Department	Business Management
Discipline	Strategic Management
Research Focus Area	**Strategic and Competitive Intelligence** **Sub Themes**: Strategic Insight, Strategic Foresight, Use of Big data & social media for Competitive Intelligence.
Supervision Team	Prof N Sewdass

Name Prof Nisha Sewdass Email: Sewdan@unisa.ac.za	Academic Profile Prof Nisha Sewdass is a Professor in the Department of Management Science at the University of South Africa (UNISA). Her research focus areas include Strategic Competitive Intelligence and business intelligence and she has conducted several certificate courses and workshops in these areas for government departments and industry in South Africa. She is currently working on Big data analytics for CI and the use of social media for Competitive intelligence. She is also the founder and Chair of the SCIP (Strategic and Competitive Intelligence Professionals) South African Chapter and the Chair of the African Summit 2014, 2016 and serves on the SCIP Global Advisory Board. Prof Sewdass is a member on the SCIP Board of Directors. She has published and presented several papers at local and international conferences.	Capacity Up to 3 master's student; up to 4 doctoral students
Model of Supervision	Students are allocated (by the departmental HDC chairperson) according to focus area. In addition, they should comply with the selection criteria in the next section. Apart from the formal approval of the proposal by a departmental colloquium, students will be required to present their work (under method and then after results) to a departmental colloquium.	
Selection Criteria: MCom and PhD	In addition to the admission criteria in the *my*Choice brochure, potential students are required to prepare a five-page expression of interest essay describing the following: 1. Topic 2. What will be studied 3. Why it will be studied 4. How it will be studied (literature and method) 5. Indicate where the study is located in the literature 6. Potential contribution of the study 7. Which research philosophy is applicable in the investigation and why 8. List of references (use the Harvard referencing method)	
Selection Procedure	1. Apply for a student number – follow the steps outlined at http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=26708. 2. Apply for a space in the competitive advantage research focus area by using the online application process. 3. Once acceptance in the research focus area has been confirmed you may register for your studies. Selection of candidates will be in line with Section 37 of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 to provide appropriate measures for the redress of past inequalities and to provide clear assessment criteria to avoid any unfair discrimination. Applicants will also receive feedback on their submissions to empower unsuccessful candidates to improve future readmission submissions. The following criteria will be applied to assess the expression of interest essay: a) Academic merit: Quality in terms of originality, significance and rigour	

	and impacts in terms of their reach and significance. b) Evidence of higher order thinking: The candidate's skills and abilities in analysing, synthesizing, applying, and evaluating information. c) Academic writing skills: The extent to which the essay convey coherent and well-developed arguments that are supported with relevant, detailed and convincing evidence; the logically sequence of paragraphs with content-based transitions; the use of appropriate diction and tone and constructively vary sentence structures, and the use of correct grammar, punctuation, spelling and syntax. d) Academic and professional experience: Strengths and relevance relative to the candidate's opportunities (impact).
Possible Alternative Opportunities for Unsuccessful Candidates	The names of unsuccessful candidates and the reasons for their rejection will be submitted to the College Executive Committee for validation. Applicants have the right to appeal to the College Executive Management if admission is refused. Reasons for such refusal must be furnished to the applicant. The following possible alternative opportunities exist for applicants who do not meet the generic admission requirements for CEMS: (1) Applicants with degrees that have different structures from normal South African honours degrees, applicant's whose degrees do not clearly correspond to generic CEMS admissions requirements (e.g. no mark awarded for previous dissertations, no clear evidence of having completed a research-related module as part of the previous qualification, etc.), or applicants who do not meet generic admissions requirements but who possess applicable experience in research that may qualify them for admissions to a master's degree will be required to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Prior academic and research activity by the applicant will be evaluated in accordance with formal Unisa RPL procedures and the outcome of the RPL process will be submitted to and approved by the College Executive Committee. If the approved outcome of the RPL process is positive, the applicant will be allowed to proceed with an application for admission, subject to all terms and conditions governing the admissions process. (2) Students who have been refused admission because of limited capacity within the academic department where the application was made may reapply in subsequent years. (3) In instances where a student does not have an average of 60% or more a submission may be made to the Department to allow such a student admission. Students must provide a written motivation of not more three pages requesting admission to the department. The department will consider the application, taking into account: • The relevant experience, work or otherwise, of the student, • Alternative options for access into the programme • Any other factor deemed necessary by the department
Documents to Support Application	One-page abbreviated CV, including: • Academic qualifications, indicating major subjects and score • Work experience • Contact details • Expression of interest (see selection criteria) • Previous research, if any
Research Agenda	Most organisations have been practicing some form of competitive intelligence (CI) or strategic competitive intelligence in their organizations for many years, without them even knowing it and without referring to these practices as CI. In many instances CI has been used for strategic planning, marketing, financial

planning, policy development and re-engineering of an organisation's activities in order for the organisation to remain viable in the environment. Managers require some form of information that can assist or that compels them to take certain decisions regarding the functioning and performance of the organisation. With technological innovations and globalisation, the situation has now escalated to new levels forcing organisations to stop and take stock of what is happening and what needs to be done. This is where the emergence of CI as a business process has been noticed.

CI can be regarded as the process that organisations uses to gather actionable information about their competitors and the competitive environments within which they function and then apply this information to their decision-making and the planning processes so that it can improve their performance (Fleisher, 2001:4).

While it is mostly believed that CI is espionage or "spying", it is in fact a legitimate way of collecting intelligence by legal and ethical means. Furthermore, the information that the CI practitioners need is usually readily available in the public domain and requires no illegal activities to access them.

Globally the terms strategic intelligence, business intelligence, competitor intelligence, market research, market monitoring, market intelligence, corporate intelligence, competitive information, commercial intelligence and knowledge management are used by organisations (Global Intelligence Agency, 2005:7; McGonagle & Vella, 2002:35).

CI can do more than just provide the organization with intelligence for decision-making purposes. A well-designed CI system can assist the organization in their strategic planning process as well as in determining the intention and capabilities of its competitors so that the extent of the risk that the organization is exposed to, can be established.

Gross (2000) confirms this by indicating that CI within an organization serves as a catalyst in the decision-making process. It also forms part of the value chain that takes data elements, converts these into actionable information and results in strategic decisions.

The benefits of CI for organisations are identified by Kahaner (1997: 23-27) and Bernhardt (2005: 2) as follows:

- Organisations that implement CI are rarely surprised by events that affect their business and performance since they are able to anticipate these changes in the marketplace long before they occur and they are able to prepare themselves for these "predictable surprises".
- Organisations are able to anticipate the actions of their competitors and adjust their own activities accordingly in good time to outsmart the competition.
- CI helps organisations to discover new or potential competitors and their activities in the marketplace.
- Organisations learn from the successes and failures of others and thus save valuable time, money and resources.
- Organisations are in a better position to increase their range and the quality of their future acquisitions targets, mergers, partnerships, etc.
- CI helps organizations to learn more about new technologies, products and processes that affect them and to determine which the most appropriate ones for their success are.
- Political, legislative and regulatory changes take place regularly and organisations are not always aware of them. CI provides an opportunity for organisations to learn about these changes that impact their business operations.
- Organisations deciding to enter into new businesses can benefit from CI as it not only helps in the decision-making, but also provides foreknowledge

about the success of these new ventures.

- CI exposes the organisation to new ideas and concepts thereby providing the opportunity to view the organisation in a new light, with an open mind and also forces them to be more outwardly focused an not have a limited, internal focus on the organisation.
- Organisations that failed in the past to implement and sustain the latest management tools as a result of a lack of information are now able to do so successfully as timely, accurate, unbiased, and valuable information is provided by CI.
- CI sheds light on "business blindspots" and helps organisations to see and recognise the not so obvious aspects.
- CI reinforces the competitive culture in the organisation.
- CI makes the organisation more aware of its needs for counter-intelligence and information security.

The implementation of CI is usually based on the needs of the organisation and these needs can be tactical or strategic needs. Depending on where the organisation is positioned, it may require different CI systems to be implemented (Metayer, 1999). The needs can be divided as:

Tactical-urgent needs – the objective here will be to provide the operational staff with rapid information and to generate additional revenue.

- Tactical-ongoing needs – the idea here is to provide different departments in the organisation with information that they require on a regular basis.
- Strategic-urgent needs – calls for bold decisions and management will need support in terms of business development.
- Strategic-ongoing needs- the objective is to support strategic initiatives that are less urgent in the organisation (Metayer, 1999).

The present global environment is confronted with constant change and development as a result of technological innovations and new business developments. Access to information is also on a constant increase leading to information overload in certain instances. This means that the tools, strategies, techniques and models as well as the skills needed to manage this vast amount of information is necessary. Tools for gathering, sorting and analysing information so that it can be converted into actionable intelligence is required to assist CI practioners in accomplishing their tasks. It is also important to note that while several tools, techniques and strategies are identified in the literature (Sandman, 2000: 69-95; Gieskes, 2001: 76-79; Marceau & Sawka, 2001: 160-163; Fleisher & Bensoussan, 2003), each organisation has to select appropriate tools, strategies and techniques to suit their unique environment and needs. In certain instances a range of CI tools may be used in an organisation to ensure that information (intelligence) gets to the users in a form which they can assimilate easily and quickly.

It should also be noted that many tools, techniques and models that are applicable for CI use are actually the traditional business or managerial tools, techniques and models that have been used in organisation for strategic planning and management decision making. They are based on solid research that has been conducted and are usually backed up by theory but on their own may not be adequate for CI purposes. However, they are flexible enough and with slight modifications and adjustments, creativity and innovative thinking, they can be used successfully in CI activities.

Selected Reading: Subject Field	• Bernhardt, D. 2005. Competitive intelligence- the lifeblood of competitive strategy. *Alumni newsletter Graduate School of Management, University of*

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• Fleisher, C.S. & Blenkhorn, D.L.2003. Strategic and competitive analysis: methods and techniques for analyzing business competition. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, Prentice Hall.
• Gross, M. 2000. Competitive intelligence: a librarian's empirical approach. Information Today. [Online].
Available:http:///www.findarticles.com/cf_dls/m0DPC/8_8/65575483/print.jhtml. Accessed 19 March 2003.

• Kahaner, L. 1997. Competitive intelligence: how to gather, analyse, and use information to move your business to the top. New York: Touchstone. 287p.

• McGonagle, J.J. & Vella, C.M. 1993. Outsmarting the competition: practical approaches to finding and outsmarting the competition. London: McGraw-Hill. 320p.

• McGonagle, J.J. & Vella, C.M. 2002. A case for competitive intelligence: 90% of the information a company needs to understand its market and competitors and to make key decisions is already public. *Information Management Journal*, 36(4): 35-40.

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• Rouach, D. & Santi, P. 2001. Competitive intelligence adds value: five intelligence attitudes. *European Journal of Management.* 19(5): 552-559.

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• Sewdass, N. 2012. Proposing a competitive intelligence (CI) framework for Public Service departments to enhance service delivery. South African Journal of Information Management, 14(1): 491, 13 pages. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajim.v14i1.491

• Viviers, W. & Muller, M. 2004. The evolution of competitive intelligence in South Africa: early 1980s-2003. *Journal of Competitive Intelligence and Management*. 2(3):53-67. |
| **Reading:**
Research Methodology | • Bak, N. 2004. *Completing your thesis: A practical guide*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
• Brynard, P.A & Hanekom, S.X. 2006. *Introduction to research in management-related fields.* 2nd edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
• Collis, J. & Hussey, R. 2009. *Business research: A practical guide for undergraduate and postgraduate students*. 3rd edition. London: Palgrave MacMillan.
• Cooper, D.R. & Schindler, P.S. 2008. *Business research methods.* 10th |

	edition. New York: McGraw-Hill. • Creswell, J.W. & Plano Clark, V.L. 2007. Designing and conducting mixed methods research. London: Sage. 265p. Leedy, P.D. & Ormrod, J.E. 2005. *Practical research: Planning and design.* 8th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson International. • Mouton, J. 2001. How *to succeed in your master's and doctoral studies*: *A South African guide and resource book.* Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers. • Pellissier, R. 2007. *Business research made easy*. Cape Town: Juta. • Salkind, N.J. 2006. *Exploring research*. 6th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson International. • Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. 2013. *Research methods for business students*. 6th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson International.
Resources: **Scholar Community**	SCIP (Strategic and Competitive Intelligence Professionals) www.scip.org SCIP South African Chapter