

BOOK REVIEWS:

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◇ **Competitive Intelligence: Acquiring and using corporate intelligence and counter-intelligence.** Douglas Bernhardt, 2003, FT Prentice Hall, 109 pages, £95.00 (e-book £71.25).

◇ **Harnessing the Power of Intelligence, Counterintelligence and Surprise Events.** Alain Paul Martin with Dr. Brian Morrissey, 2002, The Professional Development Institute/Executive.Org, 245 pages, \$39.00.

At a time when the CI community is debating how strongly competitive intelligence is imbedded within the business process and its global impact, it is refreshing to see the arrival of these two books. Not only does each add to the growing body of work on CI (now primarily generated by SCIP members: for an example of this, see 'Chronological and Categorized bibliography of key CI scholarship,' *JCIM* 1(1) 2003, p.13-79. <http://www.scip.org/jcim.asp>), but they both show us the emerging variety of approaches to CI outside of the US. And that, I believe, is evidence of the continued growth and penetration of CI on a global basis.

The first, *Competitive Intelligence* by Douglas Bernhardt, is written and published primarily for a European audience, as befits the author's Swiss-based practice. The second, *Harnessing the Power of Intelligence, Counterintelligence and Surprise Events*, contains many short case studies from Canada, as should be expected from the Ontario-based Alan Martin.

COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE

If the name Douglas Bernhardt sounds familiar, it could be because he is a former SCIP board member, or you may recall him as the author of *Perfectly Legal Competitor Intelligence: How to Get It, Use It and Profit from It* (reviewed in *CIM*, 5(4), winter 1994 p.80-81). This book is a little different. Written for the *Financial Times Executive Briefing* series, the book is just that: a high-level look at the subject, communicating the essential of CI to a business-savvy, but CI ignorant, audience.

Doug's style is crisp and straightforward, offering the reader the essence of each topic. Chapter 3, 'Key intelligence topics,' is a perfect example. It is direct and deceptively simple. And to this topic he has added a thoughtful section on linking it to 'counterintelligence' (defensive CI). Doug caps the briefing book off with two short but well-presented interviews with two very different European-based CI practitioners. And in each case, the interviews properly convey the same message: CI is not only do-able, it is critical, and those firms that do it well clearly benefit from it.

HARNESSING THE POWER

The second work is as different from the first as, well, Canada is from Switzerland. In *Harnessing the Power of Intelligence, Counterintelligence and Surprise Events*, Alan Martin first takes the reader through the active and defensive essentials of CI, from both the process and the management perspectives. While basic, these six chapters are an interesting read, particularly since he uses a number of real-world examples that are new, at least to me.

Then Alan begins the process of integrating CI into his own analytical framework. In that respect, *Harnessing the Power* is a novel work. The core of that effort, chapter seven 'Value incubation: a proven framework for early detection of threats and opportunities,' is a real gem. It walks the reader through one model of how individuals convert raw data into useable intelligence. As you read through it, Alan links his vision of analytical phases with real world examples of successes and failures, based on such principles. He then moves on to the use of the CI you have generated. Finally, Alan has three chapters to help the CI professional to understand those with whom the CI professional must deal in his or her own organization. I found, as I read these closing pages, that many of the tools and techniques he was using could well be applied to profiling competitors' key executives at competitors, or defining a competitor's corporate culture and view of the world.

Both works merit the close attention of their intended European and Canadian audiences. They also deserve to be seen by all executives still unfamiliar with CI and by CI managers eager to improve their own management skills.

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