BUSINESS STARTUP BLUEPRINT

COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

STEP 1 PLANNING

WORKSHEET

upflip

Like I said in the lesson, having a lot of competition isn't always a problem. Ultimately, you want to focus more on your target customers than your competition.

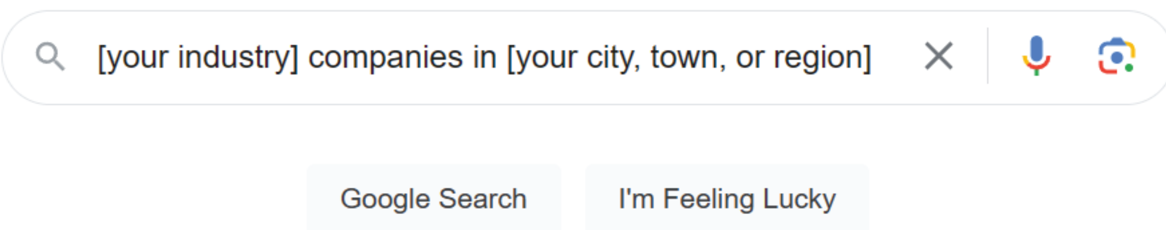
Researching your competition is still a smart move, though, and gives you a lot of helpful information as you're getting ready to start a business. It lets you see what services and products are already available in your niche and where there are gaps you can fill.

It also gives you a sense of how crowded the market is and how hard you'll have to work to get the attention of customers.

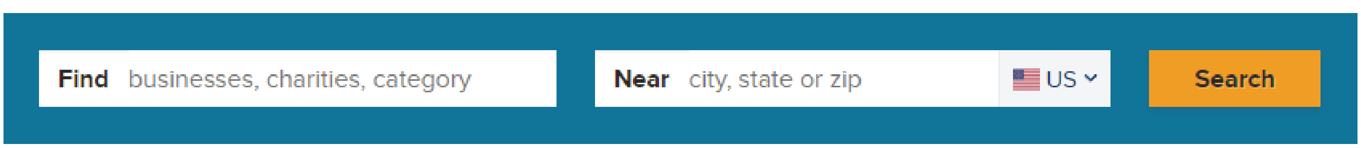
Step 1: Identify businesses in your niche already operating in your area.

There are two places you can quickly find this information:

- Do a Google search for "[your industry] companies in [your city, town, or region]"



- Go to the **Better Business Bureau** website and enter your industry next to "Find" and your location next to "Near."



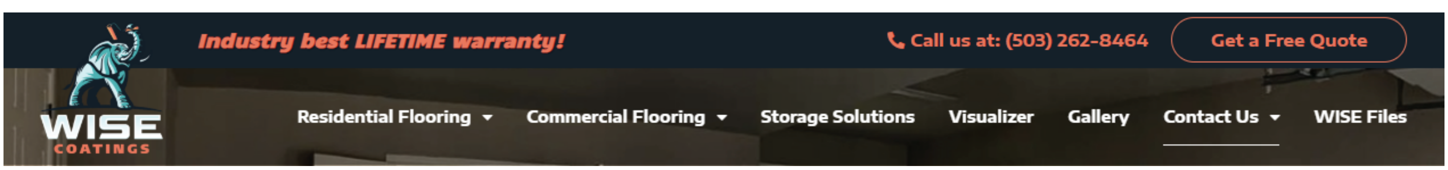
Write the names of the companies you find in the space below, along with any useful information about their niche or services that you discover during your research.

Company Name	Notes

Pro Tip: Often, doing this kind of search will bring up more businesses than just your competitors. You'll also find distributors, manufacturers, suppliers, and other adjacent businesses. Make note of these, too, since they could be useful sources of parts, equipment, supplies, and other things you'll need as you start your business.

Step 2: Analyze your competitors' online presence.

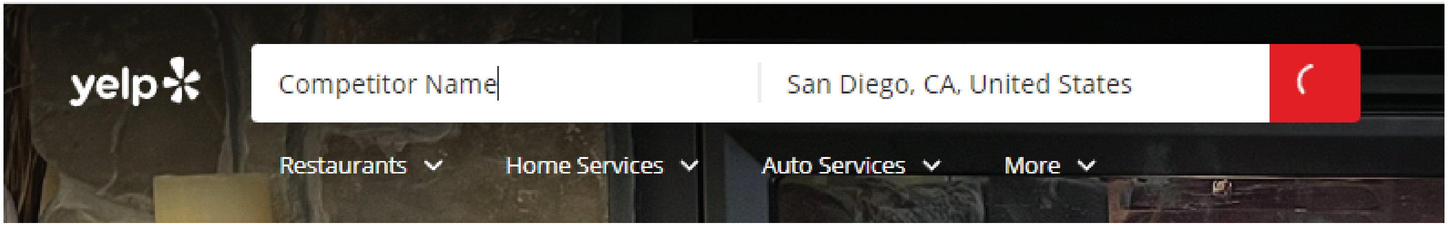
Start by looking at the company's website. Look at their services and products and try to get a sense of their main value proposition for customers.



For example, do they brag about their speedy service or low prices, or offer services that other companies don't? If it's a service company, how do customers book service? If they have an online booking form, check out what things they ask potential customers.

For online stores, navigate through their product listings and evaluate their store interface, prices, and other details that could influence customer purchasing decisions.

Along with their website, look at their social media pages and their listing on sites like Google and Yelp. Read some customer reviews or testimonials, paying attention to both the positive and negative things that customers say about them.



As you do this research, take notes on the things that catch your attention. Consider: 1) things your competitors do well that you want to emulate and 2) areas where they're weak that your business could out-compete them.

Things My Competitors Do Well	Things That Can Be Done Better

Step 3: Secret shop your top competition.

Once you've finished your online research, you likely have a shorter list of companies that will be your direct competitors. Pick out the top three to five and check them out from a customer's perspective. If it's a brick-and-mortar store or restaurant, visit the location. For service businesses, you can call and ask them about their services and operations.

Use the space below to take notes about your findings. What stood out for you? What did they do in common, or what was missing?

Step 4: Analyze your data for trends and areas of improvement.

The final step is to gain some actionable insights from this data you've collected. Some great questions to ask at this stage are:

- Are there any services or products that few to no competitors offer?
- Which products or services have the most demand?
- What are the main things my competitors do well?
- What are the main areas where my competitors are weak?
- What are the issues or complaints that customers of these companies have most often?

- How well do my competitors engage with their target audience?
- How much variety is there in the pricing of competitors' services and products?
- Are there any emerging or changing trends that I can capitalize on with my business?

You can use the space below to brainstorm answers to those questions and identify some areas where you can offer unique value or gain a competitive advantage.

Don't be discouraged if you find there are already several companies operating in your niche. Some competition is a good thing. It means there is a demand for your product or service. If you can capture that demand, you'll be well-positioned to succeed with your business.

Finding little to no competition, on the other hand, can be either a red flag or an opportunity. It could mean that you've found an untapped market that you can take advantage of, but it could also mean that demand is low for that niche.

Do some further research to decide if you should adjust your idea and how to position yourself in the market to build a customer base.

Working through the Total Addressable Market, SWOT analysis, and Customer Avatar worksheets in this lesson will give you a more complete picture of your market, potential customers, and how to set your business up for success.