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# Educational Programs for Intelligence Professionals

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## ABSTRACT

PROFESSIONS AND THEIR FORMAL educational programs result from the interaction of social, cultural, and institutional factors. The current interplay of economic, technological, social, and cultural factors may support the establishment of formal educational programs for competitive intelligence professionals. However, due to the hybrid nature of the intelligence profession, the established disciplines may not provide the most appropriate environment in which these programs can flourish. To appreciate its distinctive characteristics, a definition of the intelligence function, as well as a description of the required competencies, is presented.

## INTRODUCTION

The demand for intelligence professionals is rising as for-profit and not-for-profit firms recognize the need to formalize their intelligence activities (Prior, 1993). This increased awareness stems from the competitive pressures of the global marketplace as well as the favorable impacts of intelligence activities upon corporate revenues (Kelly, 1993). However, American colleges and universities place a low priority on educating competitor intelligence professionals. A small private college school offers a four-year program for the training of intelligence analysts, and a few colleges provide a single course in intelligence (Wreden, 1994). Regrettably, although the government supports two intelligence programs, only federal employees are permitted to enroll (Herring & DeGenaro, 1994). In

addition, various professional associations occasionally offer seminars and workshops. If an apparent need for trained intelligence workers exists, why do American universities virtually ignore this profession?

The answers to this question are complex and varied. This discussion addresses the possible causes for this dilemma. To frame these comments, the definition of the intelligence process as well as a description of the required competencies needs to be clarified.

### THE INTELLIGENCE FUNCTION DEFINED

The intelligence function comprises the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information to decision makers and/or strategists about events in a company's external environment (Aguilar, 1967; Porter, 1980). Each organization implements the function differently, with specific components being assigned to individual members of a large intelligence team or with the entire function either being outsourced to a research firm or to a single individual. In some settings, specific components are inappropriate. The reasons for this variance are addressed later in this discussion.

Where the organization positions the function within the decision-making process often determines its focus and, therefore, its nomenclature. Strategic intelligence emphasizes its relationship to strategy formulation. Business intelligence stresses the detection of a wide range of movements throughout the company's external environment as well as the dissemination of the identified opportunities or threats to decision makers (Stanat, 1990; Hohhof, 1993). Competitive intelligence focuses on the present and potential strengths, weaknesses, and activities of the firms within a specific industry whose products or services closely resemble those of the company initiating the search (Porter, 1980). Competitor intelligence emphasizes the acquisition of detailed and current information regarding a specific corporation (Fuld, 1985). Although each term shifts the focus, the typical process contains the central components of collection, analysis, and dissemination of information to decision makers.

Another reason for this terminological jockeying has its basis in history. The military initiated intelligence activity for procuring highly sensitive information to conduct war effectively. Probably some military intelligence was espionage—that is, the process of using illegal and unethical means (e.g., stealing) to obtain information. Therefore, many Americans often confuse intelligence with espionage (Martin & Stedman, 1991). Consequently, not wanting to tarnish the corporate image in the minds of its stakeholders and investors, executives refer to this function discretely. Using the phrase "business intelligence" sounds less invasive than strategic or competitive

intelligence. Undoubtedly, many intelligence professionals glean considerable insights through ethical means. However, recent surveys of business practitioners revealed that a substantial number would manipulate competitor employees or misrepresent themselves to competitors' vendors, suppliers, or distributors (Schultz et al., 1994). Not surprisingly, executives have recently expressed concern over the growing frequency of unethical procedures in companies' conduct of competitive analysis (Zahra, 1994). Furthermore, the press frequently exposes those American firms that conduct industrial and corporate espionage. Consequently, such corrupt practices reinforce rather than dissolve the misinterpretation of intelligence as espionage.

The similarities between the intelligence function and market research also contribute to this terminological blur. Traditionally, market researchers determine the potential or present market for a specific product or service offering. Intelligence professionals also examine economic and/or technological trends for potential impacts on current product lines as well as for significant opportunities or threats to the strategic focus on the entire firm (Smith et al., 1992). Due to this subtle, yet important, distinction, many business executives dismiss the intelligence function as a mere trend, while other administrators, who suspect that intelligence work can provide a competitive advantage for a firm, assign the function to their market research department. However, due to its customary research focus, the staff may overlook trends occurring within those sectors of the business environment that are unrelated to product and/or service issues.

In summary, these terminological differences relating to the intelligence profession promote a misunderstanding which, in turn, undermines its adoption and growth. Later in this discussion, various steps will be suggested to alleviate these misconceptions. Before describing the components of the intelligence function, the concept of the external environment must be clarified to fully appreciate the breadth of this activity.

A company's external environment can be defined as the relevant physical and social factors outside the boundary of an organization that are taken into consideration during organizational decision making (Duncan, 1972). Also, the external environment can be conceptualized as consisting of two layers (Bourgeois, 1980; Dill, 1958). The layer closest to the organization is the task environment whose sectors of competitors, suppliers, and customers have direct transactions with the organization. The outer layer is the general environment that includes the governmental, economic, and sociotechnical sectors with which the organization may have a comparatively indirect relationship. Assigning these specific sectors to either the task or general environment depends upon how executives choose to define

and interact with the entire environment. For example, for an electrical engineering firm, the task environment may consist of the customers, suppliers, competitors, and technology sectors. For a cardboard-box manufacturer, its task environment may only consist of the customers, suppliers, and competitors since the technology sector displays minimal fluctuations. Sectoring the environment enables intelligence personnel as well as decision makers to gather specific information more effectively and efficiently.

### BASIC COMPONENTS OF THE INTELLIGENCE FUNCTION

The basic components of the intelligence function consist of the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information to decision makers (Prescott, 1989; McGonagle & Vella, 1990). During the collection phase, intelligence professionals acquire relevant information from primary and secondary sources as well as through direct observation (Powell, 1992). Primary sources may be industry experts (e.g., analysts, consultants), as well as customers, suppliers, and key staff members within such departments as corporate communications, investor relations, and public relations. The research techniques used for gathering these data include telephone or person-to-person interviews, surveys, and focus groups. These sources and techniques provide a proprietary information product, which corporate directors regard quite highly.

Secondary sources include a wide variety of databases and print publications, such as analysts' reports, government publications, and industry newsletters. Because intelligence professionals must rely on materials of high quality and credibility, they seek not only to confirm the accuracy of the data, but also to identify the sources which an editor has used. Professionals can then recognize possible gaps in the information and resolve discrepancies in the data. To augment the secondary sources, intelligence professionals often contact writers for additional insights which they obtained while preparing the article. However, unlike primary materials, secondary sources are non-proprietary and are available to competitors. Therefore, managers perceive secondary data as being incapable of offering strategic insights. Therefore, intelligence professionals must add value by identifying unique patterns within the data.

In addition to primary and secondary sources, intelligence professionals also acquire beneficial insights through unobtrusive observations as well as from other staff members. For example, by inspecting the number of vehicles in a corporate parking lot as well as the volume of boxes delivered to a retail outlet by a competitor, valuable indicators of the growth or decline of a competitor may surface. Also, many staff members become aware of events and actions

in the external environment which should reach decision makers. Sales representatives can provide important comments from their customers, and other staff can contribute comments from suppliers and other contacts. However, unless channeled to the appropriate decision makers, such valuable information becomes lost in the rumor mill. Therefore, intelligence professionals can collaborate with members of the systems department to develop and install a computer-based intelligence system for capturing and communicating this information on a consistent basis with minimal effort (Hohhof, 1993). This system complements the previously mentioned methods of collecting information.

Having gathered the necessary information, intelligence professionals must then determine the trends, issues, opportunities, threats, and strategic forces emerging in the data. The analysis phase often requires practitioners to approach the data from a frame of reference similar to hypothesis testing. Having created a tentative proposition, professionals evaluate the data to determine the validity of their assumptions as well as the probability of the forthcoming and/or current impacts. Most often, these research questions focus upon specific developments within industries—e.g., new product trends within either the mainframe sector of the computer industry or the frozen soup sector of the prepared foods industry. The analysis may involve the use of statistical programs and various modeling techniques. Furthermore, the practitioner may realize the need to acquire additional data; therefore, collection and analysis are not necessarily sequential stages. Although persistence and creativity are necessary throughout this phase, professionals must also recognize the point at which further analysis would prove futile.

Professionals do not create reports within a vacuum. Therefore, for the analyses to be useful, it is necessary to understand the political and power structures that characterize decision-making processes. For example, some organizations tolerate creative and challenging analyses that question the established posture and attitude as well as offer alternatives, while others only permit analyses to confirm decisions that have already been made. What information and data-gathering techniques can be used, as well as how the data can be interpreted, are determined through an understanding of the function of analyses within the decision-making process (Bate, 1984; White, 1986; Lenz & Engledow, 1986). Regrettably, few American firms support the critical analysis and evaluation of their corporate strategy and marketing position (Martin & Stedman, 1991). Therefore, the potential for generating creative and challenging records is greater within independent research firms than within many American corporations.

The final phase of the intelligence function consists of effectively communicating the analysis. Understanding how decision makers want the information to be presented furthers the credibility as well as the use of the report. Decision makers may prefer formal research reports, brief outlines of the essential facts, or both. Regardless, executives favor charts and other visuals because they often prefer succinct graphic displays rather than extensive prose. In addition, clients may require intelligence professionals to deliver a verbal presentation of their findings, thus, providing an opportunity for further clarification of the issues. Therefore, effective communication, including written and verbal clarity as well as an extensive use of graphics, greatly determines the extent to which decision makers consider the contents of the report.

### COMPETENCIES FOR INTELLIGENCE PROFESSIONALS

Professionals must possess specific skills to effectively execute the various phases of the intelligence process. They obtain these abilities from inherent traits, coursework, professional experience, and mentors. Building upon one another, these four modes provide the array of competencies which successful practitioners need. Therefore, educators must appreciate the importance of these modes rather than adopting the simplistic concept that educational programs can serve as the exclusive means for gaining expertise. The following list of competencies was derived from personal experience, the literature (Fuld, 1985; Fuld, 1988; McGonagle & Vella, 1990), as well as from practicing professionals. Note that teaching experience or mentoring often enhances some abilities that were acquired in a preceding mode.

- *Traits*: creativity, persistence, written and oral communication skills, analytical ability, understanding of scientific methodology, independent learning skills, and business savvy;
- *Teachable Skills*: strategic thinking, business terminology, market research and presentation skills, knowledge of primary information sources and research methods, enhancement of journalistic interviewing and communication skills, analytical ability, and an appreciation of scientific methodology;
- *Professional Experience*: knowledge of corporate power structures and decision making processes, industry knowledge, enhancement of primary research skills, business savvy, and journalistic interviewing and observational skills;
- *Mentoring*: creativity, persistence, strategic thinking, and business terminology, enhancement of communication skills and research skills.

Recalling the previous discussion regarding the collection, analysis, and communication phases of the intelligence process, the need for this array of skills and abilities becomes more apparent. Having the capabilities to frame research issues, to execute the appropriate techniques, as well as to analyze the data and communicate their findings requires potential practitioners to fully develop their expertise. Professionals may attain some competencies within a different mode; that is, lacking a specific trait, an aspirant may obtain a skill within a formal educational setting. However, being deficient in any one of these competencies within the actual work environment can prove detrimental. For example, those who can conduct the research but cannot communicate effectively may not sustain a career. Apportioning the intelligence process among group members may obscure such deficiencies awhile; however, today's right-sized business executives have become less tolerant of ill-equipped professionals and prefer to retain those with a broad set of skills. Therefore, potential practitioners, employers as well as educators, must recognize how the skills drawn from inherent traits, teachable skills, experience, and mentoring converge into the composite of required competencies. Minimizing the importance of any one of these four modes can jeopardize the firm, the professional, and the educational institution. That is, the firm may not obtain the necessary skills to perform the intelligence function properly; the professional may not secure a successful career; and the educational institution may neither attract qualified students nor develop competent professionals.

To acquire these skills, some professionals may find the trait-coursework-experience-mentoring sequence inappropriate. That is, practicing intelligence workers may only need to complete a few courses that update, or expand, their skills. In others cases, those with the appropriate traits and extensive business experience may already hold an entry-level intelligence position and, therefore, may need to complete a more comprehensive set of courses. However, those candidates with a limited business background as well as with few inherent traits could find that, even after having completed a full range of courses, they are unable to secure a job in the field. In short, completing coursework is insufficient preparation for a career as an intelligence professional. Therefore, although the sequence may vary, successful candidates draw their expertise from all four modes.

Although few dispute the value of traits and mentoring as modes for imparting important skills and insights, the literature contains considerable discussion regarding the respective role that work experience and formal education plays in the development of professional competencies. Highly skilled positions in the new economy

demand the appropriate attitudes and technical skills which education and job experience provide (Richman, 1994). The relationships between experience and education are firmly established in professions such as law, medicine, teaching, the ministry, and social work, which require candidates to complete an internship component before receiving their degree. The changes brought on by the global economy are forcing other professional schools, where the experience-education partnership has not been firmly entrenched, to reshape their curriculum and to develop cooperative agreements in the workplace. For example, over the past few years, corporate America has criticized business schools for failing to prepare students to function in business. These executives demand that schools evaluate potential students by the quality of their work experience as well as their ability to manage (Blum, 1991; Stonham, 1992). Responding to the pressure, the tradition-bound Harvard business school will revamp its curriculum and incorporate more practical components throughout the program (Bongiorno, 1993).

Accounting programs have also been criticized recently for failing to teach what accounting practitioners actually do. Prodded by the American Accounting Association and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, schools are establishing internships and related cooperative programs which benefit both students and employers (McCombs & VanSyckle, 1994). Likewise, a growing number of engineering programs are complementing theory with hands-on experience after practitioners leveled accusations of not preparing students to meet current and future challenges. At the University of Minnesota, Stanford, and MIT, for example, students are collaborating on design projects with companies. These programs enable the students to define customer needs, to work in project teams, and to manage project time effectively (Durfee, 1994).

Finally, the Society for Technical Communication's (STC) board of directors urged academics to prepare students for the actual work that industry needs them to perform (Hayhoe et al., 1994). Because theory cannot be studied in isolation from practical applications, they recommended that students be required to participate in an internship, practicum, or co-op program which can both sharpen their focus on the functions that they will perform and teach them aspects of the profession which they cannot learn in the classroom.

Therefore, the place of work experience within the context of professional education is gaining considerable importance. Learning from these examples, similar industry-education collaboratives are appropriate modes for providing the experience-related competencies for intelligence professionals.



### FACTORS AFFECTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF FORMAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

To repeat the earlier mentioned definition, the intelligence function comprises the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information to decision makers and/or strategists about events in a company's external environment. To perform this function effectively, successful professionals acquire the necessary skills from inherent traits, coursework, work experience, and mentoring. Their efforts prove highly beneficial for many firms. As Kelly (1993) indicated, the average return on investment (ROI) for intelligence projects within a wide range of corporations was 310 percent. Furthermore, as American businesses increase their participation in the international marketplace, success and survival hinges on good intelligence activity (Herring, 1994). Whether a firm is protecting its corporate secrets or detecting those of competitors, intelligence work is critical, particularly for firms operating within a highly volatile industry, such as electronics (Parker, 1994; Kokubo, 1993). If intelligence activity means success and survival, and if an elaborate array of skills, including those acquired from coursework, are essential to perform this function effectively, why do American universities virtually ignore this profession?

An appropriate starting point in response to this question stems from the status of intelligence work as a profession. As Abbott (1988) indicated, professions emerge from the coalescence of contingent forces, including social and cultural recognition of the work or activity, professional associations, dominance of related disciplines, as well as the establishment of educational programs, standards, codes of ethics, and designated journals. However, these factors do not follow a clear causal pattern; rather, as Abbott's system model suggests, professions emerge from the interaction of larger forces, such as competitors and internal structures. Therefore, analyzing the evolution of some other profession may not reveal the causes for the sluggish emergence of educational programs for intelligence workers. However, appreciating the interaction of these factors can offer some beneficial insights. The following discussion examines the interplay and prominence of the contingent forces that influence the evolution of the intelligence profession and its formal educational programs.

Social change transforms professions by creating, increasing, or decreasing the need for certain professional activities (Abbott, 1988, pp. 143-76). The expansion of corporate America during this century increased the need for many specialized professionals. The need to verify charges, debts, and fees gained greater prominence, thereby prompting the rise of public accountants. The need to create desire

for products or services encouraged the growth of advertising agencies. The need to refine their production and service delivery processes stimulated the exponential growth of technology and, in turn, the engineering profession. Technological advances in mass media, accompanied by population shifts, transformed aspects of journalism and the performing arts. Among the many social changes of today, American firms are increasing their exploitation of opportunities in the global marketplace as well as their protection of corporate secrets from foreign intruders. The internationalization of the American economy heightens the importance of collaboration and cooperation on a global scale as well as diminishing the plausibility of economic isolation. Accompanying this change is the growing need for information about events in the global business environment as well as the critical analysis of how the emerging opportunities and threats could affect American firms. Despite this rising need, only 3 percent of American corporations have established competitor intelligence teams (Martin & Stedman, 1991).

Cultural change also transforms professions (Abbott, 1988, pp. 177-211). Because culture legitimizes the function and results of professional work, changes in social values reprioritize the importance and dignity given to certain activities. That is, shifts in cultural values greatly influence society's perception of, and demand for, professional work. For example, when a culture values physical and psychological well-being as well as justice, doctors, psychologists, lawyers, and their related schools, flourish or at least maintain their status. When Americans raised their esteem for efficiency and effectiveness, engineers and technologists, as well as the followers of the father of scientific management, Frederick W. Taylor, gained prominence, as did their respective schools. Even though these machines and methods relegated workers to inhuman conditions, the culture regarded the ultimate outcomes of corporate profits and global prestige, which these technological advances enabled, more valuable than their crippling effects on the work force (Hitch & Miller, 1994). Therefore, even though a professional activity includes certain undesirable functions, society tolerates the associated sacrifices and bestows dignity upon such work if it enables the attainment of a higher value. To maintain justice and national security, as well as to conduct war effectively, the government trains intelligence and security personnel at the Defense Intelligence Agency's Joint Military Intelligence College and at the Department of Defense Security Institute. Despite its covert activities, society supports government intelligence to preserve peace and order. The culture tolerates the ignoble aspects of government intelligence work because it enables the attainment of peace.

Society does not, however, endorse business intelligence, because many Americans, including those within business, only perceive its cloak-and-dagger aspects. This prevents an appreciation of the need for maintaining competitive advantage as well as for protecting technology and trade secrets. This lack of support does not infer that society does not value its technology and trade secrets; rather, society does not recognize the benefits associated with the intelligence function. In addition, society cannot admit that American and foreign businesses engage in competitive and covert activities (Deighen, 1993). Hiding behind a pretense of noble conduct is counterproductive for the economy, corporations, and investors. Experts have estimated that U.S. firms lose \$20 to \$30 billion per year due to foreign and domestic corporate and industrial espionage (Deighen, 1993). The most frequently confirmed reports regarding corporate spying against U.S. firms involve Argentina, France, Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom; accusations have also been directed at an additional forty nations (Herring & DeGenaro, 1994).

Due to the social stigma associated with business intelligence, management attempts to conceal its intelligence efforts. Within the first six months of this year, the national and trade press reported on firms within the aerospace, pharmaceutical, automotive, tobacco, cable television, telephone, and personal health care products industries that conducted industrial espionage. Inevitably, additional cases were left unreported. The surprising fact is not that U.S. corporations conduct intelligence operations, but that they pretend these activities are unknown to Americans. Corporations cannot disclose the details of these operations; however, these thinly-veiled cover-up efforts are also counterproductive and mask the associated benefits. Undoubtedly, upon learning that firms conduct business intelligence, whether ethical or covert, certain investors may withdraw their support, and some customers may boycott products or services. Corporations must find ways to legitimize the value of the intelligence function within the American culture, otherwise they will continue to expend resources needlessly.

A third factor that affects the evolution of professions in general and the intelligence profession in particular is the dominance of academic disciplines over their respective knowledge bases. As Abbott (1988, pp. 196-211) indicates, universities influence the professions in various ways. They can maintain the scholarly foundations of professional expertise. They can promote the development of the knowledge base by testing hypotheses. They can train upcoming professionals. They can foster interprofessional competition by monopolizing the instruction of students in specific courses. For example, in the 1930s, a fight ensued between lawyers and accountants

in practices and on campuses as to who had the authority to teach accounting principles to law students and commercial law to business students. Within professions, needs emerge that require practitioners to acquire knowledge from related disciplines. However, such changes in the professional functions can undermine the knowledge base of various disciplines. Therefore, it is not surprising that the positioning of coursework for the intelligence profession poses a problem for universities. The varied skill set for intelligence professionals is derived from the established disciplines of journalism, communications, information science, business administration, and statistics. Which discipline is prepared to relinquish control of its knowledge base, as well as its head count, to another department or school for the training of intelligence professionals?

A fourth factor that influences the development of a profession is the establishment of associations. These professional groups serve many functions. They claim jurisdiction over specific expertise. They control the activities of practitioners by establishing professional standards, certified courses, examinations, licenses, and a code of ethics. And finally, they serve to inform practitioners by publishing journals and newsletters as well as by convening meetings and conferences. These functions were formalized with the establishment of the Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals (SCIP) in 1986, whose membership currently includes over 2,500 practitioners and academics. The society has issued its code of ethics, has published its own journal since 1986, and has convened nine national conferences. The present officers and directors are exploring various alternatives regarding the educational components of the profession.

As with most professions, however, the formation of a professional group alone does not ensure jurisdiction over expertise. Rather, the interplay of social and cultural factors as well as the monopolization of the knowledge base by academics, together with the establishment of professional groups, promote the evolution of a profession. Therefore, examining how these factors interact offers insights regarding the lack of formal educational programs for the intelligence profession.

Society and its businesses have yet to fully embrace the internationalization of the American economy. The hope of regaining global dominance in the marketplace, which America held for many years after World War II, still permeates society (Martin & Stedman, 1991). Focusing upon tactics to regain dominance shifts the attention away from sharing and using information effectively (Maglitta, 1994). Therefore, the need to gather, analyze, and evaluate information about activities in the business environment is minimally recognized (Martin & Stedman, 1991). Reflecting this position, the curriculums of

professional schools, particularly those within the business discipline, place a low priority on the intelligence function. Certainly, their course offerings emphasize the management of information systems, but within the broader goal of training potential directors and CEOs. Consequently, the practice of accessing, analyzing, and evaluating competitive information is looked upon as a clerical function and of little concern to corporate administrators. Furthermore, mirroring the cultural disdain of the function, if the curriculum incorporates the topic of business intelligence, it is covered within a few sessions of a market research course or a continuing education workshop. Rather than jeopardize their reputation in today's unstable higher education market, prominent business schools prefer to demonstrate their sensitivity to business trends by introducing environmental management courses (Pham, 1994). Therefore, these professional programs reflect how management practitioners and the American culture regard the practice of competitive intelligence.

Despite the effect which these social and cultural factors have had upon the development of a formal educational component, academic journals within various disciplines and the popular business press contain a large body of literature devoted to many aspects of the intelligence function. Recognizing the importance and value of this function, these academics continue their attempt to establish a credible program within their respective schools. In addition, the practitioners remind strategists, market researchers, and executives within their respective firms of the benefits associated with this activity. The momentum behind these efforts, as well as the cumulative effect of the internationalization of the American economy, will spur the adoption of the following recommendations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The establishment of formal educational programs does not, in itself, further the development of a profession. Rather, the contingent factors which affect the evolution of professions also influence the development of a credible educational program. When society needs and values a specific professional activity, a formal educational program interacts with these forces for support, legitimacy, and justification. If, however, a curriculum is instituted to train professionals in an activity which society marginally needs or values, that program, and its students, will founder. Therefore, those advocating these educational changes would be wise to, first, analyze their external environment—that is, determine the status of these contingent factors. Based upon this evaluation, they can raise the level of appreciation for the importance and significance of the intelligence function and the potential graduates.

Advocates can continue their expansion of the support base by demonstrating the relevance of intelligence activities to organizations regardless of their purpose. Presently, competitive intelligence is a function associated, almost exclusively, with for-profit organizations. However, profit as well as not-for-profit settings can, and do, benefit from acquiring information about their external environment. Therefore, illustrating its applicability to a wider array of organizational settings can, in turn, heighten the perceived need for this function as well as demonstrate that organizations procure such information for reasons other than increasing profits.

Advocates can further influence how managers value intelligence activities by providing them with evidence indicating the extent to which foreign competitors do not, in fact, play by the rules (Deighen, 1993; Herring & DeGenaro, 1994). Raising their awareness of these activities can motivate them to adopt proactive counterintelligence procedures which would protect valuable intellectual property. Taking a proactive stance can also elevate intelligence activities' importance and status to a valuable corporate function. In turn, these administrators can speak to their stockholders and stakeholders of the positive aspects of business intelligence to offset any initial decrease in support which may accompany the adoption of counterintelligence activities. Therefore, a proactive corporate posture regarding intelligence work can raise its importance and dignity as a legitimate function and profession.

These outreach efforts not only benefit managers and their organizations, but also the support base upon which the staff, faculty, and students must rely for funding, research and internship sites, as well as job placements. Therefore, the importance of these various benefits require proponents to collaborate with an extensive array of organizations and professional associations. In addition to the Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals, other groups might include those from market research, strategy and policy development, communications management, journalism, as well as specific industry segments which may be most receptive to intelligence activities, such as biotechnology, financial services, and telecommunications. These contacts may prompt the emergence of opportunities for both the organization as well as for staff, faculty, and students.

Due to the widespread ignorance and dim regard for intelligence work among Americans and U.S. corporations, programs should initially be established at highly visible and credible institutions. With their distinguished faculty and exceptional professional schools, prominent schools will attract the caliber of students which this profession requires. Furthermore, their introduction of these programs will increase the perceived value of the intelligence profession,

which is a critical factor at this point in its evolution. Mounting programs at unrenowned institutions during this initial stage will be detrimental, regardless of the excellence of their curriculum. They will find it difficult to develop collaborative arrangements within prominent organizations and to attract qualified students. Ultimately, such programs could diminish the already dim view of this profession.

Recall that professionals acquire their expertise from inherent traits, coursework, professional experience, and mentors. Therefore, quality programs exhibit these various modes not only by offering a comprehensive curriculum, but also by attracting qualified students and providing enriching internship experiences. Students who can analyze problems creatively, teach themselves new skills, and communicate effectively, can capitalize upon the strengths of the curriculum. Building upon this foundation, the internship phase enhances students' skills and insights as well as providing beneficial services to clients. Because students may choose to build upon previous coursework or job experience within a specific discipline, program directors must establish collaborative relationships with mentors from organizations in various industries. In addition, assembling a wide variety of settings demonstrates the applicability across industries. Dismissing the importance of attracting qualified students, as well as not providing an internship component, threatens the marketability of the graduates and the program.

A comprehensive curriculum comprises courses of instruction including strategy development, market research, primary research methods, statistics, information sources, as well as interviewing and communication techniques. These topics draw upon the knowledge base of multiple disciplines, including information science, business administration, statistics, communication, and journalism. Therefore, the placement of a program within any one of these disciplines would alter the focus of the intelligence function and the profession. That is, depending upon its placement, the public would associate intelligence work with the traditional knowledge base of only one of the disciplines, thereby obscuring the hybrid nature of this function. Certainly, the curriculum within schools of business administration already includes many of these courses. Their directors and faculties have established many collaborative arrangements with prominent organizations and related professional groups. However, although their valuable experience and contacts would satisfy the recommended components of an intelligence program, the social stigma associated with intelligence activities prevents these schools from initiating such programs. In addition, initiating programs within business schools could imply that only profit organizations need the services of intelligence professionals, which, as previously mentioned, misrepresents

the applicability of this function. Schools within these other disciplines could recognize similarities between the content of their curriculum and aspects of the intelligence function. However, rather than acquire the necessary internal and external resources, and driven by decreasing revenues and increasing operating costs, advocates within these schools could choose to contort the desired range of competencies to conform to their current curriculum. Furthermore, they could rationalize that those components, left unsatisfied, are nonessential. Such actions would jeopardize the school, the intelligence profession, and, most importantly, the students.

A reasonable alternative is to initiate an Institute of Strategic Intelligence at prominent colleges and universities. This suggestion may circumvent many of the problems previously mentioned: (1) Using strategic intelligence in the title emphasizes its relationship to strategy formulation and decision making, which, ideally, are basic to successful organizations. The negative connotations are, therefore, minimized. (2) With sufficient outside funding, institutes can often be established rather quickly. Most importantly, though, being independent of other disciplines, the analysis, evaluation, and dissemination of information to decision makers remains the primary focus. However, although independent, the administrators would establish consortia with other departments and schools whereby graduate and undergraduate students could become proficient in the skills necessary to function as intelligence professionals in their primary discipline. (3) Independence would also permit the administrators to establish collaborative arrangements with organizations from a wide variety of industries and specialties to serve as internship sites. (4) Having established this beachhead, administrators could explore the feasibility of becoming a degree-granting institution. If this step appears surmountable, an appropriate professional association, such as the Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals, might consider functioning as the accrediting body. Therefore, this alternative could preserve the integrity of the intelligence profession as well as ensure the suitable training of practitioners at prominent colleges and universities.

## CONCLUSION

The internationalization of the American economy continues to cause dramatic changes throughout society. In addition, telecommunication technologies enable the swift transfer of information and shorten the decision-making processes. These economic and technological changes prompt the expansion and contraction of industries as well as the emergence and disappearance of professions.



However, the evolution of professions is not rapid but results from the interaction of social, cultural, and institutional factors. When societal needs and cultural values coalesce, an environment is spawned which supports the growth of professional educational programs. Institutions respond by offering appropriate programs that prepare qualified professionals. Might not the current economic, technological, social, and cultural changes be creating such an atmosphere for intelligence programs? If so, the distinctive nature of the intelligence profession requires its formal educational programs to be established within hybrid environments.

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