

Business Strategy / Competitive Analysis

Identify direct, indirect, and emerging competitors, then map them on a strategic positioning grid.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Model: GPT-4 / Claude / Gemini

Use Case: Competitive Research, Market Mapping, Strategy

Updated: May 2026

Why This Prompt Exists

Most businesses don't know who their real competitors are — or miss emerging threats.

You get:

- only looking at direct competitors (missing indirect)
- ignoring emerging competitors (startups, adjacent industries)
- no strategic map of the competitive landscape
- surprised by new entrants you didn't see coming
- missed opportunities to differentiate

But competitor mapping is not listing names.

It is understanding the landscape.

- Direct competitors: same product, same customer
- Indirect competitors: different product, same need
- Emerging competitors: startups, adjacent industries, substitutes
- Strategic groups: clusters of competitors with similar strategies

Without mapping, you compete blind.

This framework forces AI to identify and map your competitive landscape.

The Prompt

Assume the role of a competitive strategist who maps the competitive landscape.

Your task is to identify and map competitors.

Generate:

1. DIRECT COMPETITORS (3-5)
 - Same product/service
 - Same target customer
 - Why they are direct threats
2. INDIRECT COMPETITORS (3-5)
 - Different product, same customer need
 - Why customers might choose them instead
3. EMERGING COMPETITORS (2-3)
 - Startups, adjacent industries, potential substitutes
 - Why they could become threats
4. STRATEGIC GROUPS
 - Clusters of competitors with similar strategies
 - Positioning within each group
5. COMPETITIVE POSITIONING MAP (2x2 grid)
 - X-axis: [key differentiator]
 - Y-axis: [key differentiator]

- Where you and competitors sit

6. COMPETITOR PRIORITIZATION

- Priority 1: most urgent threats
- Priority 2: monitor closely
- Priority 3: watch list

INPUTS:

Your Product/Service:

[DESCRIBE]

Target Customer:

[WHO ARE YOU SELLING TO?]

Industry:

[INSERT]

Known Competitors (start with these):

[LIST OR "NONE"]

Geographic Scope:

[LOCAL / REGIONAL / NATIONAL / GLOBAL]

RULES:

- Direct competitors: same solution, same customer
- Indirect competitors: different solution, same need
- Emerging competitors: startups or adjacent industries
- Strategic groups: competitors with similar positioning

- 2x2 axes must be what customers actually care about
- Prioritize competitors by threat level (not just size)

How To Use It

- Direct competitors deserve most attention (immediate threats).
- Indirect competitors reveal substitution risks.
- Emerging competitors are often overlooked (watch them).
- Update competitor map quarterly (landscape changes fast).
- Use the 2x2 grid to find white space opportunities.

Example Input

Your Product/Service: Project management software for creative agencies

Target Customer: Small creative agencies (5-20 people)

Industry: SaaS project management

Known Competitors: Asana, Monday.com, Trello, ClickUp, Teamwork

Geographic Scope: NATIONAL (US)

Why It Works

Most competitive analysis misses important competitors.

This framework improves outcomes by forcing:

- direct competitor identification (immediate threats)
- indirect competitor identification (substitution risks)
- emerging competitor identification (future threats)
- strategic grouping (cluster analysis)
- positioning map (visual differentiation)

Great competitive analysis doesn't just list names — it maps the battlefield.

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