The Intelligence Edge: How to Profit in the Information Age by John Baker

Outstanding Resource And Reference Book

The Intelligence Edge: How to Profit in the Information Age is a tightly focused primer that details ways to intelligently and systematically gather the specific type of data that can boost profitability in virtually any company. George Friedman, Meredith Friedman, Colin Chapman, and John S. Baker Jr.--four experts on intelligence-gathering techniques--identify the primary sources for such information and outline an eight-step formula for acquiring, prioritizing, and utilizing it. The Intelligence Edge discusses legal questions that can arise, and possible sources of assistance and tools (including the Net) that will aid in the process.

My Personal Review:
As an investment banking analyst, one of my primary jobs is build financial models of the companies we evaluate. One of the most underrated and (in my view) more important element of my work comes when we perform due diligence and understand the soundness of the assumptions we build into our models. Most analysts (in my experience) are too infatuated with their sophisticated spreadsheets and believe the sheer complexity of their models can compensate for a lack of understanding of the fundamental business they are set to evaluate.

The book does an outstanding job of articulating, at every step, the importance of challenging one's assumptions and systematically gathering, synthesizing, and analyzing information that helps to dig through the colored lenses of wishful thinking or purely numerical analysis. The occasional injection of humor is quite welcome—in a world of stuffy self-important books on business, here's a piece of work that was written by people who love what they do, and are adept at making you better at what you do as well.

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