Competitive Analysis checklist

Before you even begin to work on your SEO and content strategy for your business, it's important you conduct a competitive analysis. To me, this is really fun because it is where your path becomes crystal clear.

You might be in a rush to start looking into keywords, optimizing your content, or even attempting link building.

However, if you do this without first conducting an SEO competitive analysis, you will hinder your companies efforts.

Competitive analysis allows you to understand not only who your competitors are, but to see where they are positioned in relation to you. Doing the analysis will give you a comprehensive understanding of what goals you should be working toward and will present you with opportunities to rank for specific keywords.

Think about it. If you don't know which companies are dominating organic search, which keywords are most valuable, or what the best backlink strategy is, how do you expect to grow your own organic traffic through SEO?

In this section, you'll learn the components that go into a competitive analysis and which tools you can use to make it as effective as possible.

Find your competitors

The first step of an SEO competitive analysis is to identify your competitors. When you do this, you'll be able to:

1. Discover what they're doing well
2. Find your strategic advantages
3. Help you find link opportunities

If you don't know who your competitors are, use a tool like SEMrush or SearchMetrics to identify them.

You should be looking out for a combination of your search competitors and business competitors (companies offering services similar to yours).. Search competitors are firms that are ranking for the terms you hope to rank for.

Once you've identified these competitors and analyzed them, you'll have a clearer idea of which tactics do and do not work within your industry. You'll have a number of different tactics to improve your own keyword rankings, and you can prioritize which tactics should take precedence.

Once you have the competitor data overview, it's time to start looking in more detail at certain aspects of what makes your competitors' sites great. These are in the list below.

Underestimating your competitors can be a main reason for having weak results.

Having a printed or bookmarked shortlist of what to do can help you and your team stay focused.

Competitor Analysis Considerations Checklist and Tools

1. Number of monthly brand searches via SEMrush
2. Average visit duration, pages per visit, bounce rate via Similarweb.com
3. Channels driving traffic via Similarweb.com
4. Competitor search metrics overview (A mix of the tools I this list)
5. Google top 10 SERPs (search engine results pages) and what is in them that matters to you
6. Keywords and keyword gap via SEMrush, UberSuggest
7. Competitor top website pages (that drive SEO rankings) via SEMrush
8. On-page optimization levels via internetmarketingninjas.com/seo-tools/keyword-density or Yoast All In One SEO plugin for basics
9. Backlinks and commonly occurring links via from AHREFS, Majestic, or Open Site Explorer
10. Social media followers, engagement, and frequency via SEMrush
11. Swipe files of competitors' top-performing headlines via SEMrush and AHREFS
12. Topical authority – Screaming Frog SEO Spider or MarketMuse, etc.
13. Calls to action, navigation, and trustworthiness via usertesting.com and usersthink.com
14. "Spy" (legally) on how competitors get leads with Nacho Analytics