How to Do Competition Analysis

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One of the most important aspects of SEO is the work you put in before you even touch the website or build a single back link. This analysis work involves keyword research and competition analysis. Choose the wrong keywords and you could be wasting all your efforts in the onsite and offsite optimization. Choose keywords which have too much competition and you'll be taking on an uphill battle.

But what are the things you should be looking for when doing competition analysis? We have listed four aspects that are absolutely essential to look at below:

Number and Quality of Backlinks

You might want to invest in a tool for this, like Web Comp Analysis from Jonathan Leger. It basically checks with Google, Yahoo and Bing to find all the sites that are linking to your competitor and then analyses those links to discover the pagerank of the page and the anchor text used. For example, if you are optimizing for the keyword 'Blue Widgets' and the top site has 4,000 backlinks, then a tool like Web Comp Analysis can tell you how many of those links include the phrase 'Blue Widgets'.

If you find the sites on the front page have tens of thousands of links then unless you have significant resources it's probably worth finding an alternative keyword.

Age of Domain

Search engines like Bing and Google seem to place a lot of value on the age of the domain,

probably because an older, well developed website contains more authority and is more trustworthy than a new site. Therefore if you find that most of the sites are 5 or more years old, it's probably best to move on to another keyword - especially if they have lots of links.

Index Page or Sub-Page

Look through the top 10 results and see if most of the results are for the main index page or subpages of the main site. It's always easy to rank a main site if the competition is mostly made up of subpages.

Keywords in Title

If the keywords are not in the title or the keywords are not at the beginning of the title, then we can probably outrank the website with some good onpage optimization.

Onpage Optimization

Visit the sites on the first page of Google and check to see if they are using H1 tags with the keywords, how often the keywords are mentioned throughout the site, whether the code is valid and if there is an XML sitemap. If they haven't done much onpage optimization there is a good chance we can outrank them if we can build a similar number of links and do some better optimization on our site.

There is a great tool called SEO Quake which can give you a very quick over view on how much competition you might have for optimizing for a particular keyword.

Feel free to download your free report for more helpful hints and tips to jump start your online marketing.

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