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## Activity introduction

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*This practice activity is an opportunity for you to apply the concepts that you learned throughout the course. We provide a completed example activity so you can compare and contrast your ideas, designs, and grow as a user experience designer.*

In this activity, you're going to create a competitive audit to assess CoffeeHouse's competition. Remember that a competitive audit is an overview of your competitors' strengths and weaknesses. At this point, you haven't designed anything for the CoffeeHouse project. Insights from your competitive audit will later be used to inform your own designs.

An effective competitive audit should:

Identify your key competitors

Review the products that your competitors offer

Understand how your competitors position themselves in the market

Examine what your competition does well and what they could do better

Consider how your competitors describe themselves

An effective competitive audit can help:

Inform your design process

Solve usability and accessibility problems

Reveal gaps in the market

Provide reliable evidence about whether designs work or not

Save time, money, and energy



## Step-by-step instructions

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To create your competitive audit, you're going to use the template and information for CoffeeHouse that we'll provide below. Once you've completed your template, you're going to write a competitive audit report.

Step 1: Access the template

To use the template for this course item, click the link below and select "Use Template."

Link to template: [competitive audit comparison template](#)<sup>↗</sup>.

OR

If you don't have a Google account, you can download the template directly from the attachment below.



[Google UX Design Certificate - Competitive audit template](#)  
[XLSX File](#)


Step 2: Review the CoffeeHouse background information

Click the link below and select "Use Template" to revisit the CoffeeHouse business scenario. Understanding CoffeeHouse's background and the services it offers will help you locate competitors that you can use in this audit.

Link to scenario: [CoffeeHouse Business Scenario](#)<sup>↗</sup>.

OR

If you don't have a Google account, you can download the scenario directly from the attachment below.

 [Google UX Design Certificate - CoffeeHouse Business Scenario](#)  
[DOCX File](#)

### Step 3: Outline your competitive audit goals

Before you move into the details of your competitive audit, make sure to define your audit goals. In the CoffeeHouse example, since the overall project is for the design of the CoffeeHouse app, your goal could be to compare the in-app purchasing experience of each competitor. Once you've chosen your goal or goals, write them in the cell in row 1 where it says "Competitive audit goal".

Using consistent language for rating competitor products can create more uniform feedback and help you "grade" competitors. You can grade competitors on a scale of: Needs work: The app is not usable, and users aren't getting what they need from this aspect of the app.

Okay: This aspect has some issues, but with some work, it could meet user needs.

Good: This aspect works well, but doesn't always provide users with the necessary information easily.

Outstanding: This aspect feels consistent, and it meets or exceeds the user's needs.

### Step 4: Add your competitors to the template

You should include three to five competitors in your list. You can identify competitors by searching for products like yours online. Put your competitors' names in the Enter competitor cells in column A, located on the left side of your table. Some competitors should be direct and others should be indirect. Record in the template if that competitor is direct or indirect. Do this in the cell to the right of the competitor's name.

As a reminder:

Direct competitors have offerings that are similar to your product and focus on the same audience. Essentially, you're both trying to solve the same problem.

Indirect competitors either have a similar set of offerings, but focus on a different audience or have a different set of offerings and focus on the same audience.

Including both direct and indirect competitors in your audit gives a better picture of the full competitive landscape.

### Step 5: Add competitor information to the template

Let's quickly review our template. The names of your competitors are listed down the left side of the spreadsheet in column A, and the competitor type (direct or indirect) is identified next to the competitor name in column B. Additional general information like location, product offering, price, website, business size, target audience, and unique value proposition is listed in columns C through I.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Competitive audit	Goal: Compare the purchasing experience of each competitor's app as a new user and a returning user.							
	General information							
	Competitor type (direct or indirect)	Location(s)	Product offering	Price (\$ - \$\$\$\$)	Website (URL)	Business size (small, medium, large)	Target audience	Unique value proposition
JavaMate	Direct	Canberra, Australia	Variety of different quality coffees	\$\$	www.javamate.coffee	Large	Working adults	Offers a diverse variety of coffee
BeanTown	Indirect	Sundsvall, Sweden	Rotating selection of high-end coffee	\$\$\$\$	www.freshbrewed.bean	Small	Higher-income clientele who work in the suburbs or from home	Offers a subscription mail-order service

### Step 6: Add research findings to the template

Review each competitor's website and app and insert your findings in the spreadsheet. Remember to include details like what works well, what could be improved, and whether your competitor meets the needs of their target audience. As you explore, start by taking note of your initial feelings about your overall experience. The First Impressions section of the spreadsheet is meant to be a high-level overview of your competitor's products, so focus on your feelings and impressions rather than specific features and functions.

First impressions	
Desktop website experience	Dedicated mobile app experience
<b>Outstanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Website is well-designed and easy to use</li> <li>+ Elegant design with strong branding</li> </ul>	<b>Good</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ App is well-designed and easy to use</li> <li>+ Smooth ordering process</li> <li>- Limited number of features</li> </ul>
<b>Okay</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Modern minimalist design</li> <li>- Limited features available in desktop version</li> </ul>	<b>Good</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Modern minimalist design</li> <li>+ Design is clean and easy to use</li> <li>- Some features don't work as intended</li> </ul>

For the next sections—Interaction, Visual design, and Content—evaluate positive and negative aspects of each category for each competitor, and record your findings in the spaces provided. To refresh your memory on evaluation criteria that's relevant to each category, revisit the [Steps to conduct a competitive audit](#) reading.

UX (rated: needs work, okay, good, or outstanding)						
Interaction				Visual design		Content
Features	Accessibility	User flow	Navigation	Brand identity	Tone	Descriptiveness
<b>Needs work</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ One-click payment that remembers payment info</li> <li>- Lack of other useful features</li> <li>- No loyalty rewards program</li> </ul>	<b>Good</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Audio option for menu available in English and Spanish</li> <li>- Offers 2 different languages</li> </ul>	<b>Good</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Easy and useful order and payment processes</li> <li>+ Straightforward user flow</li> <li>- Not memorable</li> </ul>	<b>Good</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Easy basic navigation</li> <li>+ Clear indication of clickable elements</li> </ul>	<b>Outstanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Strong brand identity including colors, fonts, style, and imagery</li> <li>+ Visual design communicates company ethos</li> </ul>	<b>Sophisticated and informative</b>	<b>Good</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ All key info is present</li> <li>- Too descriptive</li> </ul>
<b>Outstanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ One-click payment with fingerprint recognition</li> <li>+ Ability to create user profile</li> <li>+ Offers premium features for returning users</li> <li>+ A "coffee map" that shows where each month's order comes from</li> </ul>	<b>Outstanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Integrated with voice control software</li> <li>+ Offers 23 different languages</li> </ul>	<b>Good</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Fun and easy to use for account holders</li> <li>- Payment process without an account is repetitive and frustrating</li> </ul>	<b>Okay</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some unfamiliar navigation patterns</li> </ul>	<b>Good</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Visual design communicates company ethos</li> <li>+ Modern and trendy design</li> <li>- Visual design doesn't always support content intuitively</li> </ul>	<b>Engaging, concise, and informative</b>	<b>Needs work</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Too brief at times</li> <li>- Missing information</li> </ul>

It's also helpful to take screenshots and link to them in the spreadsheet. These will be important to have for presenting your findings later on. You can follow the links below for help with adding images to the spreadsheet template.

Add images to Google Sheets: [Add an image to a spreadsheet](#)

Add images in Microsoft Excel: [Insert a picture in Excel for the web](#)

Step 7: Analyze your findings

Try to notice trends and themes.

Ask yourself: What are the similarities and differences between you and your competitors? Is there a feature that your competitors all approach in the same way? Is there a competitor that is doing something completely unique compared to the others? It's a good idea to make note of the findings. You will use this information in your report.


Step 8: Summarize your findings in a report

To use the template for this course item, click the link below and select "Use Template."

Link to template: [competitive audit report template](#).

OR

If you don't have a Google account, you can download the template directly from the attachment below.

 [Google UX Design Certificate - Competitive Audit Report \[Template\]](#)  
DOCX File

To create your competitive audit report, you'll present the insights from your audit in narrative form. Consider the themes and trends you uncovered during your audit while writing your report. There are nine sections in the report template, to be filled out as follows:

- Competitive audit goal(s). Enter the goal(s) from the top of your audit spreadsheet.
- Who are your key competitors? Consult your research and the General information section of your audit and describe each competitor in 1-2 sentences. Be sure to note whether they are direct or indirect competitors.

- . What are the type and quality of competitors' products? Describe what each competitor offers, making note of what they do well and what they could do better. Your answers should be complete, but relatively brief—no more than a short paragraph (2-5 sentences) for each competitor.
- . How do competitors position themselves in the market? Describe each competitor's target audience in a few sentences. Be specific about characteristics of their ideal customers (e.g., age, location, income, spending habits, etc.).
- . How do competitors talk about themselves? Consider each company's value proposition. Summarize what they claim is unique about their offerings in 2-3 sentences.
- . Competitors' strengths. List 2-4 things each competitor does particularly well.
- . Competitors' weaknesses. List 2-4 things each competitor could do better.
- . Gaps. Consider what your competitors fail to do. Identify 2-3 gaps in the market that they do not fill (e.g., design or product features, customization, etc.).
- . Opportunities. Consider ways you might address the market gaps you identified. List 2-3 opportunities for your product to stand out from its competitors.

Step 9: Reflect on the completion of this activity

Does your competitive audit spreadsheet and final report:

Identify three to six key competitors, complete with "direct" and "indirect" designations?

Include clear competitive audit goals at the top?

Review the products that the competitors have to offer?

Include three to six features for comparing the businesses that are based on the competitive audit goal?

Include an analysis of trends among competitors?

Comment on how your competitors position themselves in the market?

Examine what the competition does well and what they could do better?

Consider how the competitors describe themselves?

Describe the competitors' strengths and weaknesses?

Highlight gaps in the competitors' products?

Identify opportunities where your product can stand out and make itself unique?