

INTERNET MARKETING

Techniques Your Competitors

HOPE YOU DON'T KNOW



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PUTTING ON YOUR INTERNET SPY GLASSES

Don't be afraid to learn from your enemies, as well as your online competitors. The old saying goes: "Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer." And, that applies even more to online business competitors who can teach you how they get the results you want to get for yourself, without having to dig things up on your own.

Of course, you can't just go up to a competitor and ask them for all their trade secrets. No one in their right mind would ever divulge the secrets to their business success, unless there was something in it for them. However, unlike old-fashioned corporate spying, online business spying does not require that you engage in surveillance training and illegal theft of company records. Instead, you can simply choose to put on your Internet spy glasses and walk the trail that your competitor has left you through many of the same Internet tools that you've used day in and day out, except this time, you will use them to keep tabs on your competitors activities online.

WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION CAN YOU UNCOVER?

It may surprise you to know the types of information you can dig up online on your competitors' businesses. This can range from:

- **Demographics**

Not sure who is the target demographic for your niche? Your competitor knows and that information is also available for you to uncover with just a click of a mouse.

- **Popular Keywords**

If your competitor knows what Google keywords attract traffic and make money, wouldn't you want to know? This is a simple thing with various tools available that can quickly scan pages and let you know what keywords it finds.

- **Who Links To Them**

The value of a website business is established by the number of incoming links and what ranking these links happen to be. There are a number of other variables, but you don't need to know all the details. You just will learn how to find out quickly who is linking to them and

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then seek to get the same link for your own website.

- **What Products They Are Promoting**

You can find out about the types of products you might want to offer to make money, the same as your competitors. In addition, you can price or package them in a better format to beat your competitor at their own game!

- **Where and What Your Competitors Advertise**

Why try to figure out what places are the best to advertise? Your competitors already know that and tracking this information down online can save you a lot of time in your own advertising campaigns. If you also know what they are advertising, you also know how they're making their money. So, it's both important to know where and what your competitors are advertising.

There is really tons of information you can get on your competitors online, simply because everything done online leaves a trace. Understanding what information is valuable to you, you can customize your market research to include keeping track of the movements of your competitors and then beating them at their own offers and strategies. So, get ready to find out more than you possibly thought you could find out about your competitors. And, best of all, it's perfectly legal.

TARGET YOUR COMPETITOR'S DEMOGRAPHICS

You would think this is really hard to do, but actually it is one of the simplest spy maneuvers online. In the real world, you might have to spend an inordinate amount of time figuring out who buys from your competitors based on the people who visit and the sales they make. Online, it's just a matter of knowing about Quantacast.com, a search engine that quantifies this information, at <http://www.quantacast.com> .

What kind of information can you get from plugging in your competitor's URL to the quantacast search engine? You can get some great demographic stats on visitors to the site, including:

- **Traffic Count**

This is really important to determine exactly how successful your competitor's site is. If it doesn't attract much traffic, you probably don't want to base your strategies on what they are doing, as they aren't reaping the traffic benefits. But, if they are successful, it gives you a good indication of what type of traffic you can shoot for too.

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- **Gender**
The percentage of male to females that visit the site.
- **Age Group**
You can even get a bird's eye view on the percentages of people within specific age groups. This tells you whether they are marketing to an older age group or a younger one.
- **Ethnicity**
You might find out that they are targeting people in an ethnic group that you didn't think of for your own site. If these people are visiting the site, it stands to reason that products that target this demographic will sell better.
- **With Or Without Children**
Amazingly, this is also available on Quantacast.com. This gives you an idea of whether the products are being sold for family reasons or whether your demographic is more the free-wheeling, no children, households.
- **Income Level**
Here is where you find out what kind of income level these visitors represent. Obviously, if the income level is low, your offers have to appeal to them. If they are high, price is not as big a consideration in your offers. Either way, pay close attention to this statistic.
- **Education Level**
If most of the target demographic is not college educated, then you may want to make sure that your copy is geared towards that. If it consists mostly of graduate level people, then you have a very sophisticated audience and you need to keep that in mind, when you publish content, in order to keep them engaged.
- **Business To Home Visitor Ratio**
Now, this is one of the better statistics to determine what products you should offer for your demographic. If you have more people visiting from business sites, then your offers and products should appeal to this demographic.

DO THE KEYWORD TANGO

Google Adwords programs have made it essential that all Internet marketers understand Google keywords and how they work. Advertisers pay Google for advertising campaigns linked to keywords, and part of that money goes to publishers who get a pay-per-click payout when the keyword is clicked. There are other types of payment options too, but this is the simplest to

understand. What you do need to know is that just as there is information on what keywords pay the most to publishers, there is also search volume traffic statistics to show which ones are being search more often on the Internet.

Odds are, your competitors know all this and they have set up campaigns to target specific keywords in their website copy. If they are marketing the same niche as you, then odds are their keywords will work just as well for you as they do for them. So, why go to all the trouble of locating your own keywords? Just find out the ones your competitors use, and use them for your own copy too.

WEBCEO

This can be done through a number of online free search engines that analyze the keyword frequency on any web page. However, there are also specific tools that make this search easy, while recommending even more words to target that your competitor might not have thought of. So, if this appeals to you head on over to <http://www.webceo.com> first. WebCeo is a nifty tool that has a free and paid version. The free version can work for your spying efforts, so try this one first.

There are two features in the WebCeo free version that make it handier than the keyword frequency analyzers on the web. For one, it has a View Competitors tab that tells you the top competitors in any keyword that you decide to target for your website. Secondly, it also has an Analyze Competitors tab that tells you exactly the keywords that your competitors are using in their campaigns. Either way, you can target a known competitor, or you can find out who the other more successful competitors in your market niche happen to be.

GOOGLE ADWORDS KEYWORD TOOL

In addition to WebCeo, there is the Google Adwords Keyword tool. However, this one doesn't analyze your competition, it gives you some idea of which keywords are profitable and which are being searched more actively. So, it really works best when you already have some keywords in mind that you want to evaluate further. That's why this tool can be used in combination with WebCeo to not only get the same keywords that make your competitors traffic and money, but also to surpass their strategy which may be either dated or missing something.

The way the Google keyword tool works is that you plug in a keyword or keyword phrase and then it will pull up other keyword phrases that are being searched that also may be relevant to your own. Thus, the Google Keyword tool lets you identify associated keyword phrases that may not show up on your competitors site, and also gives you an idea if the keyword is being searched heavily. That's because it automatically gives you the monthly search volume for each associated keyword that it pulls up.

You can even go a step further and find out what advertisers are paying in a cost-per-click (CPC) model to their publishers for these words. There is a drop-down list entitled "Show/hide columns" and there you can choose the option to show the estimated CPC. The higher the dollar value the more likelihood that publishers are competing for that keyword by publishing it on their site, although that's not always the case. Sometimes you find a keyword with a high payout and very low competition. If the search volume is high enough to make money on it, then go for it! And, that's another great tidbit on this valuable tool. It also tells you how vast or small the competition is for various keyword phrases.

And, finally, if you happen to locate some keyword phrases that didn't show up on your competitors site, take them from the keyword tool results page and plug them back into it as a search parameter. You will get a whole new set of results that can lead you into areas you didn't think of before as potential topics, profitable keyword phrases, or audiences that were hidden to you before. The Google keyword tool is located here:

<https://ads.google.com/home/tools/keyword-planner/>

FIND OUT WHO LINKS TO YOUR COMPETITORS

In order to get traffic on the Internet, you have to raise your Google ranking so that you come up near the top of Google's search results page for some keyword or phrase. In order to establish your rank, Google follows an algorithm that determines what keywords should be associated to your website and also the "neighborhood" your site resides within.

The neighborhood of any site is determined by the neighbors, or actually, the people who are linking into your site. These are called backlinks and they can quickly lift an anonymous site from the junk heap towards the top of Google ranking, simply by associating with richer neighbors. In this case, your neighbors with higher Google page ranking than you.

Once you get others to link into your site, it does two things: 1. It generates more traffic from search engines, due to better ranking, and 2. It gives you a traffic feed from another site. So, backlinks will raise your traffic level and more traffic, typically, means more sales opportunities. But, you also don't want just any traffic. You want traffic interested in your market niche and willing to spend money for your products and services. Thankfully, your competitors probably already know who those people are online. All you need to do is either poach them or join the party.

A quick way to find out the backlinks that your competitors have is to go to another search engine called Backlinkwatch.com. Here, at

<http://www.backlinkwatch.com>, you can find out who is linking into your competitor, simply by typing in their URL to the search engine. It will even show you the page rank associated with the backlink so you don't waste your time chasing links that are lower in page rank than your own site.

If you don't know what page rank your site is, then you need to download the Google Toolbar and install it into your browser. It will tell you the page rank of any site that you visit. It is located here:

Now, the smart way to use Backlinkwatch.com is to not only pay attention to who is linking into your competitor, but also to see what words are being used in association with that link. If your competitor is Internet savvy, it should have numerous juicy keywords that you can also use to describe your business when you ask their backlink targets to trade links with you too. If they don't do this, be sure to use your WebCeo keywords in conjunction with the information you garner from Backlinkwatch. Then, you may find that to get a backlink all you have to do is leave a comment on someone else's site. In that case, be sure to set the anchor tag to use the keywords you found are searched more online to describe your link back to your site. It should provide you with even more traffic.

WHAT PRODUCTS ARE YOUR COMPETITORS PROMOTING?

Rather than analyzing every page in your competitors site to try to keep up with what they are doing, there are a few sneakier, but more effective, ways to get this information. One of the easiest ways is to pretend to be a customer or an affiliate partner who wants to cooperate with their business. In that case, they are more than willing to give you whatever information you need to keep up-to-date on their latest sales promotions.

FAKE CUSTOMER, FRIEND, OR AFFILIATE PARTNER PROFILES

This is easy to do online because they can't verify your identity. Just be sure you are not using an email address from a known competitor, or they will know who you are and probably deny you entrance to the affiliate program. Once you do establish an online identity as a customer or affiliate partner, you will have access to newsletters, reports, and affiliate program promotions simply by signing up for them. Now, all you have to do is read them and copy the promotions and products they are promoting to increase your chances of making a profit on your site. You can even try to undercut them, if that's your style. In today's economy, everyone is looking for a deal, so whatever you do that makes you stand out from your competitors is going to help your business.

Often, social networking is a great way to learn from other people in today's modern Internet age. If you don't belong to these sites, but your competitors do, you need to get with the program and sign up. They may be on Facebook, Twitter, Digg, or Mix. There are so many different social networking sites, it would be impossible to list them all. However, many businesses now have blogs on their site and within those blogs, you will see information on their social networking presence. Sign up and then try to link in as a friend. From there, you can often get a really good idea of what's coming up for your competitors business plan as they update their status line and what they happen to be doing. This shows up on your newsfeed and give you great ideas for your own sales promotions and marketing plans.

TAKE A PEEK AT THEIR PROMOTIONAL HISTORY

You can also find out what they've marketed in the past versus what appears on their website now. This can give you an idea of which are their bestsellers. The products and services that sell best will remain constant over time, whereas other products that performed poorly are probably removed after a while. This can give you a good idea of where their marketing strategy is going in the future and what you want to target as well.

How can you do that, you may wonder? Again, not so hard with the power of the Internet behind you. There is a Way Back Machine that can help you get a good look at your competitor's website over time, located at <http://www.archive.org>. Here's you will see a listing of years and the different webpages as they appeared in the past. You can simply browse through the web pages to see what was being advertised before, compared to what is currently being advertised now. Whatever is constant over time is probably a good product to sell.

GOOGLE 'EM

Google has the most tools that are helpful when it comes to Internet spying on your competitors. That's possibly because many of your competitors are using their adwords campaigns to do their advertising. We've already discussed how to use the Google Adwords Keyword Tool in conjunction with WebCeo to develop a killer keyword strategy that outdoes your competition. But, there are many other tools that Google provides that can be helpful to you as a competitor who knows how to use them in your market research. These are tools your competitors definitely hope you don't know about. That's because, if they use a Google Adwords campaign, all that information is tracked by Google, and if you know where to look for their special tools, you can find some nifty online tools that will do most of the spying for you. And, sometimes, you can even automate it to alert you to when your competitor is trotting out a new Internet advertising campaign.

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The Search Engine

Just looking up your competitor online in the Google search engine can yield some interesting results. You will find out not only what your known competitor is doing, but all the unknown ones too. They will come up in page after page, using the same keywords probably as your known competitors. Or, you might end up with a whole new list of competitors who are worthy of emulating more than the one you were targeting. It is located at <http://www.google.com>.

Google Alerts

One of the most useful and effective tools that Google offers to the public is Google Alerts. You can set up this easy online tool to notify you in email any time one of your competitors has a new posting online. Or, you can set it up for keywords too. Either way, you won't have to keep up with that information manually, it will be delivered right to the email address you specify. It's almost like having an automated robot who spies on your competitors comings and goings online for you. It is located at: <http://www.google.com/alerts>.

Google Insights

This is another great little tool that will also let you do a bit of spying on your competitors. Here you can add a couple of different keywords and pull up, by category which is industry related, the people who are involved in that industry. This will be under related searches and can be quite eye-opening to help you figure out who the major players are in the industry you are targeting. It is located at <http://www.google.com/insights/search/> .

Google Trends

Remember those keywords we discovered earlier that the competitors were using? Well, now you can go online and find out what the trends are for the future for that particular product or service. All you have to do is go to Google Trends online and put in a couple of different trends. It will show you graphically which keyword is increasing or decreasing in interest over time. This is particularly useful if you want to optimize the information you are getting from your competitors so that it is not dating your site, but making it competitive. It is located at <http://www.google.com/trends> .

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WHERE AND WHAT ARE THEY ADVERTISING?

Now, we are nearing the end of this little report. But, it's not the end of learning all about how to spy on your Internet competitors. There is plenty more information out there that can be valuable to use in your own Internet marketing campaigns. All it takes is a little know-how and some ingenuity. It's all perfectly legal and actually can make you more profitable in much quicker time than if you tried to learn everything on your own. It's always good to emulate people that are more successful than you to get to the fast track to riches, but only if it's legal.

WHERE, OH, WHERE?

It is still somewhat difficult to tell exactly where your competitors are advertising, but this is swiftly changing. You might have had to rely on reading their newsletters and checking out their sales promotions online. You may even have bought something from your competitor so they would put you on their mailing list of people who get advance notice of sales. But, who has time to read all that?

Thankfully, there are some entrepreneurs who are beginning to realize that there are many people who would like to know where their competitors are advertising, and in a simply, easy to do, fashion. And, luckily, it also fits the format of a search engine quite well. So, you will see more and more of these types of applications sprouting up over the Internet and you need to be aware to look for them in Google to find them when they come out. For now, we're going to talk about an exciting Alpha version of a search engine called Yureeka.com.

Right now, due to the initial stages of development, they do not have significant advertising in their database that you can search, but the potential is definitely there and worth checking to see how they continue to develop. For major players, like Microsoft, you can plug in their name and find the banners and ads they've developed for different products online with a link to where they are found. This is really good information!

You can even use it to search keyword phrases and it will pull up the ads associated with that and where they are being advertised. That's pretty good for an alpha version. Just don't expect that all your competitors are in their database at this point. There is still much more inventory they need to do across the Internet to get this search engine to be anything as spectacular as Google. But, for Internet Marketers, it definitely has massive potential to be very useful, unique, and valuable. It is located at <http://www.yureeka.com>.

REMEMBER THOSE BACKLINKS?

If you got the people who were backlinking to your competitors sites, you will have probably already stumbled on some of their own affiliate offers. That's because some backlinks will be generated from affiliate partners who are linking into the competitor's sites through backlink feeds. All you have to do is go and check out the backlinks and see if they lead you to any advertising offers that your competitors is rolling out.

If they do happen to have an affiliate program, sign up to your competitors affiliate program so that you can get notified of what other products they are attempting to roll out in the future. This may be hard to do if you only have a competitor site, but if you have multiple sites, just list one that is not in their market niche as your domain.

You may also find out, by checking the backlinks, what other affiliate programs are out that that you can advertise on your site to make money too. For that, you want to be signed up to an affiliate bank like clickbank.com or cj.com as a publisher. That way, you can also check their databases to see what other offers you can put up on your site to bring in some money. Look up affiliate offers for clickbank.com at <http://jvzoo.com>, <http://warriorplus.com>, <http://www.clickbank.com> or also at commision junction at <http://www.cj.com>.

A WORD TO THE WISE

You don't just want to copy your competitors advertising strategy verbatim. If you do that, you'll always be one step behind and it may be that your competitor isn't as sharp as you think they are. You should always take the competitors strategy as a starting point for your own, but then develop it so that you can not only meet similar sales goals, but exceed them too.

In the world of Internet marketing, players can be sizzling hot one day and offline the next. So, don't put all your eggs in one basket. Try to find numerous competitors who can give you an idea on how to properly market your niche to create profitable opportunities.

FINDING EVEN MORE COMPETITORS

While Googling your competitor or the keyword phrases you want to use, you probably came up with the competitors who are also trying to grab a piece of the market. However, there's an even niftier tool that will graphically display the industry contenders and even give you a good idea of how you rank against them. This is important for setting market goals to keep yourself in the game.

<https://www.dreamdesignlabs.com/tag/free-online-competitor-analysis-tools/>

GO OUT AND CONQUER THE INTERNET!

As you can see, there are a variety of tools out there that make the job of market and competitor research particularly easy on the Internet. And, new tools are coming out all the time! You could spend a lot of time just keeping tabs on your competition, but the point of it all is to create your own advertising and marketing campaigns that make you profitable!

So, do set aside time each month to scope out the competition to help you get a good solid marketing campaign out the door, but don't agonize over it. Pretty much, your customers will be the ones to decide what works for your site and what doesn't regardless of what your competition is doing. That's because the customers are the ones that determine what they will buy or not, and if your demographic turns out to be slightly different than your competitors, they may end up buying things that wouldn't appeal to your competitors demographics.

So, pay attention to what your competitor is doing, but always bring it back to how it can best serve you and your customers. Odds are, they won't be exactly the same, and that's your opportunity to make yourself stand out from the competition even knowing everything that they are up to online.

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