Competitor Analysis SOP

1. Purpose

The purpose of this SOP is to establish a consistent and efficient process for analyzing our micro-project client's key competitors. The insights gained will inform the client's strategic decisions, improve their competitive positioning, and identify opportunities for growth.

2. Responsibilities

- **TrustedPMO Consultant:** Responsible for initiating, conducting, and reporting results using this competitor analysis process.
- **Client Contact(s):** Responsible for contributing specific data and insights related to their area of expertise.

3. Procedure

Step 1: Define Scope and Objectives

1. **Conduct Kick-off Meeting:** Involve key stakeholders (e.g., relevant product, sales, marketing leads at client company) to align on objectives, competitor prioritization, and specific information needs for the current analysis cycle.
    - **Objective Setting:** Clearly define the objectives of the competitor analysis. Examples:
        - i. Identify new market opportunities
        - ii. Refine pricing strategy
        - iii. Improve marketing effectiveness
        - iv. Understand competitor product development
        - v. Defend against competitive threats
    - **Competitor Identification:**
        - i. List key direct and indirect competitors.
        - ii. Consider both established players and emerging competitors.
        - iii. Prioritize competitors based on market share, perceived threat, and strategic relevance (target a manageable list of 2-3 for in-depth analysis).
    - **Geographic Scope:**
        - i. Specify the geographic area of focus (local, regional, or national).
2. **Document Micro Project Scope:** Record objectives, prioritized competitor list, and geographic scope in the designated Competitor Analysis Micro Project Scope Template (Appendix A).

Step 2: Gather Information

Populate the *Competitor Analysis Template* (Appendix B) with the gathered information.

1. **Website Review:**

- ○ Access the competitor's website and systematically review the following:
    - ■ Products/Services: List features, pricing, and target audience.
    - ■ Value Proposition: Identify the core problem they solve and their key messaging.
    - ■ Target Audience: Determine who they are trying to reach based on language, imagery, and case studies.
    - ■ Content Marketing: Analyze their blog, resources, and other content.
    - ■ Website Usability: Assess ease of navigation and mobile optimization.
    - ■ Calls to Action: Note the main CTAs.
  - ○ Record findings in the Competitor Analysis Template.
2. **Social Media Analysis:**
   - ○ Identify the social media platforms used by the competitor.
   - ○ Analyze their content strategy, engagement levels, and audience demographics.
   - ○ Look for sponsored posts and advertising campaigns.
   - ○ Record findings in the Competitor Analysis Template.
3. **Online Reviews & Mentions:**
   - ○ Search for reviews on Google Reviews, Yelp, Trustpilot, and industry-specific review sites.
   - ○ Search for mentions in relevant forums and online communities.
   - ○ Analyze the sentiment (positive, negative, neutral) and identify recurring themes.
   - ○ Record findings in the Competitor Analysis Template.
4. **Financial Information (if available):**
   - ○ For public companies, review annual reports (10-K), quarterly reports (10-Q), and investor presentations.
   - ○ For private companies, use resources like Crunchbase, Dun & Bradstreet, or industry reports to estimate revenue, funding, and employee count.
   - ○ Record findings in the Competitor Analysis Template.
5. **Sales & Marketing Materials:**
   - ○ Download brochures, whitepapers, ebooks, and other materials from the competitor's website.
   - ○ Search for webinars and presentations online.
   - ○ Sign up for their email list to analyze their email marketing strategy.
   - ○ Record findings in the Competitor Analysis Template.
6. **Technology Stack (if applicable):**
   - ○ Use tools like BuiltWith to identify the technologies used on their website.
   - ○ Record findings in the Competitor Analysis Template.
7. **Internal Stakeholder Interviews:**
   - ○ Conduct brief interviews with key internal personnel (e.g., sales, customer service, product development) to gather firsthand competitive intelligence, anecdotes, and customer feedback related to competitors.
8. **Product/Service Experience (if feasible):**
   - ○ Where appropriate and ethical, experience the competitor's product/service firsthand. This could involve making a small purchase, signing up for a trial, or going through their sales/support process. Document the experience.

Step 3: Analyze and Summarize

1. **Analysis Report:** Generate a *Competitor Analysis Report* (Appendix C) with the following sections
   a. Executive Summary: Brief overview of the key findings and recommendations.
   b. Competitive Landscape Overview: Summary of the key trends and challenges in the competitive landscape.
   c. Competitor Profiles: Key information from the detailed profiles of each competitor developed using the Competitor Analysis Template in Step 2.

Step 4: Identify Key Insights and Actionable Items

1. **Review the Competitor Analysis Report.**
2. **Brainstorm potential actions** based on the insights. Examples:
   ○ Develop new product features.
   ○ Adjust pricing strategies.
   ○ Refine marketing messaging.
   ○ Improve customer service processes.
   ○ Target specific market segments.
3. **Prioritize actionable items** based on impact and feasibility after discussions with Client Contact(s).
4. **Documentation:** Document the actionable items in an *Competitor Analysis Report Template* (Appendix C).

4. Tools & Resources

- **Competitor Analysis Micro Project Scope Template (Appendix A)**
- **Competitor Analysis Template (Appendix B)**
- **Competitor Analysis Report Template (Appendix C)**
- **Website Analysis Tools:** BuiltWith, SimilarWeb
- **SEO/Keyword Research Tools:** SEMrush (free version), Ahrefs (free version)
- **Social Media Monitoring Tools:** Native platform analytics, Hootsuite (free version)
- **Industry Reports and Market Research Databases:** As needed
- **TrustedPMO AI Tools:** As needed

5. Training

All personnel involved in competitor analysis will receive training on this SOP. Training will cover:

- The importance of competitor analysis
- The steps involved in the process
- How to use the tools and resources
- How to interpret the data and identify actionable insights

Appendix A: Competitor Analysis Micro Project Scope Template

1. Objectives

- [Objective 1 for the competitor analysis]
- [Objective 2 for the competitor analysis]
- …

2. Prioritized Competitors

Competitor Name	Rationale for Selection

3. Geographic Scope

- Scope: [Local / Regional / National]

- Specific Regions (if applicable):

4. Stakeholders Involved in Kick-off

Name	Role

5. Notes from Kick-off Meeting

[List key notes here]

Appendix B: Competitor Analysis Template (Example)

(Include a table with columns as described in the previous response: Company Overview, Products/Services, Pricing Strategy, Marketing Strategy, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, Technology Stack, Customer Service, Market Share, etc.)
Example entries with guide questions

Company Overview: Guiding Questions:

- What is their stated mission and vision?
- How long have they been in business?
- Where are they headquartered and where do they operate?
- *What is their estimated employee count and revenue?*

Products/Service: Guiding Questions:

- What are the key features and benefits of their comparable product/service?
- What customer needs or pain points is their comparable product/service addressing?
- What is the perceived quality of their products/service?
- What are the common add-ons or bundled options?
- How frequently do they update or release new products/service?
- Do they offer customization or personalization options?

Customer Segments: Guiding Questions:

- Who are their primary customer types (e.g., individuals, businesses, enterprises)?
- What industries or demographics do they target?
- Are they focused on B2B, B2C, or both?
- *How do they segment their market (e.g., by size, location, behavior)?*

Pricing Strategy: Guiding Questions:

- What is their primary pricing model (e.g., subscription, one-time, freemium, tiered)?
- How does their pricing compare to client's and other competitors?
- What discounts or promotions are common?
- How frequently do they offer them?
- Do they offer flexible payment options?
- Is their pricing transparent?
- Are there hidden fees?

Marketing Strategy: Guiding Questions:

- What is their core marketing message? What value proposition do they emphasize?
- How do they position themselves in the market?
- What is the tone and style of their marketing communications?

- What is their social media engagement rate (likes, comments, shares)?
- What is the frequency and type of content they publish (blogs, videos, etc.)?
- *Do they run referral or affiliate programs?*
- *What marketing channels are they actively using (e.g., social media, search engine optimization, content marketing, email marketing, paid advertising, influencer marketing)?*
- *What keywords are they targeting in their SEO efforts?*

Sales Strategy: Guiding Questions:

- What sales channels do they use (e.g., direct, partners, resellers, online)?
- Do they have an in-house sales team or rely on external partners?
- Do they offer demos, free trials, or consultations?
- *What is their sales funnel or process like?*
- *What methods do they use to generate and convert leads?*
- *How do they handle customer onboarding and retention?*

Business Model and Performance: Guiding Questions:

- What are they consistently praised for in customer reviews?
- What aspects of their business model seem to be particularly effective?
- What resources or capabilities do they possess that give them a competitive advantage?
- Do they have a strong brand reputation?
- What are they consistently criticized for in customer reviews?
- Are there any gaps in their product or service offerings?
- Are there customer behavior shifts that may reduce demand for their offerings?
- Are they leveraging automation or artificial intelligence?
- *What areas of their operations appear to be inefficient or lacking?*
- *Do they have strong relationships with key partners or suppliers?*
- *What patents, trademarks, or proprietary assets do they hold?*

Customer Service: Guiding Questions:

- What is their customer service reputation based on online reviews?
- What channels do they use for customer service (e.g., phone, email, chat, social media)?
- Do they offer self-service resources (e.g., FAQs, knowledge base)?
- Do they seem to prioritize customer satisfaction?
- *What is their average response time for customer inquiries?*

Appendix C: Competitor Analysis Report Template

Competitor Analysis Report
Company Analyzed: [Client Company Name]
Date: [Insert Date]
Prepared By: [Analyst Name]

1. Company Overview

Guidance: Summarize only key differences in company age, size, global presence, and mission/vision. Highlight elements that may influence strategy or market positioning.

Example:
[Competitor A] has been in operation for over 20 years and operates across multiple continents, unlike [Client Company], which remains regionally focused. [Competitor B], while newer, articulates a more innovation-driven mission, contrasting with [Client Company]'s customer-centric positioning.

2. Product/Service Offering

Guidance: Focus on distinct differentiators in features, release cycles, perceived quality, and customization. Comment on alignment with customer needs.

Example:
[Client Company] offers a more flexible product suite with customization options lacking in [Competitor A]. However, [Competitor B] updates its offerings more frequently, which may appeal to tech-savvy customers. All three target similar pain points, but [Client Company] differentiates through bundled services that improve value perception.

3. Customer Segments

Guidance: Highlight differences in customer targeting strategies, B2B/B2C focus, or market segmentation approach.

Example:
[Competitor A] targets large enterprises, unlike [Client Company], which focuses on mid-sized businesses. [Competitor B] spans both B2B and B2C, allowing for a broader customer base. This may position them better for scale, though [Client Company]'s niche focus provides deeper customer intimacy.

4. Pricing Strategy

Guidance: Compare pricing models, transparency, discounting practices, and how each aligns with perceived value.

Example:
[Client Company] uses a transparent, tiered pricing model, in contrast to [Competitor A]'s freemium approach, which can lead to hidden costs. [Competitor B] is competitively priced but frequently runs promotional offers, a tactic [Client Company] does not currently employ.

5. Marketing Strategy

Guidance: Describe tone, channels used, message positioning, and relative brand visibility. Emphasize differences in marketing maturity and reach.

Example:
[Client Company] maintains a professional, value-driven tone, while [Competitor A] adopts a more conversational style on social media. [Competitor B] excels in content marketing and SEO, consistently ranking for key terms where [Client Company] has limited visibility. Referral programs are also more aggressively used by competitors.

6. Sales Strategy

Guidance: Comment on the sales approach, support mechanisms, and lead conversion practices. Highlight differences in customer experience.

Example:
[Competitor A] relies heavily on partner resellers, which contrasts with [Client Company]'s direct sales model. [Competitor B] offers demos and free trials, enhancing their lead conversion funnel. [Client Company] may benefit from adopting similar pre-sale engagement tools.

7. Business Model & Performance

Guidance: Note standout operational practices, brand perception, gaps, risks, or use of advanced technologies like AI. Mention IP or partnerships only if relevant.

Example:
[Client Company] is consistently praised for customer service, while [Competitor A] receives mixed feedback. [Competitor B] leverages AI in product personalization—a capability not yet adopted by [Client Company]. Both competitors have stronger supplier partnerships, potentially improving cost efficiency.

8. Customer Service

Guidance: Discuss channel accessibility, response quality, and public perception. Focus on standout strengths or notable issues.

Example:
[Client Company] offers faster support response times than both competitors. However, [Competitor B] stands

out with its comprehensive self-service portal, reducing support load and improving customer satisfaction. [Competitor A] has been criticized for slow issue resolution.

9. Recommendations

Guidance: Summarize 3–5 key strategic or tactical actions for the Client Company based on gaps, risks, or opportunities identified in comparison with competitors. Each recommendation should be actionable, directly linked to insights from the analysis, and focused on differentiation or performance improvement.

Example:
To strengthen competitive positioning, [Client Company] should consider expanding its content marketing efforts, particularly in SEO-focused blog and video formats, to address the visibility gap identified against [Competitor B]. Additionally, introducing a free trial or demo option could improve lead conversion, aligning more closely with industry expectations set by [Competitor A] and [Competitor B].

Investing in AI-driven personalization would enhance product appeal, especially as [Competitor B] has already differentiated itself in this area. Finally, [Client Company] should explore developing stronger reseller or channel partner relationships to diversify its sales reach and mirror the scalable model seen in [Competitor A].