

Podcast Notes: Episode 1 - Analyzing Your Competitors

1. Identifying your top competitors.

- Yahoo! Directory – search directory listings by category to obtain a listing of competitors in that topic area. <http://search.yahoo.com/dir>
- Alexa.com (for traffic analysis) <http://www.alexa.com>
- Google the keywords and keyword phrases that describe your products or service offerings <http://www.google.com>

2. Competitor Website Review

- Company Mission & Vision statement – Is there a unique selling proposition on the site?
- Review of Products & Services Offered. You're looking for detail & content provided on each product and service (images/photos, support documents, etc.). Are there products/services offered that differ from your. Do you offer additional products & services?
- Review of Customer Service Areas & Procedures: Presence of Help, F.A.Q. Online Chat, Privacy Statement, Refunds & Exchanges Policies, Guarantees
- Look & Feel – Navigation, use of colors, fonts, graphics, layout, organization of information.
- eCommerce – How are products & services purchased? Carts, Customer Order Management areas, Wish Lists, Special Offers

3. Identifying Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities for Improvement

- Strengths – Note their strengths. What seems to work really well (from a consumer point of view).
- Weaknesses (from a consumer point of view) – What is not working or ineffective?
- Gaps (from a consumer point of view) – do you see any opportunities for improvement.

Summary: For each competitor, you will want to make a statement of how you will use your strengths to compete effectively. Perhaps you've noticed a niche that your competitors are ignoring. Perhaps you've decided to simply outspend the competitor with advertising. Perhaps you've noticed a gap in consumer service that you plan to fill. The information learned during your competitor analysis will serve to be very valuable once you begin to focus and identify your website development strategy.