



Emerging Markets Queries in Finance and Business

Intelligence Cycle Integration within Decisional System among Public Administration

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Abstract

Intelligence Cycle is a relatively new concept in the analysis of modern management systems, particularly among the public administration management. This paper aims to expose the interference of the Intelligence Cycle with the decision system and to determine whether this process complicates the tasks ruled by managers. It is also studied the impact of adding new methods and techniques to the decisional system, seeking potential benefits and risks. Integrating Intelligence Cycle involves adopting a strategic behaviour for the local government. This hypothesis requires new types of risks: financial, commercial, legal or public representation.

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Introduction

Decisional systems in local government are significantly different compared to firms and large companies: additional legislative regulations, objectives that do not aim at financial performance targets, the election of top management staff (also the assessment process), the factors that are influencing the decision, and decision-making methods. Collected information dissemination stage has the greatest impact on decision-making system as this involves changing or maintaining strategic decisions based on this information. Integration of Intelligence Cycle into the decisional system generates benefits only if decisional methods are redesigned and if the informational system is adapted to the requirements of this Cycle. Basically, the local government will develop a real-time strategic knowledge database, useful in planning competition with other governments. At the same time, there is a set of risks that occur mainly in the early stages of Intelligence Cycle integration. These risks concern to overestimation the competitive capacity, funding policy for Intelligence activities, protection of strategic information, and process of gathering strategic information.

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An important common issue among the post-accession to the EU period aimed at local government capacity to adapt to a real competitive environment. This environment is created by the main competitors that would be even neighbouring towns, in the first stage, and other cities later. Dissemination on this type of issues follows the forms of organizational culture conducted through competitive oriented market principles.

Fuld (2006) considers Competitive Intelligence as a warning tool for the organization's management by which they can manage both threats and opportunities. As about strategy elements, Competitive Intelligence may be defined as an orchestrated and targeted monitoring group of processes aimed at main competitors in a competitive environment, regardless of what they are and where they are operating. Johnson (2005) affirmed that these competitors are exactly those organizations that lead a fight for market share.

Time is an extremely important operational factor in terms of Competitive Intelligence, so that the collection and synthesis of information must be rapid, adaptive, errorless and synergistic, but simultaneously, a process with specific procedures, as there occur a high risk of hazard information security (Prescott and Gibbson, 1993). Competitive Intelligence represents a decision support for the organization's top management, demanding a great amount of attention and sometimes even integration within the management system.

As about local government, it claims a distinct organizational form, meaning that it is essential to develop an active background that consists of knowledge database systems and a collection of intellectual capital tools.

In a recent paper, Jennifer Sims (Sims and Burton, 2005) attention that an effective Intelligence product should incorporate a set of processes dealing with strategic gathering of information and also the informational-trends, in order to use these kind of information also during the next administration.

Structural organization is liable to suffer the most important change if there will be decided the establishment of a Competitive Intelligence unit which will deal with generating Intelligence tasks. Some main tasks that will be conducted among this department might be: prevention of dangerous incidents, elaborating the strategy for preserving competitive advantages, determining key growth issues, establishing security policy on its own activities. Meanwhile, at least at this moment, local government benefits from central administration as we talk about financial support so that unexpected incidents would only consist of epidemics, even tax revolt, natural disasters, and civil unrest.

Description of the Intelligence Cycle

Specific Competitive Intelligence processes might be more effectively understood as a Cycle that is conducted through a range of activities. The first stage consists in determining Intelligence requirements and needs of the top management and policy-makers board, but also the needs of those in charge of security issues. The next stage engages gathering of information by Intelligence professional, generally specialist personnel among Intelligence departments. The third step continues the Cycle by processing and exploitation of collected information, followed by a subsequently phase by which raw information is correlated, merged and transformed into a finished product. After that, there is involved an analyze process. The last step consists in product dissemination to policy makers. Intelligence Cycle should continuously benefit by a feedback collected from all levels of activity. Decision makers are considered to be the most important factors for the Intelligence Cycle, and that's because they start and close the Cycle. They also are actively involved in the following stages, because they are required to act and make decisions in order to elaborate directions, procedures and formalities according to received Intelligence products.

The traditional Intelligence Cycle is designed to deliver support for command & control structures in situations where these units deal with new challenges. The frequency of such situations is increasingly bigger in the modern competitive environment. Continual and comprehensive Intelligence process is directly structured to meet the modern decision-makers' needs – fastness, maintained tempo, distributed, appropriate, and effective (Wilson, 2002).

There are five steps accordingly to Bose (2008), and these are:

- **Determining the requirements:** at this phase, the recipients of the Intelligence are determining what type of information they need to acquire and which is the deadline for collecting those information. This

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