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What Your Competition Knows About Traffic

By Kari Freckleton

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by: **Kari Freckleton**

Need more traffic? There's a lot you can learn from spying on your competition. Your competition has traffic sources that you can easily swipe by following these steps.

Step One: Who should you spy on? You probably can name six to thirty online competitors. If not, you need to go through Google and Yahoo with the key terms you target. Who comes up? Write down everyone who has a business similar to yours, even if they aren't identical.

Now you need to figure out who you should spy on first. Begin with the most successful websites. How do you find them? It's easy with a couple tools.

The Google toolbar (toolbar.google.com) is essential for spying. The Google toolbar features a little bar labeled "PageRank." Depending on each site, this bar may be gray, white, or (usually) a combination of green and white. The more green, the higher Google ranks that page. To get an exact PageRank, put your cursor over the PageRank graph and hold it there. Your competitors with the highest PageRank are the ones you want to look at very closely.

You also want to spy on the competitors with the most traffic. To figure out the relative traffic position of your competition (compared to all web sites), go to alexa.com and download their toolbar. The Alexa toolbar will display a number for each website – it's traffic rank. The lower the number, the higher the traffic. (For example, Yahoo's Alexa rank is 1, while Blockbuster's is 2,220.)

Step two: Snoop through your competitor's log files to see which sites and search terms send them the most traffic. Is there a public stats tracker on your competitor's site? If so, check it out. If not, try typing in your competitor's URL with `/stats.html` and `/stats/` on the end of it. Often times, web hosts put statistics here – without password protection. Still can't find your competitor's stats? Try Googling their URL and "statistics." It's a long shot, but sometimes statistics pages will turn up this way.

What Your Competition Knows About Traffic

Step three: Look at who is linking to your competitor. The easiest way to do this is to run a backward link search in Google and Altavista. Simply type in link:http://www.yourcompetition.com (using your competitor's URL). You'll find most of the pages that link to your competitor this way. How do you know which links are the best? By using the Google toolbar. The pages linking to your competitor with the highest PageRank are the ones you should look to for links of your own.

To steal those links, email all the webmasters that are linking to your competitor without getting a link back in return. Figure out why they link to your competitor (good free content, subject fits site, etc), and give them a better reason to link to you. Chances are, most of these webmasters will give you a link as well.

Once you have these new sites linking to yours, positive changes in your Google ranking are likely. You may even overtake your competitor for your targeted search terms – especially if you get links from spying on multiple sites. All from a little reconnaissance work and some emailing!

Kari Freckleton, aka Greedy Girl, shares her unconventional ideas for free at

Ready to smoke the competition? Email Kari at

to join

her Too Good To Publish marketing club.

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

What Your Competition Knows About Traffic

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.

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

What Your Competition Knows About Traffic

marketing strategies to promote your web site without ever having to pay a cent in advertising.

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