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Competitive Intelligence for MBA Students: Credit Courses

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Introduction

The Parrish Library’s access into the Krannert Sch. of Management’s MBA program over the years had been shallow and inconsistent. Finally we had been able to have a recurring 4 hour (later reduced to 2 hours) elective workshop within the Leadership Discussion Series. Feedback from this workshop was consistently positive with the only complaint being that it was too short.

An increasing need for 1 and 2 credit short courses was identified within the Krannert SOM. After discussions with the directors of the MBA program it was agreed to turn the workshop into two credit-bearing short courses: Introduction to Competitive Intelligence (2 credits) and International Business and Competitive Intelligence (1 credit)

The courses were designed as problem-based learning experiences allowing for a significant amount of hands-on experience with competitive intelligence techniques.

Course Content & Structure

Day 1: Introduction to Competitive Intelligence and the CI Cycle 
- Objectives: 
  - Analyze information problems and develop solutions, drawing from a wide range of information sources 
  - Analyze and integrate information from a range of business information sources 
  - Appreciate effective, ethical techniques for conducting primary and secondary research, as well as the importance of ethics when presenting CI results and recommendations

Day 2: CI and Company Analysis
- Objectives: 
  - Analyze financial statements and perform SWOT analysis 
  - Conduct a Strategic SWOT analysis of a competitor

Day 3: CI and Market Research
- Objectives: 
  - Analyze market analysis techniques with special emphasis on country-specific market research 
  - Conduct a 4 Corners Analysis using a competitor

Day 4: Competitive Intelligence Tools
- Objectives: 
  - Analyze and evaluate a variety of sources available for competitive intelligence analysis 
  - Analyze and integrate information from a range of business information sources 

Day 5: CI and Company Analysis
- Objectives: 
  - Analyze financial statements and perform SWOT analysis 
  - Conduct a Strategic SWOT analysis of a competitor

Day 6: Final Project Presentations
- Objectives: 
  - Present and Future

Assignments

CI Technique Matching
- Matching exercise of 40+ CI techniques to show scale and scope.

Competitor Cash Flow Analysis
- Financial data exercise to utilize competitive intelligence

SWOT - TOWS Analysis
- Create a combined competitor SWOT analysis using a variety of sources.

Event/Timeline Analysis
- Conduct an Event analysis of a competitor’s actions. Using Padlet and Tiempo.

5 Forces Infographic
- Comparison of published 5 Forces reports using PiktoChart.

Social Media Audit
- Conduct a review of social media outlets on a competitor.

International Business & CI

International Business & CI Global Outlook
- Team brainstorm activity on global business issues

Country Overview Report
- Create an overview of economic, cultural, and travel information.

International Company Research
- Use company databases to create a specific list of local companies.

Country Risk Report
- Create a Country and City risk report from a variety of sources.

Present and Future

The courses received extremely positive feedback from the participants. One team member returned weeks later to conduct more research for his own company utilizing the resources and tools taught in the class.

Both courses are projected to be taught in the fall 2016 and spring 2017. Only minor modifications will be made to the courses. The CI course needs some improved organization and greater clarification on the assignments and expectations.

The International Business course needs to be streamlined slightly as well as clarifying the assignments to reduce the feeling of being rushed.

Also a greater level of pre and post assessment will take place in these next iterations to more clearly identify the learning that has taken place.

Selected Resources/Readings


http://www.automotiveitnews.org/articles/2015/11/02/what-to-expect-from-the-apple-car/


