



Identify and Know Your Online Competition

What you do know, can help you

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Most organizations are knowledgeable of their competitors non-web related strategies, but the internet often reveals additional competition for the products or services that you sell. This can apply to organizations that serve local customers as well as those that serve customers throughout the United States.

One of the strengths of the internet is that it enables businesses to significantly expand their reach and visibility to potential clients. And today, potential clients use the internet more than any other source to research potential vendors.

A recent Enquiro Business to Business (B2B) study revealed that 63% of SMB (small and medium business) buyers begin their research process by accessing the major search engines, such as Google, Yahoo, etc. along with various B2B search engines. In addition 26% of SMB buyers begin by researching prospective vendor websites.

With such a high volume of online research activity taking place, it's important to know how your competition is using the internet, their areas of focus and their visibility in terms of search engine rankings. Understanding your competition online can provide valuable information that can be used to compete more effectively.

Search Engine Rankings and Pay-per-Click Advertising

I often complete competitive assessments for potential clients and the information obtained is invaluable and sometimes surprising.

It's always helpful to know where competitors are ranked by Google and the other search engines for specific keyword phrases. Rankings tend to correlate to site visitors and site visitors can equate to new sales leads and sales and if your competitor's websites are ranked significantly higher than yours, you may be at a significant disadvantage.

It's also important to evaluate whether or not your major competitors are utilizing Pay-per-Click advertising. If they are, it's helpful to know which major keyword phrases are being purchased along with a number of other factors.

When companies are successful in obtaining page one Google positions for both free and paid search, this is normally a sign of some understanding of the power of the internet as it relates to their business.

In situations where the competition is knowledgeable and effective, it may take longer to close the gap; however, in most situations there is still opportunity.

Company Positioning

It's also important to know how your competitors are positioning themselves on the internet as these key messages can determine if a potential client acts or not, once they reach the site. This is an area of opportunity for the vast majority of small and medium sized businesses and one of the two main determiners of websites effectiveness.

Website Design and Updates

Design may be the most visible element that differentiates competitors as the look of a website can send both positive and negative messages. If some of your competitors have recently redesigned or updated their websites and other haven't, those that haven't may once again be at a competitive disadvantage.

It's important to identify and understand the strategies that your competition is utilizing on the internet. Website visibility, positioning and design can be key decision making factors that impact the 89% of small and medium sized business decision makers who utilize the internet at some point in their decision making process.

DLC&A Internet Marketing is a Twin Cities-based Internet marketing firm. They develop and implement search engine friendly Internet marketing strategies that generate sales leads and revenue for small and medium-sized businesses.

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