

# Competitive Intelligence: A lever for Competitiveness and Performance of Moroccan Organizations

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## Abstract:

*The objective of this article is to explore competitive intelligence practices and their contribution to the competitiveness and performance of Moroccan organizations. Based on the case studies method, the results obtained allow to understand competitive intelligence practices within Moroccan organizations. The culture and support of the top management seems to be the guiding principle of competitive intelligence activities, thus guiding the organization's decision-making. Competitive intelligence is a powerful decision-making tool and a lever for competitiveness and performance. It is motivated by the organization's openness to its environment, the search for new knowledge and opportunities as well as the creation of value and sustainable performance.*

**Keywords:** Competitive Intelligence; Competitiveness; Performance; Moroccan Organizations.

## Résumé:

*L'objectif de cet article est d'explorer les pratiques d'Intelligence Economique et leur contribution à la compétitivité et à la performance des organisations marocaines. En se basant sur la méthode des études de cas, les résultats obtenus permettent de comprendre les pratiques d'Intelligence Economique au sein des organisations marocaines. La culture et le soutien du Top Management semblent être le principe directeur des activités d'intelligence économique, guidant ainsi la prise de décision de l'organisation. L'Intelligence Economique est un outil puissant d'aide à la décision et un levier de compétitivité et de performance. Elle est motivée par l'ouverture de l'organisation sur son environnement, la recherche de nouvelles connaissances et opportunités ainsi que la création de valeur et de performance durable.*

**Mots clés :** Intelligence Economique ; Compétitivité ; Performance ; Organisations Marocaines.

## Introduction

The world is undergoing a real change these days. With the development of the knowledge-based economy, the internationalization of markets and the intensification of competition, the competitiveness of territories and organizations has become a major stake in meeting political and socio-economic challenges. In addition, the pace of information and knowledge production is accelerating, customers and users are more and more demanding, product life cycles are becoming shorter and shorter, and technologies are advancing at a rapid pace.

Thus, the current context requires every organization to be equipped with a high-performance system that is able to scrutinize the knowledge emanating from its external environment, assimilate it and transform it into effective strategies and actions, thus enabling to forecast the future and to create value and performance, with a view to ensuring sustainability and growth in an increasingly unstable and turbulent climate (Du Toit, 2003; Bose, 2007). This system, based mainly on the governance of intangible capital, constitutes a necessary steering mode to feed the decision-making process. It integrates the activities of collection, analysis and dissemination of knowledge useful to stakeholders for economic and strategic competitiveness. In addition to these activities, lobbying and influence strategies as well as security strategies are also included. Indeed, all these activities are known as competitive intelligence (CI). It is defined by Wilensky (1967) as the activity of producing knowledge serving the economic and strategic goals of an organization, collected and produced in a legal context and from open sources. For Juillet (2004), competitive intelligence is a mode of governance whose purpose is the control of strategic information and the security of the economy and the competitiveness of companies.

From this perspective, the real sustainable competitive advantage for the organization lies in its ability to master strategic information and build a knowledge base available to decision-makers at the right time. Indeed, the French Association for the Development of Competitive Intelligence states that "...For a company or an organization, Competitive Intelligence is the set of means which, organized in a knowledge-based management system, produce information useful for decision-making in a perspective of performance and value creation for all stakeholders...".

Within this framework, our article responds to the following problem:

## **What contribution of Competitive Intelligence to the competitiveness and performance of the Moroccan Organization?**

To answer this question, we will first define the concept of competitive intelligence and its main functions. Then, we are going to analyze the practices of competitive intelligence in the context of Moroccan organizations. Finally, we will show how competitive intelligence could be a driver of competitiveness and performance.

### **I. Literature review**

#### **1.1. Historical overview**

If the concept of Economic Intelligence is relatively recent, this practice draws its historical foundations from the Republic of Venice, whose economic and commercial power was exceptional in the 15th century (Alaoui, 2009). At that time, Economic Intelligence consisted in collecting, analysing and exploiting strategic information to determine the routes and commodities most conducive to profit maximization. This practice was the source of economic success for an entity that produces nothing, has no natural resources, but manages and constantly improves the best production chain in the world.

The second major historical experience of Competitive Intelligence was born in Japan. At the end of World War II, the Japanese economy is devastated. The political decision-makers are responsible for rebuilding a strong economy. Telexes were set up in Japanese consulates and embassies in order to gather information on the needs of the world market and on technological innovations. Gradually, the practice has developed to also integrate Japanese tourists and workers and encourage them to prepare astonishing reports during their travels abroad. In this way, the Japanese government and businesses have initiated a collaborative competitive intelligence approach, thus helping to boost Japan's economic and cultural growth (Alaoui, 2009).

Later on, we will witness the emergence of the Anglo-Saxon model of the Competitive Intelligence approach. Indeed, by relying on the young retirees of the intelligence community who had left for the company, Bill Clinton was going to put in place, from the beginning of his term in 1992, a real American security and economic war policy,

the objective of which was to conquer new markets by positioning the companies of the other side of the Atlantic as well as possible in a globalized economy (Alaoui, 2009).

## 1.2. Definition of Competitive Intelligence

The concept of competitive intelligence first appeared in the United States in 1967 in Harold Wilensky's book *Organizational Intelligence*. The author stressed the importance of knowledge as a strategic vector for the development of the economy and industry, highlighting the need for cooperation and the mobilization of collective intelligence in order to develop common strategies between States and companies, better control information and knowledge, and optimize strategic decision-making.

The concept includes all the actions of monitoring, collection, analysis, dissemination, enhancement and capitalization of strategic information and knowledge, influence and security, thus enabling the actors to make the right decisions and wise choices to improve the performance and competitiveness of a State, a territory or an organization whether public or private, local, national or international.

Wilensky (1967) defines competitive intelligence as a process, not of accumulation of information, but of production of knowledge by governments and industrialists and when necessary within the framework of collective strategies.

The Martre report (1994) defines competitive intelligence as "the set of coordinated actions of research, processing and distribution, with a view to its exploitation, of information useful to economic actors. These various actions are carried out legally with all the guarantees of protection necessary for the preservation of the company's assets, in the best conditions of time and cost. Useful information is that which is needed by the different decision-making levels of the company or the community, to develop and implement in a coherent manner the strategy and tactics necessary to achieve the objectives defined by the company in order to improve its position in its competitive environment. These actions, within the company, are organized around an uninterrupted cycle, generating a shared vision of the objectives of the company".

According to Nicolas Moinet, "competitive intelligence consists, for companies and territories, in organizing the systematic monitoring of their environment, protecting strategic information, capitalizing and enhancing their knowledge and know-how and being able to deploy influencing actions". Thus, competitive intelligence is a company's

ability "to effectively combine internal and external knowledge, know-how and skills in order to solve a problem" (Colletis, 1997).

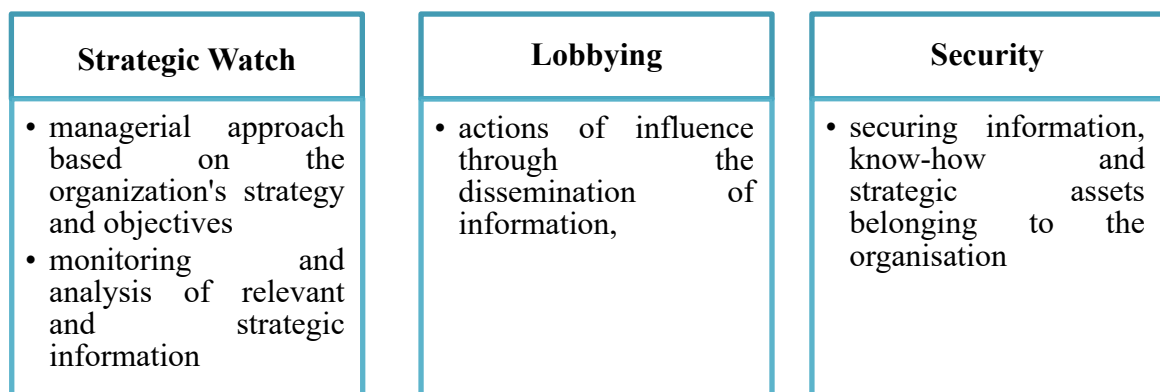
According to the French association for the development of competitive intelligence: "competitive intelligence is a dynamic of collective construction based on the conviction and the responsibility of all, and consists in the appropriation and the interpretation of information with a view to an economic action, immediate and later. Based on the principle of coordination, it is accompanied by a change in corporate culture and the ability to build the future in the face of uncertain events. Finally, it enables strategic advantages to be leveraged to build a high-performance and sustainable competitive advantage".

Moreover, for Juillet (1998), competitive intelligence is "a mode of governance whose object is the strategic information literacy and which has for finality the competitiveness and the security of the economy and the companies".

According to Promis (2004), "We are currently in an era of geoeconomics and competitive intelligence rather than economic war," monitoring, analysis, and action are the fundamental challenges of the competitive intelligence approach. Far from being a process, it is a culture and a state of mind that actors in all organizations must adopt.

According to Jakobiak (2009), the process of competitive intelligence is based on three pillars as indicated below:

**Figure1** : Competitive Intelligence Process (Jakobiak, 2009)



### - **Strategic Watch**

Strategic Watch is defined by the Association Française de Normalisation (AFNOR) as a "continuous and largely iterative activity aimed at actively monitoring the technological, commercial, etc. environment to anticipate changes".

Thus, according to Patrick Romagni and Wild (1998), "monitoring is an analysis of the different facets of the environment in order to develop proactivity and to best prepare an organization's decision-making". In order to carry out the monitoring process properly, two conditions are necessary, namely a good knowledge of the company's culture and sufficient mastery of the environment in which it operates.

Several types of monitoring are to be distinguished. In fact, Rivelli (2000) proposes the following classification according to the field that one wants to monitor:

- ✓ Technological watch: consists of monitoring the scientific, technical, technological and procedural environment in order to collect, select, analyze and disseminate useful information enabling to anticipate possible changes, carry out an innovation project and increase competitiveness.
- ✓ Competitive watch: consists of identifying current and potential competitors, as well as their partners from an economic and financial point of view (workforce, brands, investments, ongoing projects, etc.). The objective of this activity is to know the strategy adopted by each of the competitors so that management can make the right decision at the right time.
- ✓ Marketing and commercial watch: consists of monitoring market trends, competitors' products and services, as well as their business methods and organizations; detecting new entrants and anticipating substitute products and services; maintaining relationships with suppliers and customers, etc.
- ✓ Societal and environmental monitoring: consists of monitoring the regulatory, financial, fiscal, economic, political, geopolitical, ecological, social, cultural, etc. environment.

### - **Lobbying**

Lobbying, as an offensive part of the competitive intelligence system, aims at convincing, seducing or dissuading the actors and stakeholders evolving in the environment of the organization, for the implementation of a project or to defend

interests. It also allows to anticipate the risks of misinformation or rumours and to reduce the probability of their occurrence, through the implementation of a communication and influence policy, presence on social media and interaction with user customers through consumer relationship management. Lobbying is based on the notion of network. Thus, organizations must network, unite their efforts around a common project and give themselves the necessary means to defend and carry it out.

- **Security**

Defensive management consists of designing a risk map and deploying tools for anticipating, analysing and managing risks of all kinds: information risk, image or reputation risk, risk of our compliance with the requirements of current regulations, risk of turnover and loss of human capital, risk of unsuitability for technological developments, etc. Indeed, all of these risks must be studied and analyzed. Moreover, the security of sensitive information is a key aspect of competitive intelligence. Therefore, organizations must take the necessary measures to protect their intellectual capital against any aggression, cyber attack or fraud. Security is often linked to human behaviour. For example, it is important to educate employees to preserve trade secrets, lock access to applications and databases with passwords, etc.

In the era of the information and knowledge economy, the control and exploitation of intangible capital through the process of competitive intelligence is the key to the performance and competitiveness of States and organizations. Indeed, competitive intelligence allows, through several tools and methods, to be well informed, to analyze, to forecast, to organize, to decide, to establish projects, strategies, to launch actions, to anticipate crises and to protect oneself against any form of risk.

The context in which the State and organizations evolves has been overturned in recent years, and competitive intelligence has become more necessary to confront numerous and varied risks. On the one hand, the globalization of trade, the intensification of competition between States and organizations, the evolution of standards and regulations, the dematerialization of procedures, the emergence of new technical and technological innovations. On the other hand, information is increasingly strategic for decision-making. Thus, it is now necessary to organize the processes of monitoring, collecting, analyzing, sharing, enhancing and capitalizing on information. Hence the need to deploy an competitive intelligence system with the necessary resources and

qualified human capital capable of transforming information into knowledge ready to be used to make judicious choices and launch actions.

Competitive intelligence is a steering tool and a performance factor. Indeed, it allows to monitor and provide decision-makers with the right information at the right time to help them better direct their actions. Similarly, it enables the production of knowledge through the mobilization of employees' analytical and anticipatory capacities; and to highlight opportunities and exploit them for the implementation of innovations. In addition, it enables the organization to remain vigilant and react to crisis situations.

In Morocco, the practice of competitive intelligence is not longstanding, but it is still recent and in an embryonic stage (Oubrich & al.; 2018). Indeed, it is only since 2004 that one started to speak about competitive intelligence, through the organization, under the high patronage of the King, of the symposium of competitive intelligence in Tetouan, which is regarded as being the founding act of competitive Intelligence in Morocco (Alaoui, 2009). Later, in 2006, we witnessed the creation of the Moroccan Association of Competitive Intelligence. In the same year, the Jettoua government launched the Strategic Watch Centre. It is then housed within the Investment Direction. In 2007, the Royal Institute for Strategic Studies was created. In 2009, the Office of the Haut Commissariat au Plan created the National Documentation Centre (CND), a non-profit public information service. We also witnessed the organization of the first days on the theme of Regional Competitive Intelligence by the Oriental Region Development Agency; the setting up, by the Abbas El Fassi government, of a strategic watch committee to deal with the impacts of the great international financial crisis; and the launch of the monthly watch bulletin by the Agence Maroc PME to make strategic information available to Moroccan companies. In 2011, the Ministry of Industry launched observatories on Industry, Information and Communication Technologies, Trade and Distribution. Subsequently, the Moroccan Association of Competitive Intelligence proposes a roadmap in 16 recommendations for a national policy of competitive intelligence, to give a new dynamic to the practice of competitive intelligence in both the public and private spheres, accompany the development of Morocco and boost its economic growth.



## II. Research Methodology

### 2.1. Research methodology

The main objective of our survey is to explore the state of the art of competitive intelligence practices in Moroccan organizations. With the help of an exploratory qualitative study, based on interviews as an investigative technique, intended for a sample of Moroccan organizations, we tried to identify and analyze the actions implemented in order to reproduce a real image of the competitive intelligence system of the investigated organizations.

The interview guide contains three parts. The first part describes the organization and the interlocutor; the second part presents the competitive intelligence system deployed by the organization; the third part assesses the impact of the system on the competitiveness and performance of the organization and identifies some measures for improvement according to the needs and expectations of employees. The questions relate to the importance given to the practice of competitive intelligence by the organization, in this case the activities of monitoring, lobbying and security. They try to identify and analyze the degree of maturity of these activities, the mastery of the technological tools as well as the culture of the organization as regards the implementation of the competitive intelligence system.

The design of the interview is essentially based on the results of the literature review. The themes comprising the interview guide are as follows:

1. organization identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organization name</li> <li>- Missions of the organization</li> <li>- Function of the interviewee</li> </ul>
2. competitive intelligence system	<p><u>Monitoring</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do you have a monitoring unit within your organization?</li> <li>- What information sources do you use and how often?</li> <li>- For what purposes do you need the information?</li> <li>- Do you monitor your organization's image on the internet and social networks?</li> <li>- what are the modes of analysis and dissemination of the collected information?</li> <li>- Are you developing a culture of monitoring and sharing information within your organization?</li> <li>- Are you experiencing difficulties in monitoring your organization's environment?</li> </ul>

	<p><u>Security</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do you protect strategic information?</li> <li>- Do you identify the risks that may threaten your sensitive information (theft, destruction, capture, counterfeiting, rumors, ...)?</li> <li>- At what level do you place the protection of information within your organization?</li> </ul> <p><u>Lobbying</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do you think your organization influences government and partner decisions?</li> <li>- Do you take counter-influence measures to protect against misinformation, rumor, manipulation, and destabilization?</li> <li>-</li> </ul>
3. Impacts of competitive intelligence system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do you evaluate the maturity of your competitive intelligence system?</li> <li>- What is the contribution of the competitive intelligence system to the performance of your organization?</li> </ul>

As our study is in an exploratory phase, our sample does not claim to be exhaustive. Indeed, we have selected organizations with at least one monitoring function, which we considered appropriate to meet the objectives of the survey.

It should be noted that twenty (20) organizations were contacted, but only eleven (11) of them responded to our interview. Thus, the organizations we surveyed and analyzed are as follows:

- Groupe Office Chérifien des Phosphates (OCP) ;
- La Caisse de Dépôt et de Gestion (CDG) ;
- L'Office National des Chemins de Fer (ONCF) ;
- La Poste Maroc ;
- La Mutuelle agricole marocaine d'assurances (MAMDA) ;
- La Banque Centrale Populaire ;
- L'Agence nationale de la promotion de l'emploi et des compétences (ANAPEC) ;
- La Trésorerie générale du royaume ;
- Maroc Telecom ;
- Orange ;
- Lafarge Maroc.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face in the interviewees' workplaces for reasons of proximity, with a view to reassuring them and increasing the degree of their involvement. Each interview took us almost an hour of discussion and exchange and was only stopped after we had obtained the maximum amount of information necessary to achieve the objectives of our research.

It should be noted that some interviews were conducted by professional email and telephone.

Once completed, the interviews were transcribed, coded and analyzed using thematic content analysis software NVIVO.

## **2.2. Research Findings**

Heads of watch, marketing and information system units were interviewed about their competitive intelligence practices. Subsequently, each interview resulted in a report that was validated by the interlocutor.

### **- Groupe Office Chérifien des Phosphates (OCP)**

The OCP group has a documentation and strategic watch centre responsible for monitoring the scientific, technological and competitive environment to feed into the branch's decision-making processes. The latter is strongly aware of the importance of the monitoring function and is involved in carrying out its activities. This involvement takes the form of the organization of training and awareness seminars for the benefit of staff, as well as the allocation of the financial and human resources needed to ensure the smooth running of the monitoring unit. Thus, the strategic watch supports the organization in the definition of its strategy and in its export activities.

Information is collected from databases and specialized journals in scientific and technical information, scientific events. In addition, conventions are signed between OCP and other organizations providing scientific and technical information, in particular the Moroccan Office of Industrial and Commercial Property (OMPIC), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the National Documentation Center (CND) and the Moroccan Institute of Scientific and Technical Information (IMIST). The information collected is analyzed and disseminated via the intranet, according to

the needs of each entity belonging to OCP Group. Likewise, the organization's intellectual heritage is capitalized and valorized for any subsequent use.

**- La Caisse de Dépôt et de Gestion (CDG)**

The organization has a strong awareness of the importance of competitive intelligence. It gives a capital place to the monitoring process and the protection of intellectual heritage. This enables it to better guide the organization's strategy, anticipate future challenges and support its internationalization activities. In addition, it enables it to monitor the regulatory and technological environment. In addition, it enables it to protect and enhance its know-how and to defend its reputation and image in the media.

CDG mobilizes the collective intelligence of its internal collaborators. In addition, it calls on watch providers in order to obtain strategic information such as market trends; customer needs; new standards and regulations; technological innovations; trade shows and events; etc.

**- L'Office National des Chemins de Fer (ONCF)**

Since its restructuring in 2002, ONCF has set up a watch unit responsible for monitoring the competitive, technological and security environment with a view to improving the performance and quality of services provided to its customers. Having a strong awareness of the importance of monitoring activities, top management has become involved by organizing awareness and training seminars for its staff and by providing financial resources to ensure the proper functioning of the monitoring unit. Strategic monitoring within ONCF then makes it possible to better define the organization's strategy, anticipate the stakes and foresee the risks related to its activities. Information is collected from two sources. One is formal through the press, studies carried out by specialized firms and international organizations. The other is informal through the sales force, which feeds back information from the field. The information is analysed, disseminated and capitalised for use by decision-makers.

**- La Poste Maroc**

The concept of competitive intelligence is well known within this organization and the monitoring and security components remain the most practiced. Indeed, the process of watch within this organization makes it possible to define the strategy and the main orientations. In addition, it allows monitoring markets, competitors' practices and new

technologies used to improve services to customers. It also enables the Group to anticipate new entrants and substitute products. In addition, the security component makes it possible to anticipate risks and foresee crises. The organization adopts a collective approach that aims to mobilize all its employees around the practice of monitoring. Information is collected mainly from the press, trade fairs, customers, suppliers, etc.

As the monitoring approach is not yet structured, the organization has set itself the objective of deploying an internal department dedicated to monitoring the national and international environment, markets, technologies, products, competitors, etc. The department is responsible for monitoring the national and international environment, markets, technologies, products and competitors.

- **La Mutuelle agricole marocaine d'assurances (MAMDA)**

Despite the strategic importance of this organization on the national economic scene, it does not have a strategic intelligence service that could support its growth and development in the face of competition. However, monitoring is carried out informally between the different departments of the organization according to their information needs: monitoring new products and services; learning about new technologies and processes; better understanding customer needs and expectations; etc.

- **La Banque Centrale Populaire**

The monitoring function is crucial for this organization. Deployed by the Marketing Department, its purpose is to support management in defining its strategy and taking the right decisions; it also monitors competitors' products and benchmarks them with a view to improving the products and services provided to customers.

Despite the fact that the monitoring culture is not yet highly developed in this organization, top management support is present. The monitoring activity is organized via a commercial and competitive monitoring unit. The information collected comes from the press, trade journals and competitors' prospectuses. It is analyzed and disseminated through the organization's documentary information system.

- **L'Agence Nationale de la Promotion de l'Emploi et des Compétences (ANAPEC)**

The concept of competitive intelligence is less well known within this organization. ANAPEC, because of its reason for being, monitors, on a continuous basis, the sectors of activities and professions as well as their human capital recruitment needs. Thus, the watch function allows this organization to better define its strategy and action plans; to monitor the evolution of the employment market in Morocco, the development of the regulations in force; and to promote its reputation and image on the media.

In terms of organization of the monitoring process, ANAPEC does not have a dedicated unit. The monitoring practice is conducted by the head of the organization by collecting information on the market; regulations; customers; etc. through publications and information services; employees; professional organizations; press; etc.

The monitoring approach within ANAPEC thus remains poorly organized, resulting from several problems related to the collection, analysis, storage and dissemination of strategic information. Moreover, the dimensions of security and development of intellectual capital remain omitted. Hence the need to deploy a real competitive intelligence system.

- **La Trésorerie Générale du Royaume (TGR)**

TGR places a high value on watch activity, unlike other dimensions of competitive intelligence. Indeed, monitoring actions make it possible to orient the strategy of this organization, to monitor the national and international environment and to keep abreast of new regulations and technologies, etc.

The monitoring approach within the TGR is not structured, and creates several problems related to the collection, analysis and dissemination of strategic information. On the other hand, TGR has a documentation centre, responsible in charge of information management, capitalization and information security.

- **Maroc Telecom**

The organization has a strong awareness of the importance of competitive intelligence in its three dimensions of monitoring, influence and security, and its contribution to its performance. Indeed, competitive intelligence supports the organization in the

definition of its strategy and its internationalization projects. It enables it to take advantage of any opportunities and anticipate crises.

The monitoring process is organized according to a collective intelligence approach that integrates all employees. It aims to monitor the competitive, regulatory and technological environment as well as market trends.

In addition, the organization makes efforts to promote its brand image and reputation, both on traditional and social media, as the first Moroccan operator and leader in the telecommunications market. Furthermore, information security is a major issue for this organization. Measures are implemented to ensure this, such as confidentiality contracts and the filing of patents, as well as the obligation to maintain professional secrecy.

#### **- Orange**

The practice of monitoring within this organization dates back to the 2000s. Since its implementation, it has made it possible to monitor the competitive, technological, legal and regulatory environment. Aware of the importance of monitoring activities, the top management is involved by organizing awareness and training seminars for its staff and by providing sufficient human and financial resources to ensure the proper functioning of the monitoring unit.

Information is collected through web platforms and competitors' customer relations centres. In the same way, the sales representatives report information from the field. In addition, the organization works to promote its brand image and reputation and remain close to the needs and expectations of its customers. Similarly, information security is a major issue for this organization. Measures are implemented to ensure this, such as confidentiality contracts and patent registration, as well as the obligation to maintain professional secrecy.

#### **- Lafarge**

This organization gives a primordial place to the watch in the exercise of its activities. This can be explained by the deployment of a monitoring unit since 1995, the year the company started up. Indeed, the watch is so structured in this organization. It makes it possible to monitor competitors, their strategies and practices, as well as the technological and regulatory environment. In this way, the watch helps to better orient

the organization's strategy; to anticipate future issues and to support its export and internationalization activities.

Top management is aware of the importance of the contribution of monitoring to performance and value creation. It is involved through the organization of awareness seminars for the benefit of its staff and through the allocation of financial and human resources necessary to ensure the proper functioning of the monitoring unit.

### III. Discussion

Through our survey, we tried to explore the competitive intelligence practices of eleven (11) selected Moroccan organizations.

The analysis of our empirical study seems to show some limitations regarding the practice of competitive intelligence within the surveyed organizations. Apart from the large organizations, which develop in a hyper-competitive environment, and whose Top Management supports the culture and practice of competitive intelligence in order to gain a competitive advantage enabling them to innovate and improve performance and the process of value creation for user customers; the other organizations attach little importance to or practice only one dimension of competitive intelligence, generally the watch activity. Indeed, these organizations claim to practice competitive intelligence, whereas in reality, they only do monitoring, thus neglecting the lobbying and security aspects. In addition to that, there is the lack of sufficient financial, technological and human resources to make a success of the competitive intelligence project.

In general, the practice of competitive intelligence in Morocco remains recent. It was imposed by the change operated at the level of the political and economic environment, national and international, and by the need to ensure its durability and its growth in a context of exacerbated competition. This need now leads to a growing awareness of the crucial role of information and knowledge capital, which must be fully mastered and developed. Competitive intelligence enables to monitor trends, be aware of changes in your environment, identify possible synergies, anticipate and be ready to innovate.

Indeed, the integration of a competitive intelligence system within the organization allows it, through the strategic intelligence process, to know its internal environment, its strengths, its constraints in terms of human capital, financial resources, etc. Furthermore, it enables it to better know its external environment, its suppliers, its



customers and to identify the existence of a new need that could be transformed into an innovation.

Furthermore, competitive intelligence, through its monitoring techniques, enables the organization to orient itself towards the customer and its expectations. First of all, informational and societal monitoring offers the opportunity to listen to the needs and expectations of customers, the problems they frequently encounter and to follow the complaints of and trends in society. Secondly, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) allows listening to their proposals for improving products and services. In addition, thanks to technology watch, the organization can acquire the latest technologies likely to strengthen its production and delivery capacity for products and services; legal and regulatory watch enables it to monitor changes in the legislative framework, improve procedures and avoid risks of non-compliance with regulations.

In order to take advantage of the competitive intelligence approach for purposes of innovation and performance improvement, the actors and decision-makers of Moroccan organizations must initiate and adopt a competitive intelligence approach likely to allow a rigorous and permanent monitoring of new technologies, to establish benchmarks to draw inspiration from best practices and international experiences and successful managerial strategies. Thus, competitive intelligence is likely to offer to the organization an absorption capacity which resides in its ability to identify, assimilate and exploit knowledge coming from its environment and to produce new ones. This absorptive and capitalization capacity makes it possible to strengthen skills and promotes the development of the learning organization.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, our article shows how competitive intelligence, an approach to monitoring, collecting and analyzing strategic information, lobbying and security, could be a leverage for competitiveness, performance and value creation for organizations. In a hyper-competitive context, characterized by accelerating information and knowledge production rates, the complexity of customer requirements, shorter product life cycles and exponential technology development, decision-makers are faced with an increasingly complex environment to meet a variety of challenges. Indeed, Moroccan organizations find themselves forced to change in order to respond to national and international socio-economic and political transformations by

integrating good competitive intelligence practices that can help in making the right decisions and implementing new or improved services that better meet customer expectations, integrating technological and organizational innovations to improve the processes of production and delivery of goods and services, networking with other actors and communities of practice to generate knowledge, defend common interests and influence on the national or international scene, anticipating risks and managing crisis situations and developing a learning and innovative organization for good governance and customer value creation. In addition, Morocco must review its current development model and direct its efforts towards a new development model based on the knowledge economy. To achieve this, public decision-makers must invest more in intangible capital, training and education, innovation, new technologies and make competitive intelligence a top priority in order to draw inspiration from the best models and make a successful transition to the new Knowledge-Based Economy.

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