



Chapter IV

A Strategic Marketing Intelligence Framework Reinforced by Corporate Intelligence

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ABSTRACT

The chapter examines how marketing strategists and corporate intelligence officers can work together in order to provide a high level, pro-active strategic intelligence operation that enhances marketing strategy development and implementation. A variety of activities relating to marketing strategy, corporate intelligence and corporate security are highlighted. Aspects of corporate counterintelligence are addressed in the context of gathering intelligence, and guidance is provided as to how organizational strategists can develop a strategic marketing intelligence framework that incorporates a counterintelligence dimension. The main advantage of the strategic marketing intelligence framework is that it acts as a vehicle to integrate the organizational intelligence efforts and activities at the highest-level. It also facilitates the creation of an intelligence culture.

INTRODUCTION

The objectives of this chapter are:

- To review the relationship between strategic marketing and corporate intelligence activities.
- To reveal the importance, but weak awareness of counterintelligence in the context of increasing industrial espionage.
- To examine the coordination aspect of the current corporate intelligence activities/processes/systems from a holistic perspective.

- To develop a strategic marketing intelligence framework that facilitates co-ordination/integration of corporate intelligence activities.

The structure of the chapter is as follows. First, reference is made to strategic marketing and intelligence, and a section discussing the need for counter-intelligence follows this. Next, a critical review of a corporate intelligence system is provided, and a section entitled, “The Strategic Marketing Intelligence Framework” follows this, and a section entitled, “The Focus of Strategic Marketing Intelligence.”

STRATEGIC MARKETING AND INTELLIGENCE

Xu (1999) has noted that in many organizations, the marketing activities are in the main centred on the sales function and as a consequence the classical marketing approach prevails. This can be problematic in the sense that marketing strategists fail to view change as market driven, and as a result do not adopt a pro-active approach to strategic intelligence. By embracing the strategic marketing approach, it is possible for marketing strategists to devise and implement intelligence based systems and procedures that ensure that future external threats are dealt with in an appropriate manner. Before the link between strategic marketing and corporate intelligence can be explained, however, it is useful to reflect on what strategic marketing represents. The authors of this chapter define strategic marketing as:

a strategic process that has both an internal and an external dimension, which is concerned with establishing trust based relationships that result in the organization satisfying existing customer needs, producing innovatory products and services that are aimed at satisfying unmet customer needs, and which ultimately results in the organization fulfilling its mission statement.

Aaker (1984) provides insights into what constitutes the strategic marketing approach and explains how a strategic marketing framework can be used to appraise an organization’s products and services, and to align it in the industry so that marketing strategists can implement marketing policy to maximize the organization’s market standing. Cady’s (1984) work is influential with respect to placing marketing within a strategic context and Baker (1996) has reinforced the fact that marketing intelligence should be viewed as a process for gathering, analysing, and interpreting marketing data and information in a logical and structured manner. This approach should ensure that marketing strategists focus on competitive issues. In order to remain competitive, Hamel and Prahalad (1994) have argued that senior managers need to embrace the concept of strategic intent, which is about developing further the organization’s capabilities and at the same time securing additional resources. But this can only be achieved if top management can foresee potential opportunities and threats, and drive the organization with an intelligence oriented vision.

It is useful to reflect on what intelligence means. Eells and Nehemkis (1984) suggest that:

Intelligence, as the term is used here, is the product of collection, evaluation, analysis, integration, and interpretation of all available information that may affect the survival and success of the company. Well-interpreted information, provided by a properly designed intelligence function, can be immediately significant in the planning of corporate policy in all of its fields of operations. Stated in both operational and organizational terms, the main purpose of intelligence is to help the chief executive officer fulfil his wide ranging responsibilities. (p. 75)

It is also possible to add depth to the subject by defining more precisely what corporate intelligence represents. Trim (2001a) defines corporate intelligence as:

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