# FIVE SIMPLE STEPS TO ONLINE MARKETING SUCCESS

## USING COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE IN 2010

Brought to you by Compete.com

For many businesses, 2010 will be a year of recovery and growth. Your business success begins with a sound marketing strategy aimed to increase performance and maximize ROI. Competitive intelligence can complement any marketing strategy and give you the decision support needed to move forward with confidence and realize the true impact of your efforts.

You may think your 2010 strategy is primed for success, but do you really know enough about your competitors to make that assumption? What tactics are they using to drive online performance, and what are the results? By incorporating competitive intelligence into your marketing strategy, you can get the insights you need to stay on top of your competitors while enhancing your own marketing efforts for 2010 and beyond.

Here are 5 steps to marketing success in 2010 using competitive intelligence:

## 1. Know the Competition

*Define your competitive set, learn what "normal" really is for specific metrics, and know where you rank.*

How can you win the game when you don't know the playing field?. Who are the leaders in your space? Who are the copy cats? Do any of your competitors do anything in particular that interests you? How many competitors do you think you have? Creating a list of the competitors in your space and indentifying why each poses a competitive threat will be the foundation of your competitive strategy. After identifying your competitive set, start to dig deep

**EXAMPLE:**

*Your site may rank low in terms of unique visitors, but your average stay (users time on site) and pages per visit may be better than your largest competitor. Since your website is more engaging than your competitor's site, it is safe to assume that your focus should be on driving new traffic to your site and not necessarily making on-site optimizations.*

and realize where you stand for metrics that matter most. Some competitive intelligence solutions will give you visibility into metrics for your competitors' sites that are much like the ones you analyze using local web analytics tools. Comparing all of your competitors against key performance indicators such as Unique Visitors, Page Views, Time on Site, Average Stay, and Pages per Visit will give you a sense of real norms for your competitive landscape. This will allow you to make logical business decisions and maximize ROI.

## 2. Cover Your Search Marketing Bases

*Increase search traffic and campaign performance through analysis of your competitors' search marketing trends and keywords.*

Millions of internet users let search engines decide where they should go to find what they're looking for. Clearly, it is imperative that you control everything in your power to maximize your website's search exposure and drive relevant traffic. Using your local web analytics tools, you can see what keywords are sending traffic to your site, how much of that traffic is paid vs. natural, and what percentage of traffic the individual search engines contribute to your site overall.

Through optimization and testing of your paid search campaigns, SEO keyword research, and content creation, you can maximize conversions and increase search ROI. However, optimization and testing are not guaranteed to provide beneficial results. Competitive search analytics tools let you quickly gain insights into your competitors' search strategy so you can capitalize on their success. Much like you defined your competitive set in Step 1, it's important to record and analyze search engine traffic, keywords, and performance for each one of your competitors.

Competitive intelligence helps you grasp what search trends are

**GO THE EXTRA MILE:**

*If you are having trouble moving up the SERP (search engine results page) for a particular keyword, or it's too expensive to bid in paid search, you can always perform a reverse keyword search (called a Keyword Destination Report using Compete PRO). This report allows you to identify websites that are getting the bulk of the traffic from these keywords. You can decide to seek advertising opportunities on those websites or learn from their SEO strategies to help you move up the ranks.*

related to seasonality and easily determine when your competitors make changes, like increasing/decreasing paid search spend or starting a new SEO campaign.  Some tools will even let you dig deeper and allow you to see what keywords are driving traffic to your competitors' site through paid and/or natural search.  By regularly monitoring your competitive search landscape, you can easily find new keywords that are proven to drive performance, and also minimize the benefit your competitors' are getting specific keywords or phrases.

## 3. Copying is a Sign of Flattery

*Identify what websites are sending your competitors traffic and get in on the action.*

As the population continues to move everyday activities online, competition for web traffic will continue to grow.  Just like there are a few keywords that drive most of the traffic to your site (the head) and thousands of other keywords that drive a little (the long tail), traffic to websites works much in the same way.  There are millions of websites out there, however only a small percentage account for the bulk of traffic.  The relationships you forge with other online businesses can determine the fate of your marketing success.

By analyzing referral (upstream) and destination (downstream) traffic for your competitive set you can easily identify new affiliate websites, business relationships, and link-building opportunities. If your competitors are receiving traffic from specific sites, it may be worth reaching out to those sites to see how your business can benefit.  Plus, you can vet potential websites you would like to advertise with and see who they are sending their traffic to.

Using your competitive intelligence tools, create a list of websites

that send traffic to your competitors.  Exclude websites that you are already working with.  You can then determine which sites you want to reach out by analyzing how much traffic these websites receive. At first, this may seem like a daunting task, however over time you will notice only a handful of new sites that pop up.  Analyzing traffic referral reports is a great way to generate new relationships and increase your online reach with minimal effort.

## 4. Fix Your Leaky Bucket

*Retarget users that leave your site and capture lost conversions.*

Your local web analytics tools will let you identify which websites are sending traffic to your site.  Based on page views, bounce rates, and conversion rates you can easily identify which websites deliver the most benefit.  Think of your website as a bucket.  Using various marketing tactics you can scoop up site visitors that may be interested in your products or services.  Then by creating conversion funnels, you attempt to lead your users to perform a specific action.  In an ideal situation, all of the users would stay in your bucket until they performed the desired action, however in reality, your bucket may be large and strong, but it will most certainly have leaks.

Using destination or downstream traffic tools, you can easily see where your users go when they leave your site.  Are they going directly to a competitor, a search engine, or back to their favorite social network?  Maybe they are searching for coupons on their favorite deal sites or conducting research before they decide to purchase your products or services.  Regularly perform a destination traffic report on your website and easily find opportunities to quickly patch the holes in your leaky bucket.

compete.com

*Monitor, set benchmarks, and realize how your
site enhancements and marketing strategies
impact your competitors.*

In order to stay on track and continue to grow your business, you
need an online marketing strategy that can adjust to ever-changing
economic, technological, and social environments.  Incorporating
competitive intelligence into that marketing strategy can give
you the critical information you need to minimize risk and ensure
success.

Monitor your competitive set and use your competitive intelligence
tools on a regular basis.  You will find much of the information
you collect to be critical in making decisions about your overall
marketing strategy.  Then, set benchmarks and monitor changes
across your entire competitive set.  Only then will you realize the
true impact your of your efforts.

Over time your online competition is only going to heat up.  Adding
competitive intelligence to your day-to-day marketing strategies
will ultimately give you the upper hand and allow you to accurately
forecast recovery, growth, and success in 2010 and beyond.

compete.com

Compete harnesses the online behavior of millions of consumers to help hundreds of clients improve their marketing effectiveness.  Offering a robust suite of products coupled with deep vertical industry insights, Compete provides custom consultative services alongside powerful competitive intelligence tools delivered via compete.com. The results, used by some of the world's biggest brands, drive more effective online experiences and highly profitable advertising campaigns.

Compete's services are supported by industry-leading data, management, and technological innovation. Our consumer behavioral data is drawn from multiple sources and comprises the largest active consumer database in the industry, unmatched in depth, quality, and integrity.

Contact us for more information.