MAGGAZZINE

HOW TO SPY

ON YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS

COMPETITION

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How to Spy On Your Local Business Competition (Legally Of Course): Quantcast

I f you have been struggling to improve your rankings and wonder why your competition always seems to outrank you, there are resources available that will unmask their strengths and weaknesses. In this article we look at how to do this using Quantcast.

The beauty of Quantcast is that it offers your local business great insight into the demographics of your competition. Demographics reveal the characteristics of your target market so that you can customize your marketing to reach out to them.

To get you started, go to Quantcast.com and type in the website address of your competition in search box at the top of the page. Quantcast will then show you some interesting information:

1. Traffic
•   The estimated monthly number of visitors per month in the United States. You can also view the number per day or week and the trends over 1 month, 3 months, 6 months and 1 year.

2. Demographics- the demographics are divided into the following categories
•   Male and Female
•   Age bracket-3-12,13-17,18-34,35-49,50+
•   Race- Caucasian, African American, Asian, Hispanic and Other
•   No kids and Has Kids from age 0 to 17under the age of 18
•   No kids and had kids from age 0-2
•   No kids and has kids from age 3-12
•   No kids and has kids from age 13-17
•   Annual income brackets $0-30k, $30-60k, $60-100k and over $100k
•   Educational level: no college, college and graduate school

To get a simplified overall view of your competitors demographics, click on the 'demographics' tab and Quantcast will display the people your competitor's site is most popular with in the various categories. Armed with this information, your business can tailor its marketing efforts to appeal to the same popular target markets and imitate the success of the competition. In our next article we will look at a third resource to spy on your competition called Alexa.

How to Spy On Your Local Business Competition (Legally Of Course): Alexa

A final resource that helps you spy on your local business competition is the website called Alexa. Alexa is most popular for its ability to rank websites based on traffic flow.

Go to Alexa.com and type in your competitors website address in the search box and you will be given the following data upfront:

- Alexa traffic rank
- Traffic rank in the US
- Number of sites linking into the website

To get more detailed information, click on the 'get details' button and you'll uncover more secrets about your competition such as:

1. A brief summary of the products or services they offer, the percentage of traffic that comes from search engines, the number of years the site has been in operation, the demographics of the visitors they appeal to, how long each visitor takes on average on each pageview and to the site in total.

2. In-depth analysis of various categories such as:
- Traffic stats- unravel the sources of their traffic
- Search-find the top search terms driving traffic to the site from search engines
- Demographics-discover who their most popular visitors are by age, gender, race, education and location
- Contact- find out who owns the site, their contact and the size of their company
- Reviews- check out positive and negative reviews about the site
- Related links- shows the link network they have developed
- Clickstream-shows you the sites visitors go to after visiting the competitors site (downstream) and the sites they visited immediately before landing on their site (upstream)

I hope that this series of articles on how to legally spy on your competition has given you the tools to measure the strengths and weaknesses of your competition and enabled you to compare your local business to theirs so that you can outsmart them.

How To Spy On Your Local Business Competition (Legally Of Course): Google Trends

A secret way to improve your local business competitive advantage on the web is to spy on your competition and then simply outdo them. In this article we will look at how to do that using Google Trends.

Google Trends is often used to get trend information on hot topics and searches, but you can also use it to investigate the performance of your competitor's website over a period of time.

Follow these three steps to get data on your competition:
1.   Go to Google.com/ trends
2.   In the search term box, type in the website address of your competition. You can compare two or more competitors by adding their website addresses.
3.   In the new window that appears, click on the Websites link

Google Trends shows you the following data:

•   Daily Unique Visitors

The daily number of unique visitors that visits the site over a period of time is shown using a graph. You can change the time frame using the pull down menu titled "all years".

By analyzing this data, you will be able to tell what years, months and days attract the most or least number of visitors and also if the traffic to the site is increasing or declining.

•   Regions

A list of countries where the site is most visited will also give you pointers on your competitor's popular markets and you can even know which regions in a country attract the most traffic by simply clicking on the country link.

•   Also visited

This list shows other websites visited by the same people who visit your competition. This gives you insight into other sites your local business is competing with. You can use the same process to investigate them too.

•   Also searched for

This list gives you search terms that are used most by those visitors. You can use this list to add new keywords to your content to draw in more visitors to your website.