

COMPETITOR GRID

“We fell into the trap of thinking, ‘Our people are the best.’ The Competitor Grid kept us honest and drove us to innovate ways to provide better products and services at more competitive prices. It keeps us ahead in a tough industry.” – Insurance company CEO

Compete by *Proving You’re Better*

This is an alternative to an old SWOT analysis. The **Grid** deals with competitive strengths and weaknesses in a structured and streamlined way. You need to be brutally honest about what sets you apart, but it pays off in new and stronger differentiators *that you can prove*. Your sales team will also be equipped to respond to objections. (See the Trends Outline for opportunities and threats.)

Benefits

The Center’s tools minimize omissions, improve communications and foster collaboration. The **Competitor Grid**:

- Helps the organization see where they stand—and stand out
- Stimulates everyone’s competitive spirit
- Shows how everyone contributes to create differentiators that open opportunities

Difficulty Hard
Estimated time required 8-12 hours per market

Instructions

Get the managers to agree on your top three competitors, then visit their websites. Imagine having to sell to a skeptical CFO. Have The Index open for ideas.

1. Talk about the large and small *provable* differentiators. Put a “?” if you can’t prove it.
2. Edit the differentiator list: They might be narrower than you’d thought.
3. In the far left, mark how a typical buyer would rate a differentiator’s importance.
4. Take the time to research the differentiators. See 2.1.4 Competitor Analysis.
5. Take action: focus on where you have a **D**isadvantage of **H**igh Importance.

Subscribers can contact the Center for assistance.

Make It Better

Member should share ideas for improving any of the Center’s tools and how they’re taught and formatted. It’s also great to suggest new applications or brand-new tools.

SAMPLE
How do we compete—really?
12/22/2017

? Don't know
D We're at a Disadvantage
N Our position is Neutral
A We have an Advantage

COMPETITORS: Home Construction National Builders General Contractors

PRODUCT	Home Construction	National Builders	General Contractors	DEFINITIONS, COMMENTS
Services: self-performed work	N	D	D	Clients care only about cost
Services: small projects (one source)	?	D	D	
Services: design/build and other delivery methods	N	N	N	Rarely done; Owners usually
Customer service: project team	N	A	A	Stable of specialized staff
Customer service: communications	N	?	?	
Customer service: field staff's Owner relations	N	?	?	
Quality: craftsmanship (meeting specs)	N	?	?	More scrutiny with repeat cus
Timeliness: submittals (paperwork)	N	A	A	I.e., jump through hoops...
Timeliness: project deadlines	N	A	A	Good story how we get to the
PRICE				
Basic price: estimating accuracy and speed	N	D	D	Cost of General Conditions; u
Option pricing: change order pricing	N	A	A	Good detail, but slow turnarou
Payment terms: standard contracts with Owner	D	D	D	I.e., implications of indemnity
Other: bonding strength	N	N	N	E.g., insurance requirements;
Other: transparency of bids and prices	N	A	A	
PLACE				
Territory for project delivery	D	A	D	More important for smaller pr

SAMPLE
 How do we compete--really?
 12/3/2018

? Don't know
 D We're at a Disadvantage
 N Our position is Neutral
 A We have an Advantage

priority (H,M,L)
 notes

COMPETITORS: Acme Construction
 National Builders
 General Contractors
 DEFINITIONS, COMMENTS

		Acme Construction	National Builders	General Contractors	
L	Services: self-performed work	N	D	D	Clients care only about cost implications.
M	Services: small projects (one source)	?	D	D	
L	Services: design/build and other delivery methods	N	N	N	Rarely done; Owners usually have designs
H	Customer service: project team	N	A	A	Stable of specialized staff
M	Customer service: communications	N	?	?	
H	Customer service: field staff's Owner relations	A	A	A	
H	Quality: craftsmanship (meeting specs)	N	?	?	More scrutiny with repeat customers
H	Timeliness: submittals (paperwork)	A	A	A	i.e., jump through hoops.
H	Timeliness: project deadlines	N	A	A	Good story how we get to the end of the job.

PRICE

H	1 Basic price	N	D	D	Cost of General Conditions; what makes up price?
H	Basic price: estimating accuracy and speed	N	A	A	
L	Option pricing: change order pricing	A	A	A	Good detail, but slow turnaround.
L	Payment terms: standard contracts with Owner	D	D	D	e.g., implications of indemnity. How positioned?
L	Payment terms: contracts with subs	A	A	A	Esp. insurance requirements; needs to be explained
L	Other: bonding strength	N	N	N	
H	Other: transparency of bids and prices	N	A	A	

PLACE

H	2 Territory for project delivery	D	A	D	More important for smaller projects
M	Territory for project management (ability to travel)	N	A	N	
M	Market presence	D	A	N	i.e., there's an office in the state, in town or nearby

PERCEPTION

H	Clarity of message: client list	D	D	N	
L	Advertising: website	D	D	D	
M	PR: community relations	A	A	A	Using local talent; unionization an issue; open process
L	PR: conferences, trade shows, associations	D	A	?	
H	Sales management: interviewing (new client)	?	?	?	i.e., prep, team, materials, time.
M	Client communication between projects, with executives	A	A	A	Mostly by Jim.

PEOPLE

H	Trade skills training program	A	N	A	
M	Training in standard PM process	A	A	N	Most competitors don't have this discipline
L	Employee ownership	A	A	A	
M	Family business	N	N	A	This is an advantage with family business clients
L	Rotation through project types	A	N	A	Some clients appreciate this, others don't

NOTES

- 1 Cost and pricing factors include not self-performing work and relationships with local subs
- 2 Rate disadvantage in non-union markets