

Scoping Out the Competition on Craigslist

It is no secret that business owners are constantly in direct competition with other businesses offering similar products or services. Whether advertising and sale of these products or services takes place online or offline, those who are truly successful in the business, are aware of the need to continually study the competition. This article will explain why studying the competition is necessary to the success of any business and will offer insight into how Craigslist can simplify this process for Internet marketers.

Why is it Necessary to Study the Competition?

Studying the competition is one of the most critical aspects to succeeding in any business. Whether you are marketing products or services, it is important to know what types of products are available on the market. This is necessary to ensure the products and services you are offering to your customers is comparable to the products or services offered by competitors. This is important because customers are not likely to either select your products or services or remain loyal to your business if the competitors are offering better products or better prices.

Consider a new lawn care business as an example in why studying the competition is worthwhile. Suppose this new lawn care company in a particular geographical region begins offering lawn trimmings at a price \$40 for an average sized yard with an additional fee of \$25 for edging the lawn. If there are three other existing lawn care businesses in the same region offering lawn trimmings and edging services combined for one fee of \$35, it is not likely the first lawn care business will thrive in this situation. A business owner who is not continually evaluating the competition may be confused by the lack of business. However, if he were to spend some time studying the competition, he would clearly see business is being lost because the other businesses are more affordable and offer a greater range of services for a comparable price.

The above example clearly illustrates how a new business can suffer by failure to evaluate the competition before officially opening for business. Existing businesses can also suffer by not evaluating the competition on a continual basis. Failure to do so may result in the business either offering inferior products or services or offering these products or services at inappropriate prices. When this happens it is not likely the company will remain financially successful.

How does Craigslist make it Easy to Study the Competition?

Those who market their products or services via the Internet can use Craigslist

in a number of ways. Craigslist is a popular advertising option because most advertisement postings are offered free of charge. Additionally, Craigslist receives approximately four billion page views per month making it possible to reach a large audience with minimal effort. While Craigslist makes a great deal of advertising sense, it is important to realize competitors will also realize the value of advertising on Craigslist.

While competitors advertising on Craigslist increase the competition level for the loyalty of customers, it also gives savvy business owners an easy way to study the competition. One way to study the competition is to do a search for your own products or services by using relevant keywords. In doing this you are likely to encounter other businesses offering comparable products and services. This instantly puts you in contact with the competition.

Once you realize who the competition is, you can carefully evaluate their advertisements to learn more about them. Key information which may be gleaned from studying competitors' advertisements may include the quality and type of the products and services they are offering, the prices they are charging and the relevant keywords they are using to promote their products or services.

Internet marketing is driven by content and keywords. It is definitely worthwhile to hire a consultant with search engine (SEO) skills to evaluate the competitors' advertisements and tailor your own advertisement to be optimized for these keywords as well. This will help to ensure potential customers looking for information on products or services you offer are directed to your advertisement and not just the competitions'.

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