2023 STATE OF COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE

The Industry’s Largest & Longest-Running Benchmark Report
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INTRODUCTION

From Paul Santilli, CEO and Chairman Emeritus of SCIP

One thing Covid-19 taught the world is just how unprepared we are to cope with global disruption—how impactful it is to not only business behaviors and outcomes, but to everyday life. Organizations are now instilling safeguards to manage this disruption through technological improvements as well as changes to organizational structure, cultural norms, and priorities.

But the real winners will be those organizations that can not only manage their business functions through what I call “perpetual disruption,” but actually use it as a catalyst for growth.

I believe SCIP is best suited to provide the insight, knowledge, and experience our members need to use competitive and business intelligence to help their organizations grow. And by working with partners in the intelligence ecosystem, SCIP is positioned as the cornerstone of the global intelligence thought leadership community.

To that end, I am honored to introduce the State of Competitive Intelligence. This report showcases key learnings around CI disciplines and practitioners, and reinforces the fact that organizations with intelligence disciplines are better equipped in times of “perpetual disruption”.

There are 3 major points around CI and related intelligence-driven economies that will drive a successful strategy:

• A data-driven mentality is critical in the development of CI initiatives and plans
• Strategic decision-making needs to happen as close as possible to the time that new intelligence is revealed
• Organizations need to pivot their line of value to alternative/related outcomes in order to efficiently use intelligence to meet changing customer demand.

With the proper alignment of intelligence strategists and this knowledge around data-driven insights combined with executive-level decision-makers, you can create a truly world-class strategy.

I believe we are in the midst of a profound role transition, in that people at all levels of the intelligence profession are becoming critical to organizational growth and wellness.

It’s an exciting time to be in this field. I look forward to working with each of you in the SCIP community.

My sincere best,

Paul Santilli
Our favorite findings from this year’s survey include...

Since 2021, we’ve seen a 55% increase in the share of stakeholders who say competitive intelligence is “absolutely critical” to their success. 99% of the stakeholders who completed our survey this year said CI is at least “somewhat important” to their success.

For the average software company, 66% of sales opportunities are competitive. Fortunately, most CI leaders understand how crucial it is to enable sellers with competitive intel: 64% say sales is a very important CI stakeholder group, and 56% are using win/loss analysis to determine where their enablement efforts are most needed.

88% of CI stakeholders want regular updates on their competitive landscapes—ideally on either a weekly or monthly basis (only 9% want quarterly updates, and even fewer want daily updates). At this point, only 70% of CI leaders are fulfilling this desire for regularity.

Since 2018, we’ve seen a 125% increase in the share of CI leaders who say they’re measuring the success of their programs with key performance indicators (KPIs). Competitive win rate is the most popular KPI.
THE NEED FOR COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE

For the average software company, 66% of sales opportunities are competitive.

We asked each respondent to estimate the share of their sales opportunities that are competitive. Given that sellers are not always aware of (or willing to report) the presence of a competitor, it’s likely that some respondents underestimated—which means the true average is likely higher than 66%.

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TEMPLATE
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Q: Would you say your market has gotten more or less competitive in recent years?

12% increase in the share of CI leaders who say their market has gotten much more competitive.

- 2020:
  - Much more competitive: 51%
  - Somewhat more competitive: 40%
  - No change: 6%

- 2023:
  - Much more competitive: 57%
  - Somewhat more competitive: 36%
  - No change: 5%
  - Less competitive: 6%

The Need for Competitive Intelligence
Q: How important is competitive intelligence to your success?

55% increase in the share of CI stakeholders who say CI is **absolutely critical** to their success.
Q: Why is CI important to your company’s success? Select all that apply.

85% Helps us differentiate in the market
79% Helps us win competitive deals
67% Helps us with business development
44% Helps us build our brand
34% Helps us get products to market faster
7% Other

TAKEAWAY
Applications of CI that directly impact revenue are considered most important.
INVESTMENTS IN COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE

Q: How many employees at your company are dedicated to CI?

55% increase in the share of CI teams with 3 or more dedicated employees. More companies are building dedicated competitive intelligence departments.
33% of respondents expect their CI headcount to **increase** in 2023.

42% expected headcount increases in 2022—so macroeconomic forces are slowing the growth of CI teams. Nevertheless, it’s encouraging to see that a third of CI teams will add new members in 2023.

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**Q:** How do you expect your CI headcount to change in 2023?

- **33%** Increase
- **50%** Stay the same
- **15%** I’m not sure
- **2%** Decrease

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Q: What is your annual CI budget (excluding headcount)?

110% increase in the share of CI teams with more than $25,000 in budget. CI teams have traditionally worked with little to no budget, but this is rapidly changing.
26% of respondents expect their CI budgets to **increase** in 2023.

36% expected budget increases in 2022—so, again, we’re seeing the impact of macroeconomic forces. But, as with headcount, the unwillingness across companies to reduce CI budgets is encouraging.

**Q:** How do you expect your CI budget to change in 2023?

- **26%** Increase
- **48%** Stay the same
- **22%** I’m not sure
- **4%** Decrease
COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE PROGRAM MATURITY

On a maturity scale from 0 to 100, the average CI program is at 39.

Averages based on data from the Competitive Program Grader. Visit crayon.co/grader to calculate the maturity of your CI program.
On average, CI programs in the pharma, software, and IT industries are relatively mature.

Averages based on data from the Competitive Program Grader. Visit crayon.co/grading to calculate the maturity of your CI program.
**SUCCESS MEASUREMENT**

**Q:** Do you have defined competitive intelligence KPIs (a.k.a. success metrics)?

- **2018:**
  - Yes: 16%
  - No: 84%

- **2023:**
  - Yes: 36%
  - No: 64%

*125% increase in the share of CI programs with KPIs.*
84% of those with defined KPIs use both qualitative & quantitative measures.

Compared to early-stage CI programs, mature CI programs are only slightly more likely to use both qualitative and quantitative KPIs. Even amongst programs that are still getting their footing, the use of only one type of KPI is rare.
Q: Which KPIs do you use? Select all that apply.

- 76% Competitive win rate
- 71% Engagement with deliverables
- 67% Revenue from closed-won competitive deals
- 44% Sales team confidence
- 25% Competitive sales cycle length
- 14% Other

Some of the other KPIs submitted by respondents included number of deals supported, number of requests received, and stakeholder satisfaction.
INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION

The average CI practitioner spends 40% of their time collecting intel.

Whether CI is the practitioner’s primary focus at work makes no difference in how they divide their time. The average full-time CI practitioner spends 40% of their time collecting intel, and the same is true for the average part-time CI practitioner.

On staying focused:

“Our space has hundreds of solutions, so crowded is an understatement. We’re laser-focused on the who, the what, and—most importantly—the why of our customer base.”

Kait Smith
Product Marketing Manager / Intellum
Q: On which of the following do you collect intel? Select all that apply.

- 90% Direct competitors
- 73% Perceived competitors
- 58% Indirect competitors
- 53% Your own company
- 51% Customers
- 39% Prospects
- 38% Partners
- 38% Thought leaders
- 6% Other

BEST PRACTICE
Keep tabs on your indirect competitors to avoid getting blindsided by major moves.
Q: How valuable do you consider each source of intelligence?

The intel you source from your coworkers is extremely valuable not only because it can inform strategy and tip deals in your favor, but also because it gets your coworkers involved in the process—which helps drive culture change and adoption of CI.
56% of CI leaders try to determine why they *win some deals and lose others*.

Of those with roles focused specifically on CI, 63% do win/loss analysis—compared to only 52% of those with responsibilities beyond CI. The less time you have for CI, the less likely you are to do win/loss.

Q: Do you do win/loss analysis?

- **56%** Yes
- **44%** No

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**EBOOK**
How to Succeed with Win/Loss Analysis

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28% of those who do win/loss analysis do it without any dedicated budget.

Although dedicated budget is by no means required to get started with win/loss, it does unlock the ability to use specialized software and/or leverage the expertise of a consultant—both of which are tremendously valuable.

On making the case for win/loss:

“Win/loss helps you understand operational gaps and highlights opportunities for leaders to increase win rates, reduce churn, drive higher revenue, and delight buyers.”

Carolyn Klinger
Director, Market & Competitive Intel / Affinity
29% of those who do win/loss analysis do it on an **ad-hoc (as needed) basis**.

Of those with roles focused specifically on CI, only 24% do win/loss on an ad-hoc basis—compared to 33% of those with responsibilities beyond CI. This reinforces the notion that the latter group does not yet consider win/loss essential.

**Q:** How often do you do win/loss analysis?

- **29%** Ad-hoc
- **33%** Quarterly
- **24%** Monthly
- **8%** Annually
- **6%** Twice annually
- **8%** Twice annually

On programming win/loss:

> **Win/loss analysis is an ongoing program that’s built to bring in insights on a quarterly basis.**

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**Penny Moran**

Head of Competitive Intelligence / Zuora
67% of those who do win/loss get insights directly from their buyers.

Of those who do win/loss regularly, 70% get insights directly from their buyers—compared to only 58% of those who do win/loss on an ad-hoc basis.
**INTELLIGENCE DISTRIBUTION**

**Q:** Rate the importance of these stakeholder groups.

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Which of the following channels do you use to distribute intel? Select all that apply.

Q: Which of the following channels do you use to distribute intel? Select all that apply.

- 71% Meetings
- 68% Email
- 53% Slack/Teams
- 48% Knowledge sharing site (e.g., SharePoint)
- 39% Competitive intelligence platform
- 31% Sales enablement platform
- 27% CRM
- 5% Other

BEST PRACTICE
Improve adoption by embedding CI into your stakeholders’ favorite tools and existing workflows.
30% of respondents share intel on an ad-hoc basis.

Headcount makes a big difference here. Of those with roles focused specifically on CI, only 16% say they share intel on an ad-hoc basis—compared to 37% of those who have responsibilities beyond CI.

Q: How often do you and your colleagues share competitive intel?

- 30% Ad-hoc
- 20% Daily
- 16% Monthly
- 30% Weekly
- 4% Quarterly

On sharing intel with stakeholders:

"Don’t overlook obvious insights; they can be more actionable than you may think. There’s value in validation."

August Jackson
VP, Market Intel & Competitive Strategy / Deltek
Q: Which deliverables do you produce? Select all that apply.

- 69% Competitor profiles
- 63% Battlecards
- 54% Competitive landscape reports
- 53% Sales slide decks
- 49% Executive reports
- 42% Newsletters
- 40% Data sheets

Some of the other deliverables submitted by respondents included SWOT analyses, thought leadership articles, and analyst briefings.
Nearly half of CI leaders update deliverables on an **ad-hoc basis**.

Once again, headcount makes a big difference. Of those with roles focused specifically on CI, only 34% update their deliverables ad-hoc—compared to 52% of those who have responsibilities beyond CI.

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**Q:** How often are your deliverables updated?

- **45%** Ad-hoc
- **21%** Monthly
- **18%** Quarterly
- **11%** Weekly
- **5%** Daily

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36% of CI leaders are able to measure the usage of their deliverables. Headcount doesn’t matter much here— but technology does. Of those with a dedicated CI platform, 49% can measure the usage of their deliverables—compared to only 24% of those without a dedicated CI platform.

Q: Do you have a way to measure the usage of your deliverables?

- 36% Yes
- 64% No

On the value of conversations:

“1-on-1 conversations with stakeholders help you better understand their areas of focus for the coming quarter and year, enabling you to better customize insights and meet their needs.”

Carolyn Klinger
Director, Market & Competitive Intel / Affinity
63% of CI leaders enable their sellers with competitive battlecards.

Competitive battlecards are ubiquitous in the software sector, where competition is particularly intense. 86% of CI leaders at software companies enable their sellers with battlecards.

Q: Do you produce competitive battlecards for your sales team?

- Yes: 63%
- No: 37%
54% of respondents say they maintain at least 10 battlecards.

For comparison, 56% of respondents from software companies say they maintain at least 10 battlecards.

**CASE STUDY**
Learn how Dropbox increased battlecard adoption by 400%
56% of those who create battlecards are able to measure usage.

Again, the right technology makes all the difference here. Of those with a dedicated CI platform, 71% can measure the usage of their battlecards—compared to only 31% of those without a dedicated CI platform.

On the value of conversations:

"Consistent check-ins with sellers allow the PMM and sales enablement teams to understand what is working in the field vs. what is falling short of expectations."

Casey Ward
Senior Product Marketing Manager / Mural
I’ve established with our field teams that talking about our industry, and especially our competitors, is healthy. If we don’t know what’s in our space, we’ll fail to differentiate.

Kait Smith
Product Marketing Manager / Intellum

58% of those who can measure their battlecards think they’re well-adopted.

68% of respondents from very large companies (>5,000 employees) say their battlecards are well-adopted. Only 42% of respondents from very small companies (<50 employees) say the same.

Q: Do you consider your battlecards to have strong adoption?

- 58% Yes
- 42% No
Most respondents are unsure if battlecards have improved win rates. 56% of CI leaders can tell you whether their battlecards are being used—but only 34% can tell you whether they’re impacting win rates. Getting to this next level of measurement will be a key area of focus in 2023 and beyond.

Q: Have battlecards improved your competitive win rate?

- 28% Yes
- 66% I don’t know
- 6% No

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The ROI of Competitive Intelligence
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Q: With which of the following do you struggle? Select all that apply.

- Measuring the success of CI efforts (64%)
- Keeping deliverables up to date (56%)
- Separating signal from noise to find competitive insights (49%)
- Gathering competitive data in a timely manner (49%)
- Centralizing & organizing competitive data (47%)
- Securing increases in budget/headcount (41%)
- Communicating competitive insights to stakeholders (38%)
- Getting stakeholders to buy into CI (28%)
- Securing C-level support for CI (18%)
- Other (5%)

**BEST PRACTICE**
Measure the success of your CI efforts by establishing KPIs that roll up to your stakeholders’ KPIs.
STAKEHOLDERS’ EXPECTATIONS & PREFERENCES

Quality of insights is 8x more important than deliverable UX/UI.

Sellers are particularly indifferent to UX/UI—they don’t seem to care much about the visual presentation of intel. 62% say quality of insights is most important. 31% say ease of access is most important. 7% say timeliness is most important. None of them say UX/UI is most important.

Q: What is most important to you as a consumer of competitive insights?

- 54% Quality of insights
- 22% Ease of accessing insights
- 16% Timeliness of insights
- 7% Deliverable UX/UI
- Other

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Most CI teams provide support on ad-hoc requests from stakeholders.

Not all stakeholders have the same need for ad-hoc support. Whereas 73% of sellers say their CI teams help them with ad-hoc requests, only 60% of product managers say the same.

Q: Does your CI team help you with ad-hoc requests?

65% Yes
35% No

What has worked for our team is prioritizing ad-hoc requests based on urgency, impact to revenue, and impact to future partnerships and growth.

Casey Ward
Senior Product Marketing Manager / Mural
Q: Do you trust the insights you get from your CI team?

Takeaway
Earn your stakeholders’ trust by creating a system to respond to their ad-hoc requests.
88% of CI stakeholders want updates on a regular basis.

Remember: Only 70% of CI leaders say they share intel on a regular basis—so there’s a bit of a gap between what stakeholders expect and what they’re actually getting.

Q: How often would you like to receive competitive intelligence updates?

- 36% Weekly
- 36% Monthly
- 12% Quarterly
- 9% Ad-hoc
- 7% Daily
- 9% Ad-hoc

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How to Drive Adoption of CI

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Q: What is your preferred channel for receiving CI updates? Select one option.

**TAKEAWAY**
Email still reigns supreme, but when it comes to other channels, there isn’t a clear preference. CI leaders should cover their bases by putting intel everywhere their stakeholders spend time.
Nearly half of stakeholders want to **self-serve** competitive insights.

Once again, preferences differ across groups: Whereas 60% of the product managers we surveyed said they want to self-serve competitive insights, only 31% of the sellers we surveyed said the same.

On sharing intel with stakeholders:

> **Begin with the end in mind:** What do your stakeholders need to know? What decisions do they need to make?

**August Jackson**  
VP, Market Intel & Competitive Strategy / Deltek
If someone on your sales team is working 6 deals right now, chances are 4 of them are competitive—at least. Which means you, as your company’s point person for competitive intelligence, have a tremendous opportunity sitting in front of you.

Because if you can help your sellers win competitive deals at even a slightly higher rate, you’ll drive some serious revenue growth.

So go make it happen, keeping in mind some of the key takeaways from this report:

- Sellers value quality of insights and ease of access over everything else
- The best competitive insights typically come from sellers themselves
- Different people want to consume competitive insights in different places
- Providing ad-hoc deal support helps create trust

Throughout this report, it’s apparent that measuring your CI program is no longer optional. Make sure to measure the success of your work using your peers’ favorite KPIs: competitive win rate, engagement with deliverables, and CI-influenced revenue.

And speaking of your peers: As you work to create a show-stopping CI program, remember that you don’t have to do it alone. We collaborated with your peers on many of the webinars, podcasts, ebooks, and other pieces of content linked throughout this report—so make sure to check those out and learn from the experiences of others.

Until next year!

Team Crayon
With the exception of Chapter 4 (Competitive Intelligence Program Maturity), everything in this report is based on Crayon’s State of Competitive Intelligence survey, which yielded more than 900 responses between September and December 2022.

Chapter 4 is based on user data from Crayon’s free tool, the Competitive Program Grader, used by more than 450 CI leaders as of February 2023.

About Crayon
Crayon empowers revenue teams to win and keep more customers by putting real-time competitive intelligence at their fingertips. Hundreds of companies, including Gong, ZoomInfo, and Dropbox, use Crayon to capture and distribute the competitive insights they need to achieve their revenue goals. Learn more at www.crayon.co.

About SCIP
SCIP (Strategic & Competitive Intelligence Professionals) is a global non-profit community of leaders who leverage insights, best practices, and unimpeachable ethics to drive growth and reduce risk in strategic choices. Learn more at www.scip.org.