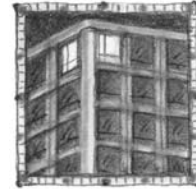


INTERNATIONAL CI REQUIRES A SOFTER APPROACH

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International CI is a topic open to wide interpretation. As I looked at what made international CI different than domestic CI from an analytical perspective, I realized the core analytical tools do not differ. Most of the popular models such as Michael Porter's Five Forces and Four Corners models are universal in their application. For the CI practitioner, what is different with international topics and teams is how the analysis is delivered. Without the proper soft skills to deliver your intelligence, the best analysis can fall on deaf ears.

Unfortunately, most of our time is consumed on mastering the actual analytical tools themselves and not the accompanying skills which are often more subtle and difficult to teach. Yet in an increasingly globalized world, these skill sets are more important than ever. Today the world is smaller. We are more connected than ever. But cultures still remain distinct, requiring different approaches to producing and delivering intelligence in light of our global differences.

SOFT SKILLS

The conventional role of a CI analyst has changed in the 21st century and is likely to continue evolving. Today, four soft skills have emerged as key traits required for CI analysts to succeed in international CI:

- Cultural-awareness
- Collaboration
- Consensus-building
- Communication

CULTURAL AWARENESS

Become aware of cultural differences. Start by putting yourself in

TIP: CI ANALYSTS NEED TO SPEND AS MUCH TIME MASTERING SOFT SKILL SETS AS THEY DO ON THE HARD-CORE ANALYTICAL TOOLS.

a colleague's shoes – what values and norms shape your internal customer's beliefs and corporate culture. Consider the differences that can exist in terms of how your colleagues think and make decisions. Include international members on your team when possible to help you navigate the nuances in your respective cultures.

REMINDER: ALWAYS TRY TO GET INTO THE MINDSET OF YOUR INTERNAL CUSTOMER.

Collaboration

In this increasingly global world, competitive intelligence can rarely succeed if it operates as an isolated function. Collaboration with key stakeholders across the business is critical. Global challenges require cross-geographical teams to solve them. CI analysts need to figure out who needs to be brought together from both inside and outside the company to analyze and solve competitive challenges. Multiple individuals across different geographies carrying the same message carry more weight than a sole CI soldier pounding his or her drum. It takes a village.

A recent *Harvard Business Review* worldwide study revealed that collaboration has become a new and

important competitive advantage for successful companies. These "successful firms have altered their training and reward systems to focus on 'soft' skills so that managers can better learn to motivate and coordinate team members outside the firm and sometimes in vastly different cultures," (Rosabeth Moss Kanter, "Transforming giant," HBR, January 2008).

Consensus-building

Successful CI analysts build consensus for their ideas and persuade other to act on the intelligence they have helped to produce. Investing the time to build consensus will yield tremendous dividends in the long run. Flexibility and tolerance are particularly important in building consensus on international issues.

Flexibility. CI analysts need to adapt their style and approach for a given situation.

Tolerance. CI analysts need to be tolerant of different approaches, non-conventional, out of the box thinking.

Communication

Western culture is known for its direct and explicit communication style. Other cultures are often less direct, using inferences instead of strong language. Adapt your communication style to your team and the internal customer to whom you're reporting your analysis.

CHALLENGES OF INTERNATIONAL COLLECTION

Competing in an increasingly global economy requires having access to the right data at the right time. Advances in technology and the internet allow researchers to tap into

TABLE 1: EVOLVING CI ROLES

20 th Century	21 st Century
Department based	Community & peer-based
Receive questions	Ask questions
Fact finding	Links and connections
Report-based deliverables	Communicating messages adapted to audience
Function autonomously	Collaborate with other business units
America-centric	World-centric
In person teams	Virtual teams

information that was not previously available even as few as ten years ago. The challenge is not the access to this far reaching data but the ability to interpret it. Research planning should include brainstorming ideas and feedback from colleagues of different

but relevant cultural and geographical backgrounds. When possible leverage your local contacts to help interpret research findings and nuances specific to that culture, country or geography. International CI requires adopting new soft skills in order to be effective

including: cultural-awareness, collaboration, consensus building and communication. Unfortunately for the CI analyst these skills were not necessarily taught to us in business school. But global differences require that we change the soft side of our analytical approach and delivery to be effective. Recent evidence and studies even suggest that these skills differentiate forward-thinking firms from the rest of the pack in today's increasingly global economy. What's more, it's good for us in both our professional and personal lives.

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SCIP WEBINAR

Increasing Your Intelligence ROI

There is a wealth of information from SCIP and other sources about the “how to” of CI – tools, techniques, sources. But what about the “why to”? CI professionals are being asked to provide hard evidence that what they do is directly creating value for the organization. In this webinar, we'll explore some ways to approach this problem.

You, or members of your organization, can attend these one hour webinars from anywhere in the world. All you need is a personal computer

(PC) with a standard internet connection and a telephone. Each registration is for one PC link. Cost is \$95 member, \$195 non-member. Contact Sandy Skipper sskipper@scip.org or Robyn Reals reals@scip.org.

About the presenter: T.W. (Tim) Powell is president of The Knowledge Agency, a business research, training, and consulting firm. He has been formally studying the relationship between intelligence and enterprise value creation for three years