used for decision making and more resources are used for their distribution (e-mail, written reports, workshop and intranet).

BMCE Bank formalizes a policy of protecting its information deemed sensitive by training security officers, documentation rules to follow, the management of access rights, incident handling and caution against indiscretions. In addition, when the bank chooses a provider, it takes into

account its ability to protect its information by imposing secrecy clauses in his contract. Financial data, including forward-looking statements, are secured by the appreciation of their value and their mastery of dissemination and exploitation.

Access to the premises of the bank are controlled by the host organization, the movement of visitors and intrusion detection as well as servers and computer workstations are equipped with hardware and software security (antivirus, anti-spyware and firewall).

BMCE Bank complained several informational problems such as lack of integration of monitoring in decision-making and retention of information. And to overcome these difficulties, the bank offers a reconciliation of monitoring activity to the Executive, the development of more advanced training in economic analysis and the creation of an information system tailored to the needs of the bank.

## 2) *Credit Morocco*

Credit Morocco (CDM) is a commercial bank subsidiary of French group Credit Agricole. With 333 branches, CDM is a Moroccan financial institution first order. It operates in three main business lines: retail banking, corporate banking, investment and asset management. The complementarity between these activities is a major commercial asset and a guarantee of financial stability.

Since information is becoming more and more a strategic weapon competitiveness in a changing environment, and aware of the importance and the significant contribution of the day before his operation, the CDM is underway to establish a monitoring system operational sector, enabling it to monitor all developments in the banking sector, anticipate its changes, assist in decision-making and assessing the potential risks in order to keep its durability.

This device is an informational medium that observes and analyzes the industry environment, whose main mission is to help leaders in decision-making, to provide them a comprehensive view of their environment by providing relevant information deemed likely to reduce risks and on defined area.

Software and sites used for the research and treatment of information is the website of Bank Al Maghreb, website Google.com, software Business Objects and Cognos....

The access to the premises of the bank is controlled by the organization of the reception, the movement of visitors and intrusion detection. Servers and computer workstations are equipped with software and hardware security: antivirus, anti-spyware, anti-spam and firewall.

## 3) *Barid Al Maghreb*

Barid Al Maghreb was created in 1998 as a public institution with legal personality and financial autonomy, in August 2010 and converted into a limited company whose capital is wholly owned by the state. The transformation of Barid Al Maghreb limited company,

which became effective in November, 2011, to better ensure its missions and development.

Multi-company, Barid Al Maghreb operates mainly in three business segments: mail, messaging and financial services while relying on multifaceted networks (contact points, network routing and distribution, computer networks ...) to offer his services and those of its partners.

This institute is aware of the importance of strategic intelligence about his future. This has resulted in the creation of a structure at the direction of the strategy to tackle a delicate mission to implement a BI system for development of business and promoting Culture watch on the environment.

This is the "Innovation & Strategic Intelligence service. This device consists of human resources (cell saver / watchmen) and technical resources (appropriate methods & tools).

Requirements definition, the current year is through an action plan and relates to the production of records according to a predefined plan ensures the determination of priority issues in collaboration with key stakeholders, identifying recipients (consumers of information), monitoring of areas and specific topics, developing and updating the directory of information sources.

## 4) *CDG Capital*

The Caisse of deposit and management (CDG) is a financial institution created as a public institution by the Dahir of 10 February 1959. The CDG has central role of receiving, storing and managing savings resources of by their nature or origin, require special protection.

The Group's business is the management of institutional funds and pensions, Banking, Finance, Insurance and territorial development. The group operates in several business areas; it evolves in a changing and competitive nature of environment.

The need to be responsive to its environment brought CDG to create a business intelligence service in the Study and Strategy direction. The day is new; it dates from the beginning of 2007. It has launched a tender to seek the services of a company specialized in terms of monitoring tools and support for the implementation of the system.

CDG looks permanently on the definition of areas of activity to ensure. She began by analyzing the existing, and then she surveyed subsidiaries to detect their needs before.

The staff is very involved in the day including subsidiaries of staff. Training seminars were organized by the company and led by experts. For people to take ownership of the system, it was necessary to train them and introduce them to the tools and methods before.

Software is used for the collection, processing, dissemination and storage of information. This tool is set in a manner to integrate the information CDG needs including field information.

## B. Synthesis

Based on the analysis of the various models of business intelligence system within companies of different nationalities and different sectors (finance, telecom, aviation, ...). It is clear that learning business intelligence happening and still go through the practice of sleep (regulatory, business, competitive, and technological). Those responsible for economic intelligence within companies analyzed always aware that the information is a key determinant for the development of their structures and that the practice of the day becomes indispensable.

While overall multinationals and most large companies are already taking their game by focusing their management on economic intelligence, adopting as a support tool for decision and devoting huge investments in optical define and plan strategies and responsible policies that can enable them to stay the course and keep up with their environment. In our businesses against it is still the navigation. The information is still unstructured and practices of the day are random, somewhat formalized. The means, organization and tools are still lacking.

Certainly, as access to information is a major obstacle, but not insurmountable, which alone can explain this gap between local businesses and those in the northern hemisphere over the economic intelligence.

Indeed, the most significant advances appear in large Moroccan structures, including the banking sector, may be, by the means at their disposal and psychological factors that lead to having a business intelligence system for image reasons.

## V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it appears that the use of tools of economic intelligence has become a necessity due to a broadening of the economic competition, the rise of international competition and opportunity that constitutes input of our societies in the era of information. It is a lever that allows companies to survive and grow to be competitive.

The approach of the Economic Intelligence aims to collect strategic information, create new organizational knowledge that are supposed to enhance the development of the company to improve its technical innovation, further strengthen its strategic position and protect its heritage immaterial.

The approach of the Business Intelligence tool is an opportunity for the company to ensure its competitiveness in an environment where competition is ruthless. It allows for a more thorough analysis to involve all internal stakeholders (managers, employees, shareholders, etc.) and external (competitors, subcontractors, suppliers, banks, customers, etc.), showing the approach to be followed, resources, tools and methods being considered for use to enhance the competitiveness of the company in a hypercompetitive environment.

Through this approach, innovation and information management is the cornerstone of any company that wants to develop, maintain and to manage the drivers of economic growth.

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