



HOW TO BEAT YOUR COMPETITION



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**“Branding is the process of
connecting good strategy with
good creativity.”**

Marty Neumeier

5 Ways to Identity Your Competition

1 Search For Them

Start with the most obvious and just google it. Begin by searching for the products or services you offer. Next, search for terms and phrases related to your business. And finally, compile a list of keywords that relate to your products or services, and start Googling. You will quickly have a list of potential competitors.

2 Pay Attention to Search Ads

While you are Googling your keywords and phrases, pay attention to the ads listed above, below and to the side of your search results. These ads will most likely be from competitors that have targeted the keywords you are searching. Also, make sure you do the searches multiple times since not all the ads will appear on every search.

3 Dive Into Social Media

Whether you like it or not, everyone and every business has a social media presence these days. There are so many channels, groups, communities, forums, chats, posts, and blogs to analyze that it can quickly become overwhelming. Start by searching on facebook for competitor business pages, then move on to youtube, and twitter. From there, you will start to find groups and links to blogs to follow. Pay close attention to the comments section. This is where your audience hangs out and talks about the competition.

4 Talk to Your Customers

When you make a sale, ask the customer how they heard about you, and if they have purchased the same product or service from a competitor in the past. Find out why they chose you over them. This will help you develop your marketing message and value proposition.

5 Review Publications and Trade Show Vendors

If there are any publications in your industry, both physical or digital, make sure you're reviewing these often. New or existing competitors may submit articles or place advertisements to help promote their business. Take a look at vendor lists for trade shows that focus on your industry. This could produce a list of up and coming brands that may become direct or indirect competition.

The 8 Step Competitor Audit

STEP 1: Basic Information

Start with the easy stuff. This will help to organize and develop some comparison points between your competitors.

- What products or services they offer?
- Their revenue and financial reports, if publicly available?
- How many clients or repetitive customers they have?
- How many offices or stores they have, and their locations?
- What geographic areas they operate in?
- How many employees they have, and any valuable information about executives and upper management?
- The history of the company, and any significant milestones?
- What websites and social media channels they own?

STEP 2: Brand Purpose, Vision, Mission, Values

Just like you've defined for your brand earlier, you will want to learn the brand purpose, brand vision, brand mission, and brand values of your competitors.

This information will be valuable when determining the best way to differentiate and position your brand in the marketplace.

STEP 3: Visual Identity

You will want to perform a complete audit of your competition's visual identity.

This should include their logo, colors palette, typography, imagery, iconography, and website design.

Some questions you should ask yourself are:

- Do you like their logo?
- Does their logo represent what they do?
- What emotions do you feel from their brand colors?
- Does their typography trigger a response?
- Does their imagery match their brands look and feel?
- How is their visual identity better than yours?
- How is your visual identity better than theirs?
- Does their website provide a pleasurable visual experience?

STEP 4: Messaging

Take a look at how your competition speaks to their customers.

This is not just in verbal communications, but in all of their messaging. By analyzing their voice, mission, slogans, and taglines you will begin to get a good understanding about how they see themselves and what they are trying to accomplish.

You should review their website copy, social media content, marketing campaigns, emails, packaging copy, and physical materials such as brochures and flyers.

A few question to consider are:

- What does their tagline or slogan say to the consumer?
- What is the main heading and opening copy on their homepage?
- When they speak to the consumer, what type of language is used?
- How do they talk about their products and services?
- What features do they emphasize?
- Who are the people they are talking to?
- What are their key selling points?
- Do they compare themselves to the competition?

STEP 5: Pricing

Analyze and document the pricing structure of the competition's products or services.

Then match those up with comparable products or services that you offer.

If they are similar in quality and features, you can then assess whether or not your product is fairly priced.

STEP 6: Recruitment & Job Openings

Your competitors careers page will provide great insights into their company. You can make some educated guesses based on what they are posting.

For example, if they are looking for new designers and developers, they probably have a big project or product expansion on the horizon.

Also, if there seems to be a lot of recent job openings it could indicate there are troubles within the company, and employees are leaving.

This is something you may be able to take advantage of by recruiting their top talent.

STEP 7: Website Content

A lot of valuable information can be collected from a competitor's website.

Begin by taking a look at the website structure.

- Is their website easy to navigate?
- What are they emphasizing?
- What content are they presenting to the visitor?
- Do they have a blog, and how often are they posting?
- Where does their website fail the visitor?
- How can it be better?

Next take a look at the design, technology and how the website functions.

- Are they staying on top of the latest trends?
- Is the website visually pleasing?
- Is it responsive and does it work on multiple mobile devices?
- Does it load fast?
- Are there any errors or broken links?

STEP 8: Social Media

There's no better source to determine what your competition is doing, and how well they are performing than social media.

By reviewing all their channels you will not gain insight into how your competition uses social media, but also how people perceive them.

Begin by finding what platforms they use, and then see who they are talking to and how they interact with them.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself while reviewing their channels:

- What platforms are working best for them?
- How many followers do they have?
- How often do they post?
- Are their posts engaging?
- What kind of language do they use?
- Are people commenting on their posts?
- Are the comments positive or negative?
- Who is the demographic that follows and comments?
- Do their graphical posts remain on-brand?
- Is their messaging consistent?
- What type of content is working?

Identify Your Competition

Identify your competition to understand how you can better differentiate your brand.

	COMPETITOR 1	COMPETITOR 2	COMPETITOR 3
BASIC INFORMATION			
Competing Brands			
Brand Purpose			
Brand Vision			
Brand Mission			
Brand Values			
Products & Services			
Revenue			
How Many Repeat Clients			
How Many Offices / Stores			
Geographic Area			
How Many Employees			
Strengths			
Weaknesses			
Similarities			
Differences			
VISUAL IDENTITY			
Do you like their logo?			
Does their logo represent what they do?			
What emotions do you feel from their brand colors?			
Does their typography trigger a response?			
Does their imagery match their brands look and feel?			

How is their visual identity better than yours?			
How is your visual identity better than theirs?			
What is their design "look & feel?"			
MESSAGING			
What does their tagline or slogan say to the consumer?			
When they speak to the consumer, what type of language is used?			
How do they talk about their products and services?			
What features do they emphasize?			
Who are the people they are talking to?			
What are their key selling points?			
Do they compare themselves to the competition?			
WEBSITE			
Website URL			
What is the main heading and opening copy on their homepage?			
Is their website easy to navigate?			
What are they emphasizing?			
What content are they presenting to the visitor?			
Do they have a blog, and how often are they posting?			
Where does their website fail the visitor?			
How can it be better?			
Are they staying on top of the latest trends?			
Is the website visual pleasing?			
Is it responsive and does it work on multiple mobile devices?			
Does it load fast?			
Are there any errors or broken links?			

SOCIAL MEDIA			
Which social media platforms do they use?			
What platforms are working best for them?			
How many followers do they have?			
How often do they post?			
Are their posts engaging?			
What kind of language do they use?			
Are people commenting on their posts?			
Are the comments positive or negative?			
Who is the demographic that follows and comments?			
Do their graphical posts remain on-brand?			
Is their messaging consistent?			
What type of content is working?			

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