

## Surprising Competitor Intelligence Enables a Strategic Response from an Agribusiness Company

### BACKGROUND

A manufacturer of widely used agricultural products believed that it had an opportunity to take market share from a bigger competitor who had made some serious missteps. At first, the client wanted to see if those missteps might have led to weaknesses that could be tactically exploited.

### CHALLENGE

Our client's rival had attempted to imitate the market leader in the space, a company widely known for its superior technology. But in undertaking a technology push and rationalizing their sales force, the rival had appeared to drift from their core strength: maintaining strong relationships with the distributors of their product. Though products in this market were also sold through retailers, the high-touch distributor channel generated far more value for them.

When the rival's technology push ended in disarray, our client believed they saw a further opening, but they also saw far more uncertainty about how the rival might proceed. Would they continue to stumble? If so, in which direction? What would it mean for our business? Until our client could answer those questions, they couldn't devise the most advantageous response.

### APPROACH

In addition to conducting primary research, undertook four corners analysis, and developed a predictive model that leveraged a proxy for the rival's revenues by geographical business unit. With these tools, and others, we were able to create a more accurate and realistic reading of the rival's intentions than less comprehensive approaches yield.

Our client was surprised to learn that the rival was righting the ship – moving resources out of corporate, pouring them into the geographical business units, and returning to a laser focus on distributor relationships.

### RESULT + BENEFITS

Our client, having originally thought they might be able to opportunistically make some inroads in the distributor channel because the rival was napping, now realized they faced a much different reality. As a result, they were able to develop a more appropriate and nuanced strategic response. To keep pace in the distributor channel, they overhauled their sales training and reoriented their recruiting, without sacrificing the technological superiority they already enjoyed over their rival. At the same time, they saw an opportunity to team with the rival through technology licensing agreements to take on the market leader.

