

How To Research Your Competition

...and Identify Exactly Where You Can Stand Out



Course Book

Table of Contents

Introduction – The Case for Competitor Research3

Step 1 – Gather Competitor Data7

Step 2 – Research Your Competitors' Customers8

Step 3 – Analyze Your Competitive Data.....9

Step 4 – Assess Your Competitive Standing10

Conclusion and Next Steps11

Sample

Introduction – The Case for Competitor Research

There's a great deal to focus on when you're trying to grow your business and make it profitable. One area that small business owners all too often miss is researching their competitors. This is a small part of your day-to-day business operations, but it can make a significant difference in the effectiveness of your marketing. In fact, competitive research should be a critical factor in almost all your business and marketing decisions from the very start.

Do you know what your competition is up to? You should, and here's why:

What Sets You Apart - How do you know what's unique about your business if you don't know what your competitors are doing? You may be offering the same or similar products to the same or similar people and in the same or similar way. This is definitely not a good thing for any business. You need to uniquely fulfill the needs of your market in a way that no one else is currently doing it.

Avoid Doing What's Been Done – What if you have a great idea for an ad but your competitors have already run one like it? Simply knowing what your competitors are doing is a good way to make sure you don't do something that's already been done. A number of forehead smacking moments can be avoided. And you might even find out that what they've done didn't even work!

Know Your Strengths and Weaknesses – You may have an intuitive sense of your business's strengths and weaknesses. But you can never truly know unless you compare these strengths and weaknesses to those of others. You can truly understand what position your business occupies in the market. Through comparison with your competitors, you can understand which natural strengths you can play to for an advantage, as well as which areas need improvement.

Identify Opportunities – If you know what your competition is (and isn't) doing, you can find gaps where they're not meeting the needs of the market. These gaps present perfect opportunities for you to fulfill a need. For example, there may be one segment of your market that your competitors ignore. You can dominate this segment.

Steal Ideas – Okay, maybe we should say something more like, "Borrow and modify ideas" or, even better, "Learn from your competitors' mistakes." You can watch your competitors and take note of their successes and failures, analyzing these successes and failures for wisdom you can use for your own business. For example, if a competitor's new product bombs, you can discover why and improve upon it. If they ran an ad for only a brief period of time and then stopped, it's probably an indicator that the ad or the location didn't pay off.

No business is an island. You need to know what your competition is up to so that you know what's going on in your market. This can alert you to new trends, new developments in your industry, the market's changing tastes, and more. This is a somewhat harsh way to put it, but business is in some ways like war. You need to know as much as possible about your "enemy", even if you're on friendly, cooperative terms. That way, you can avoid conflict and even become allies.

In this course, you'll learn more than just how to keep an eye on the competition. You'll learn a four-step process for gathering as much information as possible on your competition, analyzing this data and then comparing it to your own business so that you can make the appropriate changes. The four steps are:



1. Gather competitor data. In this step, you'll identify who your competitors are, what information you need to gather, and how to do it.
2. Research your competitors' customers. You'll learn as much as possible about your competitors' customers so that you can better understand their needs.
3. Analyze your competitive data. This stage is where you take all of the data you've gathered and analyze it in terms of strengths and weaknesses.
4. Assess your competitive standing. Here, you'll assess the results of your analysis and where there are opportunities for your business, comparing yourself to your competition.

Action Steps:

1. What do you know already about your competitors, their customers, and how you compare to them?
2. What unique niche in the market does your business cater to?

Sample

Step 1 – Gather Competitor Data

Unfortunately, not every company is like McDonald's with a Taco Bell right down the street. Chances are good that even if you have a basic idea of who your competitors are, it's not a complete enough picture to use here.

The first step is to identify your competitors and gather as much information about each one as possible. Start with other businesses that are currently offering the same or similar products or services as you. These are the organizations you're most likely to be in direct competition with, since customers must choose between them and you for the same or similar product.

Now, add organizations that could move in and offer the same or similar products or services in the future. If you have a studio that offers piano lessons and there's a new musical instrument store in the neighborhood, this is a potential future competitor because they may begin offering lessons as well. It's important to keep your eyes out and plan ahead for businesses that will move into direct competition with you.

Your competitors are not just businesses that sell similar products or services as yours. For example, if you're the only restaurant in a small town, you're still in direct competition with the movie theaters, bowling alleys, social clubs, bars and coffee shops that are competing to entertain the town folk on a Saturday night. You need to identify any business that might cut into your customer base.

ATTENTION:

This is only an excerpt from our full course **How To Research Your Competition**. The full, customizable course contains 4 major modules and Action Steps.

When you purchase a license for the course, you'll receive the editable files for the Course Book, Action Guide, graphics, social posts, and other resources.

Sample