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In this issue of the *Competitive Intelligence Report*, we look at two different aspects of setting up a CI group. Here we take a look at two news stories that offer valuable lessons for the use and application of competitive intelligence.

## Between the Lines

Companies that have CI groups are able to more effectively predict competitor actions and are better at responding to competitive pressures in the marketplace. When setting up a CI unit, it is imperative to establish ethical standards that will allow a company to confidently present itself to customers.

Our first article addresses the importance of a competitive intelligence unit to all size companies. This has become more apparent as smaller companies, which traditionally held that all the CI they needed resided in the heads of employees, have begun to use CI and software to augment what the owner and a few select employees can collect. For many companies that have operated with the assumption that a CI program was too expensive, the long term benefits have become apparent.

A CI program that prevents a tactical or strategic misstep has an even greater impact in the small company, due to the generally lower levels of resources available to the small company. For these firms, CI can mean the difference between profit and loss. [More...](#)

## More SME's Likely to Adopt Business Intelligence

By Juhi Shrivastava | January 15, 2008  
The Economic Times, India

SME's (small and medium enterprises) do not have deep and endless pockets like the large corporations; they cannot afford even small mistakes. They need to keep innovating to remain competitive at all levels. To fuel innovation within the organization, it's necessary to have a sound enterprise intelligence strategy in place.

This makes Business Intelligence (BI) a very important tool in today's continually changing market scenario.

[More...](#)

## Best Practices Range from Useful to Destructive

By Jason Sherman  
The Market-Intelligent Executive | June 24, 2008

I've been advising clients to exercise skepticism when evaluating anything positioned as a "best practice". What works well at one company is sometimes counterproductive at another.

Today, I received an email promoting excerpts from a study titled, "Developing the High Performance Market Research Function: Study Excerpt".


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## Between the Lines (cont.)

Originating in India, this article demonstrates how widespread CI has become and companies all around the globe now practice this discipline to the disadvantage of those who do not.

In the second article, we look at the marketing of best practices studies as a way to benchmark and improve performance. Many companies use syndicated research reports as a low cost alternative tool to compare their practices to those of the “best in class.” While it is possible to garner some intelligence from such an exercise, the qualifications used to pick “best in class” make any outcome suspect. Effective best practices benchmarking requires that you start with a comparison of those who are truly “best in class” in each benchmark area. Comparing each step of your operations to the best guides you to make positive operational changes and produce a more beneficial outcome. Use care when selecting the comparison companies. Avoid the temptation to pick the “best in class” based on who is the toughest competitor or (in a more cynical exercise) who looks worst in the comparison. In either case there is a great risk that the comparison will produce misleading results with less than optimal outcomes.

CI programs do not have to be behemoths, nor are they limited to the largest companies. Small enterprises and divisions can benefit from a well run CI operation. Keeping company information to a narrow distribution is increasingly important as the internet makes it easier than ever for a searcher to find the information and distribute it far beyond its original intended audience. Companies that compare operations to competitors who are chosen based on what was in a third party report, wishful thinking, or randomness do not get the same benefits from benchmarking as do those that use a careful assessment and determination of “best in class.” Treat every claim that a competitor (or even your own operation) is best in class with a grain of salt and you are more likely to uncover the hidden biases in the comparison. 

## Business Intelligence (cont.)

BI solutions help organizations to transform information into intelligence which in turn can fuel innovation and help organizations to leap frog their competitors.

BI is increasingly viewed as strategic initiatives for businesses to step change their performance. BI plays the role of a filter, which filters out the unnecessary details and brings up only the most important elements needing attention at any time. BI enables enterprises to break through to a higher level of understanding and establish a culture of fact based decision-making.

While large businesses have made it a mandate to drive business transformation through BI Analytics, SME's have started using BI for analyzing simple business trends for making business decisions especially in marketing, sales and finance.

[Read the whole article...](#)

## Best Practices (cont.)

Aside from providing no criteria against which the practices described were evaluated, the premise of this report seems to defy logic. The report is essentially a derivative of research performed by the sponsor on behalf of its clients, which begs the following question. Why would client firms knowingly handover proprietary secrets (their best practices) for publication to the world?

There are other best practices, which border on the comical, such as one suggesting that when companies invest tens of thousands of dollars in focus groups someone from product teams should actually attend the groups.

[Read the whole article...](#)

Continued from page 1

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Decision Support and Training on Competitive and Market Issues for Pharmaceutical Senior Management

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## CI Training by Fletcher/CSI

Taking advantage of all the different competitive intelligence sources and tools available requires a continuing training program composed of both basics and refreshers. Often, CI professionals get used to the same collection and analysis tools. A refresher is an excellent way to verify that you are using the most appropriate tools for the tasks at hand. A basic program is a good way to prepare non-CI staff to support your CI efforts at trade shows or congresses.

Fletcher/CSI, a global leader in CI and the developer of *AdaptiveIntelligence*<sup>SM</sup> which combines different collection and analysis techniques to produce accurate CI, offers clients a full range of customized CI training. Drawing on our 20 years of CI experience, we can apply the lessons of both recession and growth to build a training program for your entire staff.

Whether you are preparing for a trade show and need to maximize the collection effort or are bringing in new staff, we offer customized training that is designed to your specifications and needs. Please call Fletcher/CSI at 802.660.9636 or send us an email at [knowledge@fletchercsi.com](mailto:knowledge@fletchercsi.com). 

### Conference Schedule

The following is a partial list of upcoming conferences. To learn more about other conferences occurring in 2008, visit our web site: [www.fletchercsi.com](http://www.fletchercsi.com) or E-mail: [knowledge@fletchercsi.com](mailto:knowledge@fletchercsi.com)

#### Competitive Intelligence

**Pharma CI Conference & Exhibition** — Sept. 15-17, 2008 – Iselin, NJ — [www.pharmaciconference.com](http://www.pharmaciconference.com)

#### Healthcare/Pharmaceuticals

**National Medical Association** — July 26-31, 2008 — Atlanta, GA — [www.nmanet.org](http://www.nmanet.org)

**American Association for Clinical Chemistry** — July 27-31, 2008 — Washington, DC — [www.aacc.org](http://www.aacc.org)

**3rd Annual Forum on Clinical Supply Chain Management** — July 31 – Aug. 1, 2008 — Princeton, NJ — [www.cbinet.com](http://www.cbinet.com)

**American Association of Nurse Anesthetists** — Aug. 9-13, 2008 — Minneapolis, MN — [www.aana.com](http://www.aana.com)

**American Psychological Association** — Aug. 14-17, 2008 — Boston, MA — [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

**American Academy of Pain Management** — Sep. 4-7, 2008 — Washington, DC — [www.aapainmanage.org](http://www.aapainmanage.org)

#### Medical Devices

**Medical Device Puerto Rico** — Jan. 29-30, 2008 — San Juan, PR — [www.medicaldevicepuertorico.com](http://www.medicaldevicepuertorico.com)

**Medical Devices & Diagnostics Sales & Marketing** — Feb. 2, 2009 — Boston, MA — [www.eyeforpharma.com](http://www.eyeforpharma.com)



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Adaptive  
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Competitive  
Advantage

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## Top 10 CI Training Rules

**When designing a competitive intelligence training program for your organization, remember these rules:**

10. Focus the training on CI applications that fit your business and industry
9. Start small, grow as expertise increases
8. Include all operational levels and job titles in the training with different topics and coverage for each
7. Use internal experts to begin the process and to spread the training to internal groups
6. Run training on a regular basis and in bite sized sessions
5. Bring in outside training experts to provide balance and structure to the training program
4. Make the training systemic and include introductory modules in new employee orientation
3. Cover "Counter-CI" topics in both advanced and basic sessions to prevent loss of information
2. Provide special situation training (conferences, events, negotiations, etc.) prior to the event
1. Use broad level CI training to build a knowledge baseline that covers the basics

## New CI Tool! Google Trends for Websites

[Google Trends for websites](#) enables the user to enter in a popular URL and get a quick snapshot of it's unique visitors, geographical traffic sources, other sites visited and terms searched for; these being the types of search terms that are possibly driving traffic to the site in question.

The introduction of this tool is a positive boost to the Competitive Intelligence sector, a niche and relatively unknown service that gives you access to your competitors website information such as traffic stats, search term traffic and refers that currently link through and drive traffic to their websites. 

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Producing  
Reliable  
and  
Accurate  
Competitive  
and Market  
Intelligence  
Since  
1988

## PHARMA CI CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

September 15-17, 2008

Sheraton at Woodbridge Place  
Iselin, New Jersey

*The Most Targeted, Largest Assembly of Pharmaceutical Competitive Intelligence Executives You Can Meet Anywhere*

In 1999, Fletcher/CSI Healthcare Strategies® co-founded the industry's premiere CI Pharmaceutical Conference. Join us as we continue to serve as the key sponsor in 2008. Features:

- 90% Pharmaceutical Company Speakers
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- Over 300 Registered Attendees
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