

How Competition Website Analysis Reveals What Your Clients' Rivals Are Doing Right

Every SEO agency has been there. You pitch a new client, show them a roadmap, talk about rankings and traffic growth, and they nod along. Then they ask the question that makes every account manager sweat: "What makes you sure you can beat what our competitors are already doing?"

That question stings because a lot of SEO work is built on assumptions. You guess at what the competition is doing, patch together a strategy from a few screenshots, and hope the data backs you up later. But there is a better way. A disciplined approach to competition website analysis turns guesswork into a repeatable process. It gives your agency the kind of hard evidence that wins client retainers and keeps them signed month after month.

I have spent years working inside agencies, watching account teams scramble before quarterly reviews. The ones who consistently hold onto clients are not the ones with the flashiest presentation decks. They are the ones who show up with data that explains exactly why a rival outranks their client for a high-value keyword. That kind of insight does not come from gut feelings. It comes from a structured, ongoing practice of studying competitor sites with the right tools and a clear methodology.

Why Agencies Need More Than Surface-Level Spying

Most SEOs already peek at competitor sites. You visit a rival's homepage, notice a new feature, check their meta titles, maybe run a quick domain authority lookup. That is useful for a rough picture, but it is not enough to justify a client retainer or to guide a six-month content plan. Surface-level checks miss the deeper signals: shifts in backlink strategies, content gaps that are quietly draining traffic, changes in technical structure that affect crawl efficiency.

Real [competition website analysis](#) goes several layers deeper. It means pulling back the curtain on the competitors' organic and paid strategies, understanding their content production cadence, and identifying the specific pages that drive the majority of their traffic. When you can show a client that their main competitor gained forty percent of their new domain authority from a single guest-post campaign six months ago, you are not just reporting. You are delivering actionable intelligence. That is the difference between a monthly report that gathers dust and a strategic document that earns a seat at the table.

The Tool Stack That Makes It Possible

You cannot do this kind of analysis with just one tool. The best results come from combining several data sources, each covering a different angle of the same competitive landscape.

SEMrush is usually the starting point for most agencies. Its domain-versus-domain comparison lets you see keyword overlap, traffic volume estimates, and changes in organic positions over time. I have found that the "Keyword Gap" tool inside SEMrush is particularly useful for spotting terms your client's competitors rank for but your client does not. Those are the low-hanging fruit that often justify a content expansion project.

Ahrefs shines when you need to understand backlink profiles. A solid backlink audit on a competitor site can reveal which publications, blogs, or resource pages are driving their strongest links. You can then prioritise outreach targets based on real data rather than guesswork. Ahrefs also offers a "Content Gap" feature that cross-references the keywords where multiple competitors rank but your client does not. That is pure gold for content strategy.

Moz still has a place in the stack, especially for its domain authority metric. While domain authority is not a ranking factor Google uses directly, it remains a useful relative benchmark when comparing sites within the same niche. Pair it with **Majestic SEO** for a second opinion on link trust flow and citation flow. Different tools index the web differently, so cross-referencing gives you a truer picture.

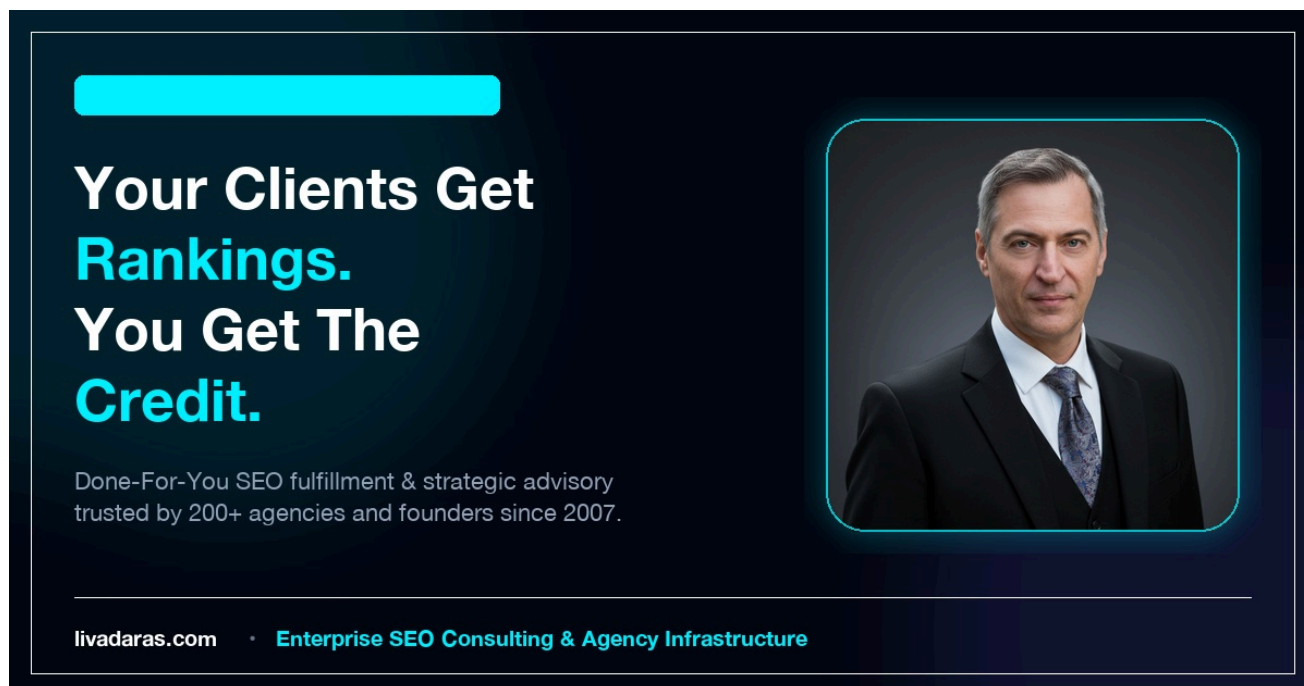
For traffic estimation and audience behaviour, **SimilarWeb** provides a broad view of how competitors acquire visitors. It breaks down traffic by source, direct, search, social, referral, paid, and even estimates the average visit duration. These numbers are directional, not exact, but they help you spot major trends. If a competitor suddenly spikes in referral traffic, you can investigate which site sent them that boost.

SpyFu is often overlooked, but it is invaluable for understanding paid search competition. It shows the exact keywords your competitors are bidding on, their ad copy history, and even estimated budgets. That data can help your agency decide whether to compete on paid terms or to focus organic efforts on keywords where the paid competition is too expensive.

On the technical side, **Screaming Frog** lets you crawl competitor sites to check for structural weaknesses. You can see their redirect chains, meta tag quality, heading structure, and page size. Combine that with **Google PageSpeed Insights** and **Lighthouse** scores to compare page speed. If a rival loads faster on mobile, that is a concrete technical issue you can flag for your client's development team.

Finally, **Google Search Console** and **Google Analytics** are your client's own data sources. You cannot see a competitor's internal analytics, but you can benchmark your client's performance

against industry averages and competitor estimates from the other tools. The combination of first-party and third-party data is where the real insights emerge.



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Structuring the Workflow for Client Retainers

Running a one-time competition website analysis is fine for a one-off project, but the real value for SEO agencies comes from making this analysis a recurring part of the retainer. When you deliver a fresh batch of competitive intelligence every month, the client sees you as a strategic partner, not a vendor who just tweaks meta tags.

I recommend a simple monthly cadence. Week one: pull fresh data from SEMrush, Ahrefs, and SimilarWeb for the top three to five competitors. Week two: run a backlink audit and a content gap analysis. Week three: check technical metrics using Screaming Frog and Lighthouse. Week four: compile the findings into a short report that highlights three key opportunities, backed by data, and present it alongside the regular traffic report.

The format matters as much as the content. Clients are busy. They do not want a fifty-page PDF. They want a clear summary that says: "Here is what your competitor did last month, here is why it matters, and here is exactly what we should do next." That kind of clarity builds trust, and trust is what keeps retainers alive.

The Hidden Value: Finding What Competitors Are Not Doing

Most competition website analysis focuses on what rivals do well. That is natural. But some of the best opportunities come from identifying what competitors are ignoring. When you run a

keyword gap analysis and find twenty high-intent keywords that none of your client's competitors are targeting, you have found a goldmine. Those are terms you can own with relatively little resistance.

Similarly, a content gap analysis might reveal that competitors have strong backlink profiles but very weak internal linking structures. Or that they publish frequently but never update old posts. These weaknesses are opportunities for your agency to position your client's site as the more thorough, more useful resource. It is not enough to copy what rivals do. The real edge comes from doing what they overlook.

Measuring the Impact on Client Retainers

When your agency delivers consistent competition website analysis, the results show up in retention numbers. Clients who receive quarterly competitive intelligence alongside their performance reports are less likely to churn. They see the value of your ongoing work because you keep proving that you understand their market better than they do themselves.

One concrete metric to track is the number of new keyword opportunities you surface per quarter. If you can show a client that your analysis uncovered fifty keywords they were not ranking for, and that you have already moved them into the top thirty for ten of those, you have a strong case for renewing the retainer. Another metric is the improvement in domain authority growth relative to the top competitor. If you can demonstrate that your client's domain authority is closing the gap with the market leader, the client will stay.

Just be careful not to oversell the data. Tools like SEMrush and Ahrefs provide estimates, not guarantees. A traffic volume number from SimilarWeb is an approximation, not a precise count. Always present competitive data with appropriate caveats. Clients respect honesty. And when you later exceed those estimates, you look like a hero rather than a lucky guesser.

Competition website analysis, done right, is more than a checkbox on an SEO audit. It is the engine that powers smarter strategy, stronger pitches, and longer client relationships. The tools are widely available. The methodology is straightforward. The only thing separating the agencies that thrive from the ones that struggle is the discipline to run this analysis every single month, without fail, and to present the findings in a way that makes the client feel informed and ahead of the game.

If your agency is not already doing this, start with one client. Pick their three toughest competitors. Run the full stack, SEMrush, Ahrefs, Moz, Screaming Frog, SimilarWeb, SpyFu, Google PageSpeed Insights, Lighthouse, Majestic SEO, and compile a single-page brief. Show the client what you found. Watch how their attitude changes when you speak in specifics rather

than generalities. That is the moment when a vendor becomes a partner. And that is the moment that turns a monthly retainer into a long-term relationship.