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Rethinking Business Information as Veritable Catalyst for Organizational Competitive Advantage

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Abstract

This study examined business information and the critical role it plays in achieving organizational competitive advantage. The increase in stiff competition among businesses in this era, industrial espionage among other contending factors necessitated the need to critically and creatively ‘think’ and ‘rethink’ business procedures particularly in intelligence, information and knowledge gathering, processing, use and evaluation. This study also brought to the fore the hidden drivers within business information architecture of business intelligence and information consulting with clear identification of areas of attention and implementation to achieve competitive advantage. In highly commoditized and competitive organizations, it will take much effort to determine what separates one organization from its competition. Hence, managers or leaders must establish a strategy that will help them gain in-depth knowledge from customers and those within the organization. Exploratory approach was adopted, where conceptual investigation of literature and secondary data gave credence to the position of this work. Hence, it was concluded that competitive advantage can be achieved when organizations generate greater value for themselves, customers and shareholders due to certain strengths or conditions they have mastered; and take advantage of, or capitalize on the weaknesses and perceived threats of competitors by deploying adequate competitive intelligent strategies to their advantage.

Keywords

Business Information, Competitive Advantage, Business Intelligence, Information Consulting

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Introduction

Business organization in this era places high premium on resourceful and solution driven data and information. The characteristic nature of a typical business environment brings to the limelight activities such as managing competition, competing interests, market dominance, customer-brand acceptability and managing innovation. Chief among the activities that perhaps has continued to increase the volatility observed among a variety of organizations is industrial espionage. No wonder the renewed quest to gain and retain competitive advantage by top ranking business organization ranging from multinationals, through conglomerates to medium ranked businesses. To achieve competitive advantage, business organizations have realized how pivotal access to business information is in this era and have continued to invest and support research or activities that could incubate and birth availability and effective deployment of actionable business information to achieve desired result. Many organizations today have targets, be it manufacturing/ production, services or marketing, this has left them with gaps. These lacuna stem from inadequate and, or paucity of uncommon and real-time business data/information that supports key strategic decisions and functions, such that when such information arrives one minute late, value depreciation, poor strategic decisions emanating from somewhat stale data/information becomes the attendant consequences. Sadly, the various solution seeking strategies that organizations would deploy to fill identified gaps have been observed to be outside the information professionals (information professionals, librarians etc.) or information organization (libraries, information management entities). The realization of the place of information professionals in business organizations is still in its low ebb. This has not given information professionals (his/her competence, professionalism) and the various rich information contents they manage (be it specialized or general) their rightful place of value in the sector.

A proper mastery of the information need of business organizations by information professionals today will increase professional relevance and add value. As the organizational information need increases so should the value of information for businesses. Whereas, as creative and innovative business needs increases, occasioned by rapid technological advancement and various socio-economic changes, so has competitiveness; but the volume of non-stereotyped information that is tailored toward achieving competitive edge in organizations has not been found in a commensurate measure. Hence the need to explore business information and create a re-think of the concept. Business intelligence as well as allied information systems and services are embedded in business information, thereby making the concept of business information very broad, but exciting, particularly for organizations who wish to achieve competitive advantage in this era. The gap experienced by business firms in terms of access to business intelligence data for protection from espionage, while retaining their desired level of competitiveness has been observed to be a question of understanding the effectiveness of actionable business information. Due to the evolving competitive nature of business environment both locally and globally, there has been a sudden increase in the demand for tailored information services (providing business information to

identified groups or businesses), this has been found to be far reaching but where there is its paucity, failure becomes inevitable. Hence, in an era where the quest for apt and resourceful business data/information is on the increase among competing organizations, access to well-packaged business information cannot be overemphasized. The systematic process and procedure that birth such packaging is to be brought to the fore for better appreciation and achievement of desired results. This is where effective information consulting orientation becomes indispensable. As will be observed in the subsequent paragraphs business intelligence and information consulting constitutes key drivers of business information in the context of this paper.

Business Information (BI)

Business information is a broad concept. It is one of the key segments of the information industry which has begun to gain popularity in relation to performance of small and medium enterprises as well as organizational productivity (Mark & Delphine, 2018). As observed by Okoro et al (2019) the relevance and positive contribution of business information to businesses either at the micro or macro levels is felt when appropriately deployed for effective performance and productivity. Because of this, many business organizations have continue to increase their level of awareness and investment on business information. Although, the concept is gradually gaining popularity among researchers, yet its novel nature in research from the perspectives of information resources management cum library and information science has made studies in business information somewhat scarce. Over the past two decades, studies by information scientists on BI have provided operational definitions, some of which are as follows. ALACRA (2007), business information is specialized information heavily utilized for competitive advantage, strategic planning, sale and marketing, human resources and many other strategic business functions. Haynes (2004), a kind of information that can be used by a business to guide its planning, operations and evaluation of activities usually in form of data, internal records, general surveys, articles, books, references and search engines. Moss (2004), Okello-Obura, et al. (2008) also identified market research, news materials/periodical, government information services, financial/credit information, statistics/economic analysis, e-business sources, loose-leaf information services, company/executive profile, and reference materials (bibliographies, encyclopedia, handbook, almanac, manuals/guides, business dictionaries, directories) as important forms. It could be formal or published sources such as trade or financial newspapers/ bulletins, association magazines; government statistics, trade literature, databases, directories, technical manuals etc.; informal sources such as customers, vendors, business associates, friends etc. Popoola and Ayankola (2018:41) laid credence to how important these sources are to deriving quality business data as they observed that “creative performance of managers in organizations depends so much on their quality of information used” which comes from specialized sources for defined business processes. Otuza and Okoro (2016) reiterated that any information item that

is suitable for specific business processes can be tagged business information. It represents information on external factors that are beyond the immediate control of the business but that has a direct commercial significance. Awe and Owolabi (2016) agreed that it is that which helps an organization understand its business, environment and achieve competitiveness. For Unegbu and Adeleye (2020) it is the information depended upon for progress and survival of SMEs, and has become indispensable for business success.

These assertions shows the importance of qualitative BI sources because in them the various information contents are packaged bearing in mind that “good information comes from a source in which the user has confidence” which implies that the trust users of business information repose on their sources is of far reaching consequence (Riaga, 1994; Popoola & Okiki, 2013). Kaye in Okello-Obura, et al. (2008) submitted that business information sources refer to the containers of information that are useful for different business transactions, which are both formal and informal. Formal are considered as those within regularized or legal packaging in relation to the user. They include trade associations, professional/learned societies, chambers of commerce/trade, market research organizations, universities and colleges, advertising agencies, stock exchanges, business statistics offices, company registration offices, legal offices, governmental agencies (federal/state/local), competitors, suppliers, share/stakeholders, libraries/information setups, international services, customers, sales/market reports, delivery/invoice notes, organizational budget statements, work policy/instructions, and company data analysis. On the other hand, the informal is described to include those that assist in making information available to individual business managers. Examples include business associates, superior/subordinate colleagues, trade contacts, external professionals, friends/family contacts, and personal advisors. Having access to the rich and qualitative business information will no doubt contribute tremendously to solving problems and strategic planning. Popoola and Ayankola (2018), Otuza and Okoro (2016), Lavin (1992) argued that such information can be useful in: evaluating the marketplace through surveying changing market tastes/needs; assessing and monitoring buyers intentions and attitudes; assessing both the existing and emerging characteristics of the market; keeping tabs on the competition by watching new product developments, shifts in market share, organizational performance, and overall industry trends; assisting managers to anticipate political, technological, social and legal changes, as well as economic conditions within the country and globally; and providing a guide to know how the business organization is currently performing and where it is headed (meeting goal or targets).

Nature/Forms (Characteristics) of Business Information

Business information is a domain or set of activities that includes products (tangible business information resources), services (intangibles, deliverable activities) and systems. It involves preparing, producing, collecting, managing, providing access to, using and evaluating information for doing business. It is information about business, economics, business intelligence, competitive intelligence, useful for

making informed decision (short term, long term, strategic), enhancing business products/services to gain profit, recognition and success. Considering the three major activities of production/service, marketing, and finance that every business organization engage in; and the two broad categories of business types (*industrial businesses*- engages in producing goods used by other businesses or organization to produce, *commercial businesses*-engages in wholesale/retail marketing, finance, providing services); hence, it is important to note that the nature of business information is defined not only by what it is but also in terms of how it is used, where it is generated, who generates it, its geographic coverage and time frame. Array of related studies by Mark and Delphine (2018), INC (2020), Beck, et al. (2017), Moss and Ernsthausen (2012), Hardcastle (2011), Xingyuan, et al. (2010), Benson and Tribe (2008), Norton (1992) and Daniels (1993) have attempted to summarize the nature, features and the various dimensions of business information as follows.

Time Dimension

Here, the emphasis is on the “when” aspect of information. That is, when is the information needed? When will it be delivered? When can client access the information? Issues that border on timeliness, currency, up-to-datedness, real-time information access and use are brought to considered under the purview. Business organizations place high premium on timely information such that staying ahead of competitors is largely a function of when the needed information is released, accessed and put to use.

Content Dimension

This deals with the “what” aspect of business information. In this context, a critical evaluation is done on what constitutes the information content. Is it suitable? Does it adequately address the need? Is it capable of meeting the complex or simple need of the organization or client? Are the sources of the information reliable? Can a task be completed with the given information? Is the information content rich enough to make strategic decision? Can it provide a proactive pattern for a good business forecast? Does it facilitate comparisons of alternative course of action? Can the information be reliably comprehended? Does it represent what it purports to represent? Is the information reported in a form that is understandable by a reasonably competent user? Critical questions such as these helps to explain the importance of getting the content of business information right. By implication, the characteristic features of accuracy, relevance, completeness, comparability, verifiability, neutrality and representational faithfulness are emphasized. Where these are achieved, the organization will be ahead of its competitors.

The Form Aspect

This third part considers the “how” attribute of business information. It deals with mode of presentation of the information. How is the information packaged? Is it presented in the right form? Is it appealing? Is that the best form it can appear? Apart from presentation mode, another feature that is addressed in the

how attribute is the 'detail'. Was the information provided at the correct detail? Does it consider every important detail? Ethical and legal constructs are adhered to as well. Hence, the characteristics of business information includes meeting requirements of time always, authenticity, costly, technology inclined, trustworthy, reliable, statistical/quantitative, depth/extent of coverage, predictability (analyses business patterns and forecast), flexibility and enduring. Furthermore, in spite of the above qualities, business information can be grouped into internal and external information for better management, use and analysis.

Internal Information: it is a type produced by an organization in its day to day operations; it is mostly quantitative in nature; highly structured and purposive; largely internally generated data and information; contains little redundancy and highly relevant to the organizational need; people within the organization may have little knowledge of what data is actually available; and It include the type handled by management information system (MIS) such as: production and sales figure- advertising expenditure, stock of raw materials and inventory- asset lists, financial information- accounts, profit/loss statements, labor turnover and absenteeism- productivity figures, research and development reports, among others.

External Information: it is the type produced about the environment within which the organization operates; it is mostly qualitative in nature such as white paper, reports; it is usually unstructured and somewhat difficult to handle; often managed by business information professionals, examples include annual reports, market reports, periodical articles, directories etc. Categorizing business information into the above helps to identify stockholders role in generating, organizing, accessing use and evaluating the information. Such organizational stakeholders and participants can be grouped as described below.

Internal Usage/Participants: Operational/lower level managers and supervisors; tactical/middle level managers; strategic/top level managers; legal advisors; training personnel; and specialists/professionals and technocrats. *External Participants:* shareholders, business partners, customers/ clients, investors, suppliers, financial institutions, other stakeholders, media/the press, and policy makers. As the demand for business information continues to increase, the drive to gain competitive edge among business organizations has become highly prized. Many factors were considered responsible for the high demand, some of which are:

1. Business information has become the lifeblood of business organizations who wish to gain competitive advantage in this era
2. Information has become the sixth factor of production, and no serious organization takes any factor of production for granted
3. Industrial espionage is on the increase as competition tightens

4. Business data and information gathering, sourcing, sorting, processing, deployment, storage, retrieval and customized use has become of high essence and utmost importance for constant development
5. Many organizations in this era have begun to embrace competitive intelligence
6. Many organizations are moving away from subjective, chance or instinct management to scientific management
7. To divest away from less capital and infrastructure intensive businesses to information and knowledge intensive business
8. For increase in accountability and transparency
9. For globalization of markets leading to competition on a global scale
10. To create a knowledge economy that is want-driven and tighten margins.

Achieving Competitive Advantage in this era

Competition among organizations is one of the key elements that characterize today's business space. It has been observed that where a healthy competition hold sway, organizational performance and productive is like to be affected positively particularly among stronger competitors. This activity has dominated the business environment both the global and local levels. Although, some scholars still debate the true meaning and position of the concept, others see it to be a broad concept, but it is not entirely new. The concept has evolved over time with the constant changes witnessed in the realm where business organizations operate. As far back as early 1980s, Porter sought to define the concept of competitive advantage as having low costs, differentiation advantage, or a successful focus strategy (Porter, 1980). He posited that competitive advantage is central to a firm's performance in a competitive market. But the question on how a firm can create and sustain this advantage as well as implement it broad strategies was yet to be ascertained. Potjanajaruwit (2018), Peteraf (1993) defined the concept as that which sustains the organization; it is the ability of the organization to sustain its bar above normal returns. While Barney (2002) suggested that an organization is said to experience CA when its actions in a market creates economic value, and few competing firms engage in similar actions. From Barney's standpoint, competitive advantage is tied to organizational performance. Grahovac and Miller (2009) saw the concept as the cross-sectional differential in the spread between product market demand and marginal cost, and performance as the longitudinal difference between what a firm appropriates in the product market and what it paid in the factor market. Again, the authors related CA, performance and the value of a resource.

In his work on rethinking organizational competitive advantage, Goldsmith (2013) observed that organizations that continually clarify and reinvent their competitive advantage will have the greatest potential to capture long-term sustainable financial rewards. Wang (2014) argued that organization achieves competitive advantage when it develops or acquires a set of attributes that allows it to

outperform its competitors. Still, the call to clarify the concepts of differential performance, business strategies and competitive advantage still rages in strategy literature (Arbi, et al. 2017). Otuza and Okoro (2016:5competitive) asserted that it includes “systematic program to treat, analyze, understand, disseminate information upon the activities of the competitors, the technologies and the general tendencies of the company’s activities, in view to achieve the best strategic goal of the company”. While implementing competitive intelligence, its advantage will be attained. Mandelbaum (2021:2) argued that “competitive advantage consists of a set of values or qualities that companies have that helps to set them apart from similar businesses within the same industry”. He further asserted that without a competitive advantage, customers won’t have a good reason to stay loyal to the organization. Hence, it entails surviving the long-term as a business as well as positioning as a market leader among players within the business environment. This position is buttressed by Twin and Anderson (2021), they posited that CA entails factors that allows an organization produce goods or services that are better and cheaper than its rivals. These factors will in turn allow the productive entity generate more sales and reach greater margins when compared to competitors. Therefore, factors such as branding, quality of product offerings, cost structure, distribution network, intellectual property and customer service must be given required attention.

An organization is said to achieve competitive advantage when

1. it generates greater value for itself, customers and its shareholders due to certain strengths or conditions it has mastered
2. masters its strength and opportunities, knows how to maximize them, improve on its areas of weakness and threats
3. take advantage of, or capitalize on the weakness and perceived threats of its competitors by deploying adequate competitive intelligent strategies
4. it makes the existing competitive edge more sustainable as to make it difficult for competitors to neutralize the advantage
5. ensures that its products/service offerings remains more desirable to customers than that of any other.

The competitive state of an organization depends on forces whose joint action could determine potential benefits. These forces include barriers to entry, supplier power, buyer power, threat of substitutes, and the intensity of internal rivalry. The organizations strength and weakness can be identified after analyzing these forces and how they came about (Lorenzo, et al., 2018; Ortega, 2010). Then, competitive advantage can be achieved through intentionally building defense against the forces and looking for opportunities within the organization where the forces are weaker.

The Rethinking Process

In highly commoditized and competitive industries, it will take much effort to determine what separates an organization from its competition. Hence, managers or leaders must establish a strategy that will help them gain in-depth knowledge from customers and those within the organization (Mandelbaum, 2021). This process will aid the rethinking process of the business information generation, access and deployment, while aiming at meeting the desired advantage. Three indicators are key to bringing about changes birthed through rethinking business information application strategies, this study refers to it as competitive game-changers. This will impact on how organizations develop competitive advantage and then provide a level playing landscape for competition. Also, it will endear organizations to constantly search for new and innovative advantages. They include: access to qualitative and quantitative in-depth information that is highly sought for; organizations of all degrees should have access to sophisticated technology; and due to the internet revolution, business organizations can easily tap or key into global market. According to Twin and Anderson (2021), since competition will continue to be more global, more knowledgeable and more intense, “companies will be under constant pressure to lower their cost structure, increase margins, make better decisions, embrace change, and be capable of spotting trends before they happen” (p.2). To remain competitive, an organization must constantly examine and reinvent what separates it from competitors, this is because an organization might have competitive advantage today but gone tomorrow.

Proposing Two Business Information Drivers for Gaining Competitive Advantage

This paper has been able to establish that business information is pivotal to organizational success and as such, in the bid to achieve competitive advantage, the link between appropriate deployment of business information and achieving competitive advantage is well established herein. To achieve this process, this paper attempt to bring to the fore to key drivers for business information to drive the process of achieving the desired organizational advantage. These drivers include business intelligence and information consulting.

Business Intelligence Strategies

As a concept, business intelligence is not entirely new. As far back in the early 1980s, it has been identified as a set of information, or information type in business. The term was identified as comprising a variety of information such as customer intelligence, competitor intelligence, market intelligence, technological intelligence, product intelligence and environmental intelligence (Otuzza & Okoro, 2016; Tyson, 1986). Hannula and Pirttimaki (2003:594) defined business intelligence as “a continuous and systematic process that produces knowledge, insights, and forecasts on a company’s operating environment”. This in turn increases the quality of strategic and operative planning and reduces time

taken for decision making process. Business intelligence is a set of techniques and tools that aids in acquiring and transforming raw data into meaningful and useful information for the purpose of business analysis. It is organizations intelligent information that makes the establishment acquire new forms of competitive information in order to adapt to changes in businesses and its environment (Azma & Mostafapour, 2012). As can be noted in the definition, an encompassing information processing activities are brought to play, from acquiring relevant information to analysis and dissemination of useful knowledge to decision makers. This shows that business intelligence strategy could drive the efficacy of business information's positive impact on organization's decision making process. Again, it can be noted that 'intelligence' gathering is information gathering. So, gathering intelligence on customers, competitors, market, technologies, product and environment can be seen as a product of information gathering/processing.

Intelligence in this paper is information valued for its currency and relevance. It is expert information, knowledge and technologies that is efficient in managing organizations business. This position agrees with that of Ranjan (2009) that considers business intelligence as "a broad category of applications and technologies for gathering, providing access to, and analyzing data for the purpose of helping enterprise users make better business decisions" (p.60). Including having in-depth knowledge about factors that affect the business such as customers, competitors, business partners, economic environment, and internal operations to make quality business decision. Such in-depth information and knowledge produces intelligence that support and facilitate activities such as processing offline analysis, data mining, business analysis, implementing organizational knowledge management, and organizational networking operations (Azma & Mostafapour, 2012). This will allow organizations to take advantage of their competitors' intelligence, create a powerful business feature, good case report, data analysis, and performance improvement. Business intelligence plays a central role in producing up-to-date, comprehensive and timely information and knowledge useful for operational and strategic decision making, generating new products and improving business operations. Some components of business intelligence that aid its activities include: Web services, DOTNET, Data warehouse, Data Mining, OLAP (On-line analytical processing, XML, representation technologies to improve enterprise effectiveness, support management to achieve competitive advantage. Others are decision support systems and forecasting, knowledge management mapping, information visualization, dash boarding, management information systems, trend analysis, Software as a Service (SaaS), Real time BI and advanced analytics. These tools help business intelligence strategy to be effective in organization.

Business intelligence strategy is the blueprint for deciding how data, information and knowledge will be used in the organization. For the purpose of this study, mention will be made on five key areas of strategy. From the works of Beck et al (2017), Azma and Mostafapour (2012), Twin and Anderson (2021)

and Lorenzo et al (2018), it can be summarized as: business intelligence roadmap- this is required for use as a start up to the strategy implementation; stakeholder management- this involves getting the right people involved at the right level; architectural blueprint- this aspect considers how the business intelligence estate will look and operate; capability improvement- deals with looking at what requires upgrading, re-development or decommissioning; implementation planning- how to approach implementing the roadmap to take the organization from where it is to where it want to be. To ensure the success of business intelligence strategy the following steps are considered necessary: create a business case and outline the expected benefits; obtain a buy-in from stakeholders, particularly the senior executives; have an enterprise-wide perspective; treat information as an asset; adopt best practices and standards; set up change management procedures; align the strategy with the overall IT strategy and enterprise goals; do a current, future state and gap analysis; think actionable steps; establish governance body; use iterative implementation approach with parallel tracks; work with frameworks and adopt proven methodologies; assess BI readiness of the organization and identify related gaps and issues; and document and analyze the constraints and assumptions.

Business intelligence, no doubt, drives a successful business information impact on business organizations as its set-up favors organizational pursuit of competitive advantage. However, central in the successful implementation of business intelligence strategy are specialists and professionals, who are trained in appropriate skills and techniques. The skills or techniques required to leverage on these tools for best use of information, knowledge, insight etc. resides with information professional (scientists) such as business information specialists and IKM specialist. Hence, the need for information consultant.

Information Consulting

Information consulting in this study is introduced as another key business information driver for gaining competitive advantage. Information consulting is a dynamic, interactive process in which librarians and information professionals are full partners with other business professionals and technocrats to facilitate provision of useful specialized information and knowledge. Lavrentieva et al (2021), Kerimova (2020), Tsai et al (2006), Vickers (1992) supports that information consulting services are needed all over the world as an important avenue to take care of information need at different sectors, although, educational and specialized consultancy firms have often served as major base for this type of service, however, the focus of information consulting is gradually shifting towards business organizations. The library was expected to be at the center of such services unfortunately, many business organizations are yet to believe in patronizing information consultants. Many developing countries are yet to benefit from this move more so Nigeria (Mayega, 2013). Delivering the right information to the right people at the right time underscores the value of information consultant, librarians and the libraries, hence, special/subject-based librarians are partners as consultants (Frank, et al, 2001). According to Frank et al (2001) consulting

depicts two roles, the consultant and the client. The client is seeking advice from the consultant who is seen as the expert that could provide a solution to a need or problem. Here, the verb ‘consult’ is to *seek advice from* or to *take counsel with*. This notion should not be judged based on the traditional consultancy practice but mark the distinguishing factors of “taking counsel together, deliberate and confer” (p.9). It involves anticipating and assessing information needs, delivering value-added information and services in timely manner. The authors noted how essential information consulting has become both to the organizations and to librarians because “libraries and librarians that do not promote information consulting will be less relevant over time” (p.13). To ensure that organizations enjoy the best of information service delivery, and information loop is maintained on the part of the information professionals, then the value of information consulting should be re-established in this era.

Kerimova (2020), Adenekan and Otuza (2020), Tsai et al (2006) noted the following features of information consulting as demonstrated by the consultant:

- a. Mastery or knowledge of the profession, can listen, observe, analyze, make time for research, provide information at a fee, and having a vision into the future
- b. Taking counsel together, advisory service, deliberate and confer. It is not to take decisions on behalf of managers but to offer assistance on variety of information management services.
- c. Should be in a position to make an unbiased assessment and evaluation of information available, telling the truth objectively on what the organization need to do without considering self-interest first.
- d. Exploiting information technology, innovative technology, and brace up on knowledge and expertise on specialized competitive intelligence tools to keep abreast of the emerging trends in the information and knowledge age.

Kerimova (2020), Elisha (2009) in Adenekan and Otuza (2020) reiterated that information consultancy services for business organizations create information management systems and environment that consist of numerous units and sub-units, each having peculiar specialization tasks, targeted towards satisfaction of users and in this case, achieving advantage. Information quality is a critical business asset because business data quality when deployed will affect all aspects of the business. This is why business information consultant will be needed to identify business information needs, the quality criteria of information needed, evaluate huge volumes of disparate information, manage the information through structured legacy systems and architecture, and advance the mission of the organization to achieve competitive advantage.

Key Competencies of Information Consultants

Creativity, resourcefulness, enthusiasm, good analytical and interpersonal skills, versatility, open mindedness and adaptation to the continuous changing environment are worthy of note. Professionalism, ability of manage time, exercise good judgment, good team player, good communicator, expert knowledge, good listener, understanding roles and responsibility, work with other consultants, and have/protect good reputation. Akanbiemu and Otuza (2017) suggested certain areas of competence that are required by the information consultants to include:

- a. Ability to collaborate- entails team collaboration, community collaboration, professional collaboration, and network collaboration
- b. Creative thinking- this comes with attributes such as fluency, flexibility, elaboration, originality, complexity, risk taking, imagination and curiosity
- c. Critical thinking- inquisitiveness on wide range of business issues, open-mindedness regarding divergent views, fair-mindedness in appraising reasoning, prudence in suspending, making or altering judgments, can raise vital questions clearly, gather, assess and interprets relevant information among others
- d. Fluency in communication- verbal, non-verbal, written, and visualized forms. Entails building/maintaining relationships, facilitating innovation, ensuring transparency, and contributing to the growth of the organization
- e. Credibility- licensed, integrity, competence, sound judgement, likeable and relationally sensitive.

Conclusion

This work has demonstrated that business information is indeed a veritable tool for achieving competitive advantage in business organizations. When properly managed, business information acts as a catalyst that speeds up the process, and makes achieving competitive advantage possible. The business information drivers as proposed in this study are business intelligence and information consulting. When properly deployed, have the capacity to drive organizational success in attaining and sustaining competitive edge in this era. Organizations can maximize business information for competitive advantage when they embrace a rethink of the processes of information services, and the delivery at their disposal presently, divest towards the new approach proposed in this paper. Howbeit, the central role of business information and knowledge in providing requisite intelligence and value, cannot be overemphasized knowing that as competition increases, espionage tightens.

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