## The Best Competitive Intelligence Resources

The next step is to determine how to create a competitive analysis framework through tools/data sources. In this section, we have outlined different sources of competitive analysis that give your business more advantage:

### 1. Company Intelligence Data

It is general information that is available publicly, and all that you have to do is pick one reliable source. Depending on what you are looking for, they could be a treasure cove of information. Here is what you get from each source:

* **Annual reports** - All publicly traded companies publish annual reports. It contains images, graphs, management commentary, and detailed financials.

* [**SEC Filings**](https://www.sec.gov/edgar/searchedgar/companysearch.html) - These are mandatory statements that public companies in the US need to file with Securities and Exchange Commission and are reliable sources of financial data since 1994.

* [**LinkedIn**](https://www.linkedin.com/) - While it began as a professional networking site that let you connect with co-workers and make connections with business associates, it now allows you to blog, post, and share information. LinkedIn now even lets companies host their pages and use it as a medium to communicate to a broader audience.

* [**CompanyCheck**](https://companycheck.co.uk/) - An online database of over 7 million UK based companies that lets you do unlimited searches including addresses, registration details, key financials, and director records.

* [**Hoover’s**](http://www.hoovers.com/) - A business intelligence company that has been around since 1990, it is used for information on public and private companies, executives, industries, and current events.

* [**Reuters**](https://www.thomsonreuters.com/en/about-us.html) - It is a Canada-based multinational mass media and information firm that traces its origin back to 1851. Reuters provides a summary and detailed information about a company's operating segments and financial metrics.

* [**GlassDoor**](https://www.glassdoor.co.in/index.htm?countryRedirect=true) - If you are a fan of user-created content as a source of company information, then GlassDoor should be on your list. It hosts information such as company reviews, interview questions, office pictures, salary details, and employment experience.

* [**PrivCo**](https://www.privco.com/) - A rare source of information on private companies, PrivCo provides valuable data on deal history, key contacts, and ownership that are notoriously difficult to obtain online.

* [**World Market Intelligence**](https://www.marketresearch.com/World-Market-Intelligence-v3764/?progid=89048) - It provides qualitative information on valuation, funding, acquisitions, investors, and executives for around 75,000 companies.

* ​​​​​​**[GlobalData](http://www.gdresearchcenter.com/)** - A data analytics and media company that offers subscription-based information and consultancy services aimed at consumer, technology, and healthcare companies.

* ​​​​​​**[Timetric](https://www.globaldata.com/timetric/)** - This London-headquartered company provides information on insurance, construction and infrastructure industries.

* [**SGA Talent**](http://sgatalent.com/sga-executivetracker-live/) - This organization provides a phone-verified database on executives with names, titles, emails, direct dials as well as live links to their profiled executives.

Apart from SEC which is a government website, most of these sources are subscription-based. So, choose your research sources with care.

### 2. Financial Data

The best place to obtain financial data is the company's annual reports or exchange filings such as the SEC. Within these, look for information in financial statements of the company such as:

* Profit & Loss Statement - For data on revenues, expenses, and profits.
* Balance Sheet - For data on assets and liabilities.
* Shareholders Equity - For data on share capital, reserves, net income and dividends.
* Cash Flows - For data on cash flow from operations, investing and financing.
* Statement of Fixed Assets - For data on capital expenditure, fixed assets, depreciation.

This competitive analysis report reveals the financial health of your competitors and crunching these numbers will help executives to determine what needs to be done to match their prowess.

### 3. Product Comparison

Product feature intelligence templates can be created using data from your competitor's websites, case studies, digital brochures, product videos, and customer testimonials. There are a host of online tools as well that let you compare prices, features, and discounts. Here are a few:

* [**Pronto**](https://www.pronto.com/) - A handy price comparison website for store owners.

* [**CamelCamelCamel**](https://camelcamelcamel.com/) - A price comparison tool for Amazon that tells you list price, current price, and average price.

* [**ShopMania**](https://www.shopmania.com/) - A price comparison platform that lets you see the deals and promotions within your country.

* [**Price Runner**](https://www.pricerunner.com/) - A price comparison website for UK-based establishments that compares sites such as Amazon, ASOS, House of Fraser, and other top brands.

* [**Google Shopping**](https://www.google.com/shopping) - A simple, yet useful platform for store owners looking to find competing products and compare their pricing. Businesses can even add their products to drive more traffic to their website.

* [**G2Crowd**](https://www.g2crowd.com/) - A grid scoring system-based platform that helps business buyers shortlist and compare solutions. It uses peer reviews to rank software that B2B buyers and analysts will find useful.

* [**Capterra**](https://www.capterra.com/) - It connects buyers with appropriate vendors and lists products in about 300 categories along with purchase guides, user reviews, and blogs.

* [**PCMag**](https://www.pcmag.com/) - A mélange of hardware and software reviews along with opinion sections, technology trends, DIYs, and How-Tos.

**Useful tip** - To get an accurate picture of your competitor’s products, you could become a customer and buy their products. Try their products/services for yourself and see what differentiates them versus you. If you are a product manager in an airline company, besides doing your internet research, try flying in your competitor’s flights to experience their service first-hand. Don’t blame us if they don’t let you board their flights :).

### 4. Strategic Reports

This information is classified and can be obtained only through non-conventional sources such as:

* **Surveys** - Ask partners/resellers of your competitor why customers crave for their products. You could even ask their customers for this information using surveys and reward them if they are willing to part with this information.

* **Analyst Reports** - There are research firms that specialize in such qualitative information. The most popular ones are [Nielsen](https://www.nielsen.com/in/en.html), [Gartner](https://www.gartner.com/en), [IDC](https://www.idc.com/), [Everest](https://www.everestgrp.com/), [Forrester](https://go.forrester.com/), and [HFS](https://www.hfsresearch.com/) amongst others. These companies publish their research on industry trends, top players, changing consumer tastes and preferences. For example, Gartner’s Magic Quadrant gives us a wide-angle view of your competitors' relative market positions.

* **Expert Interviews** - There are experts such as independent market analysts, equity research analysts, and journalists who track industries, companies, executives, and customers. Engaging with them in interviews could reveal insights into your competition.

* **Reviews** - Forrester’s [research](https://go.forrester.com/blogs/the-ways-and-means-of-b2b-buyer-journey-maps-were-going-deep-at-forresters-b2b-forum/) tells us that 68% of customers want to research on their own online before making a purchase and 60% prefer not to interact with a sales rep as their primary source. In B2C scenarios, product reviews form a vital component of a competitor’s strategy to succeed. Shoppers on Amazon invariably read reviews before buying them.

* **Events** - Events, conferences, trade shows, seminars, symposiums, industry meetups are extremely instrumental when it comes to knowing the ground reality. Get out of your office to understand your competitors' perception that people have.

For more details on review sites, here is HubSpot’s blog on [22 Customer Review Sites for Collecting Business & Product Reviews](https://blog.hubspot.com/service/customer-review-sites).

**Useful tip -**  Obtaining this data could be difficult and time-consuming because it is unorganized, so plan for it early. Besides, these could also prove more expensive than other means of data gathering.

### 5. Competitive Marketing Intelligence

Let’s face it - there are probably millions of web pages out there, and that makes compiling marketing intelligence reports an unenviable task. However, the good news is that there are many tools that you can leverage such as:

* [**SEMRush**](https://www.semrush.com/) - This platform can give you a lot of insanely useful data about your competitors’ online marketing efforts - identify different trends within your niche, earmark a variety of keywords, track search traffic, audit your competitors’ on-page SEO, check their rankings and backlinks.

* [**Ahrefs**](https://ahrefs.com/) - This is a close competitor to SEMRush and is known to be a swiss-army knife for marketing warriors. What started in 2011 as a backlink analysis tool, now lets you analyze behind-the-scenes work that your competitors have been doing such as backlink analysis, rank tracking, review keyword rankings positions, and content analysis.

* [**Moz**](https://moz.com/) - Before you start using Moz, we recommend you read this [post](https://sparktoro.com/blog/moz-returns-to-seo/) by Rand Fishkin about its origins. It is a great tool to snoop on your competitors for their backlinks, content creation strategies, on-page optimization, and keyword ranking. One of their most popular features is the MozBar, a web browser extension that nestles on your browser and lets you analyze domain authority and page authority for every keyword that you’re targeting.

* [**BuzzSumo**](https://buzzsumo.com/) - A monitoring and research tool that lets you find content that is highly shared by your competitors on social media know topic-based influencers, set alerts for brands, keywords, authors and domains. Not only do you know who is leading for a particular keyword, but you also learn new topics that you can go after.

* [**Serpstat**](https://serpstat.com/) - Another tool that takes on the above-listed platforms is Serpstat. It gives you essential metric information such as keyword search volume, backlinks, filter toponyms, the cost for it, and difficulty level. Enter the URL of your competitors to know their ranking, their keyword elements, and you will notice all this information come in handy.

 The links in Section 5 are generally paid sites. Look for some unpaid sites for the purposes of your paper.