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Title	The role of market intelligence in foreign market entry decision-making. Case study in a multinational industrial service company.		
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Abstract

The use of market intelligence has been linked to better performance in foreign market entries but there is a lack of academic research on the role of market intelligence in the initial decision to enter a new foreign market. Also the industrial services context seems to be lacking research. The case company in this study is a Finnish multinational industrial service company that is a part of a larger group, which produces new industrial equipment worldwide. As of late, the industrial service company has been prioritizing its market entries so that services no longer are made to follow the new equipment market entries. The main research problem of this study is to find out what the role of market intelligence is in the initial decision to enter a foreign market and how an industrial service company should use market intelligence to its advantage.

This study was done as a qualitative case study and the empirical material was collected through interviews. Eight managerial interviews were conducted in the case company and three external expert interviews were conducted to help amplify the research results. The three experts were experienced in gathering and using market intelligence. The results showed that market intelligence was gathered and used mainly after the decision to enter a market was made although theory suggests that market intelligence is relevant prior to the market entry decision. Several important market intelligence factors were determined through the managerial interviews to act as a basis for gathering market intelligence. Also already existing methods, such as the SLEPT method, was presented to give structure to the market intelligence process. For the use of market intelligence in decision-making, the SWOT method was suggested, as it would help the managers establish scenarios of future market developments.

It could be concluded that there is a severe lack of systematic market intelligence use in the foreign market entry decision-making process in the case company. The managers involved in foreign market entries did not have any guidance as to how market intelligence should be gathered or used. It was suggested that the case company should consider hiring a person(s) to handle the market intelligence process for industrial services. This person(s) would create an intelligence gathering process such as Kahaner (1996) suggests. It was also recommended to put together some general guidelines for market entries, which would include the use of market intelligence and a more formal decision-making process. This way it would not be up to the individual managers to decide how and at which point market intelligence is used in market entry decisions.

Key words	market intelligence, industrial services, foreign market entry, decision-making
Further information	