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SPYING ONLINE ... OR HOW TO OUT-PROMOTE YOUR COMPETITION ONLINE

By Daniel Barnett

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Barnett

Are you constantly loosing ground to your online competitors?

Do they win all the sales, get all the great reviews and generally ooze success? Well now it is time to fight back. Now it is time to really start competing online.

The funny thing not many businesses are actively competing online. Sure the big boys will always be in active competition.

But take it down a few levels and you'll find that smaller web ventures just do not compete.

The first business in your industry to start actively competing online is going to come out a big winner.

Before you can effectively compete online, you need to know everything about competitors. Only by knowing exactly what your competitors are up are you able to compete.

Each of the search engines can tell you who is linked to your competitors' web site. This should give you an idea about how they are advertising, and where they have mentions such as reviews, articles and links. Make a note of this...these are the places where you should be too.

Different search engines require certain information in their search box to list links going into a site:

- * Altavista: In the search box type "link:competitor.com" where your competitor's domain is competitor.com.
- * Northern Light: In the search box type "competitor.com" without the "www".
- * Excite: In the search box type "www.competitor.com".
- * Infoseek: In the search box type "link:www.competitor.com".
- * Hotbot: In the search box type "http://www.competitor.com",

then change the pull-down menu to "links to this URL".

You need to make the effort to be at least everywhere your competition is. If your competitor is featured on a particular site there is no reason why you shouldn't be featured too.

If a web site features a competitor's product, write to the webmaster to see if they would like to try your product. Bribe your way onto the site with free samples if you have to. Search, infiltrate and destroy your competitors promotional territory.

Go to Dejanews (<http://www.deja.com>) and search for their company or product names through the newsgroups. This will give you a great idea about what people actually think about their products and of any problems or success they have experienced with your competitors.

You should also be able to find out where they are advertising...this can be tricky as there are a lot of possibilities. Check out the archives of e-zines and e-mail lists to see if you can spot them. A good place to find e-mail lists is at: <http://www.topica.com/>
<http://www.liszt.com>

You might even be able to find out what books your competitors have been buying. Take a look in at Amazon.com's purchase lists and see if your competitors company name is listed. From here you will be able to track what popular book titles have

been purchased through your competitors. Check it out at:
<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/subst/community/community.html/>

If your competitors have affiliate sales programs, assume a new internet identity and join up as a sales agent. From here you should have access to a range of their marketing and promotional material. As an affiliate you might also be sent regular e-mail from your competitor offering information such as sales details and future directions.

Remember, before you even start to action an online marketing campaign ensure you know how, where and why your competition is marketing online.

Daniel Barnett, co-author of *Work the Medium*, a 200+page manual of Internet Marketing, Promotion and Selling Strategies:
<http://www.workthemedium.com>

How To Take Advantage Of Your Competition

By Rich Hamilton, Jr

When people market their business, they pay little attention to their competition. However, they can learn a lot from them. Your competition plays a large role in your business and in your marketing efforts, so don't ignore them.

There is an old saying, "Keep your friends close, keep your enemies closer". In this case, your enemy is your competition. You shouldn't look at your competition as an enemy, but, as a guide or a valuable tool.

Your competition can be an asset to your business. I want you to think about this for a minute, your competition is like having a one stop shopping center, they have it all. Let me give you an example, take a look at your fearsome indirect competition, they have it all. They may have targeted an area of the market that you've missed, on the web that's not hard to do.

Who Are Their Link Partners

One day when I was analyzing my competition I immediately noticed something about their link partners, a lot of them were different, but some were the same. Let me give you an example, if you were to take three of your competitors, you may only find a few of them with the same link partners, other than that, a large portion of your competition's link partners will be different.

Once you've found out who your competitor's link partners are, persuade them to link to you. By getting your competition's link partners to link to you, it will take some of your competition's traffic away and give it to you, bringing targeted traffic to your web site.

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How do find your competition's link partners? A couple of ways, one is you can use software like Arelis. Arelis will retrieve all the web sites that are linked to your competitor in minutes, saving you a boatload of time. Another way to find your competitor's link partners is by using Marketleap's Link Popularity Tool, which is free to use.

Who Are Their Affiliates

Another way to take advantage of your competition is to find out who their affiliates are. If you offer an affiliate program, this may be an ideal strategy for you. Track down your competition's affiliates and persuade them to promote your product or services, instead of your competitor's.

If your competitors offer their affiliates a lower commission percentage than you, then you already have the upper hand. How? Affiliates are always looking for away to make more money and by offering them a higher commission percentage, they'll be able to increase their affiliate profits.

How do you find your competition's affiliates? You can use the same methods to find their affiliates, as you would trying to locate their link partners, by using Arelis and/or Marketleap's Link Popularity Tool.

Spying On Your Competition

Thanks to the power of the internet, spying on your competition couldn't be any easier. You can easily find out what their marketing angle is, what they have for products, how much they are charging for their products, and any new products that they may be working on.

If you were to go to your competition offline and evaluate their establishment, while taking notes on their products, you would immediately draw attention to yourself and get thrown out of the store. There is nothing worse than letting your competition know you are keeping tabs on them, but on the internet, it's completely anonymous. Your competition will never know you are there or what your doing there.

When you pay a visit to your competition's web site, the first thing you want to know is, what their weaknesses and their strengths are. That way, you can capitalize on the opportunity of making their weaknesses, your strengths.

Rich Hamilton, Jr is the CEO/President of

and the Author of Inside

Internet Marketing. His book will show you how to laser in on your targeted market with unconventional marketing strategies to promote your web site without ever having to pay a cent in advertising.

How To Take Advantage Of Your Competition
What Your Competition Knows About Traffic

When is 'Spying on Your Competition' a Complete Waste of Time?
Your Online Business...Just Like Any Other Business...Almost!
Make Money on Internet: Promote the product not the program

Competition Commando
Pay Per Text Marketing
30 Powerful Business eBooks
14 Profitable eBooks
Scripts2Sell



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