

# How to 'DIY' Cremation Competitive Analysis

By Welton Hong



Understanding what your cremation competitors are doing when it comes to marketing—and what might be working best for them—helps you position your firm more competitively and engage with more potential clientele. But most small businesses don't engage in competitive analyses. Common reasons for avoiding this important marketing step include worries about the expense, lack of knowledge on how to do it, and the perception that you need special access and tools to conduct competitor research.

While you can certainly pay a marketing agency or other expert to conduct research and analysis for you—and there are benefits to going that route—you also could simply “DIY”: do it yourself.

## 1. Determine who your competitors are.

For local firms, this step is easy. Simply make a list of other firms providing cremation services in the area.

You can break the list into direct competitors—those that provide services very similar to yours—and less-direct competitors. If you have a funeral home that focuses on higher-end “cremation with a service” offerings, other funeral homes would be direct competitors. But low-cost direct cremation businesses are also effectively competitors.

## 2. Research your competitors.

For each competitor, create a summary that includes:

- Data points such as name, location, and how long they've been in business
- What types of services they provide, including various options and packages
- Any information you can glean or estimate about price points, even if it's just a guess on whether they mostly

provide affordable or luxury services

- Conclusions about their target audience you can draw from their website, brochures, and other available information
- Any other information you discover that might be relevant to comparing your business and marketing to theirs

Depending on the size of your market, you might need to limit the number of competitors you research to the top 10. If that's the case, choose the 10 firms in your area most likely to compete with yours for the same clientele.

## 3. Review each competitor's marketing presence, online and off.

Start by summarizing offline marketing. Have you seen the competitor's ads on television or heard about them on the radio? Do they show up in local newspapers? Record what you know. Then look at the competitor's presence online. At minimum:

- Browse each firm's website and answer the following questions:

- What types of pages does it have?
  - Landing?
  - Blog posts?
  - Image galleries?
  - Other?
- What content topics are covered?
- How long on average are the landing pages and blog posts?
- What types of calls to action are used?
- Are there external links, and where do they go?
- Does anything stand out to you as especially effective or helpful?
- Does anything stand out as questionable or annoying?

Note the social media profiles each competitor has, whether it's active on the platform, and what kind of content is posted.

- See if the competitor is using Google My Business and how.
- Consider whether you've seen the competitor's ads when browsing the web.

The answers to all these questions help you understand how competitors are marketing online. But you also want to know whether those efforts are fruitful. Here are two ways to find out:

- **Search keywords you think people might use to find your services.** Note which of your competitors show up in the top three Google results, in search ads, or in search engine page results sections such as People Also Ask. That can indicate a competitor's on-site search engine optimization is strong. Pay closer attention to what those competitors are doing.
- **Use a traffic checker.** You can find out how much traffic a site is getting with traffic checker tools such as SEMrush—even if the sites belong to someone else. Some of these tools, such as Amazon's Alexa Ranking tool, are free but offer less accurate results. Tools offered by organizations such as SEMrush and Ahrefs are more accurate but do cost money to use.

Finally, use a tool to get a quick grade or summary of how well your cremation competitors' sites are structured. Free tools for this purpose include Google Page Speed Insights and HubSpot's Website Grader. This information helps you understand how much effort other firms are putting into their sites and how well they might work for visitors.

#### 4. Identify strengths and weaknesses for each competitor.


Take time to review all the information you gathered about each competitor. List at least one thing each competitor is doing better than your firm is—or something they're doing that you're not doing at all. Then list at least one weakness or "hole" for each competitor. This might be something they're not doing well or something they aren't doing that your firm is.

Consider your list to determine if there are repeating themes. For example, if half of your cremation competitors are weak in an area your firm is strong in, you might have identified a unique value proposition you can build on in your marketing. But if all or most of your competitors are doing something you're not with regard to online marketing, you might have identified an area to work on.

#### 5. Use the information to bolster your cremation marketing.

Look at your marketing efforts with the competitor analysis conclusions in mind. What can you change to market your services more competitively?

For example, if you only invest in online marketing and your competitors are showing up on radio and in local direct mailers, it's probably time to branch out. And if you don't have a blog but all your top competitors do, you may need more content on your website.

It's really that simple. A DIY competitor marketing analysis does take quite a bit of time, but the information you gain can be invaluable to marketing success. 



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