

Monitor Your Competitive Landscape

One of the most critical tasks we often fail to execute is the consistent monitoring of our competitors. We fall short on this chore for a number of reasons, primarily because we are so wrapped up in engaging our own business plan that we don't allocate the necessary time or manpower to do the constant market updates we require. Instead, we make certain assumptions based on our own experiences inside the market, assuming times are tough for competitors when they are tough for us, and that its business as usual, when things are normal.

This could be a critical mistake. Monitoring our competitors not only gives us insight into what they are doing – the kinds of products they are offering and the markets they are targeting, but also the condition of the market and defensive and offensive positions we need to assume.

The condition of the market can be reflected in a number of visible factors, such as the depth of their product offering, the manner they are positioning their products (product claims), their pricing structure, and, of course, their performance. Their reactions to your own market plays will reveal to you how you need to respond, whether by protecting your client base through additional offerings or other strategies (such as pricing or renewed marketing effort). Similarly you may find that you want to take the offensive because their response to your actions has been weak or non-existent – perhaps because they are failing to monitor you to the same degree you are monitoring them.

Gee...that sounds like a market advantage to us.