COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
Finding & Communicating Yours in a Crowded Landscape
Heather Physioc
Heather Physioc
Managing Director, Discoverability

• At VMLY&R since 2014
• Lead the Discoverability capability
• Professor of Digital Marketing in the KU School of Journalism Masters program
• International search industry speaker and writer
• Bachelor of Journalism, University of Missouri; Executive MBA, Rockhurst University
Around the World

80 DISCOVERABILITY EXPERTS
Organic Search
Paid Search
Performance Content

5 KEY REGIONS
United States
United Kingdom
Mexico
Colombia
France

US
Organic Search
Paid Search
Performance Content

UK
Organic Search
Performance Content

France
Organic Search
Paid Search

70+ ACTIVE CLIENTS, INCLUDING
Ford
United Rentals
Sherwin Williams
Conagra Brands
BASF
General Mills
AARP
Wendy’s
Sanofi

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Brands We've Helped

AGRICULTURE
BASF
Firestone Ag.
John Deere

ANIMAL & PET HEALTH
Boehringer-Ingelheim
Elanco (Bayer)
Hill’s Pet Nutrition
MARS Petcare
PetMeds
Zoetis

AUTOMOTIVE
Ford
Mazda
Bridgestone

B2B INDUSTRIAL
Apex Tool
Bridgestone
John Deere
JR Automation
United Rentals

EDUCATION
A&M University
Devry University
Pearson Online Learning
Rockhurst University

ENERGY
BP
Georgia Power
Spire Energy

FINANCE & INSURANCE
AARP
Crowe
Northern Trust
Thrivent Mutual Funds
Plante Moran
Mariner Wealth Advisors

FOOD & CPG
Baileys
Bell’s Brewing
BLK&Bold
Bush’s Beans
Butterball
Coca-Cola
Colgate
ConAgra
Flowers Foods
General Mills
Kimberly-Clark
Kraft-Heinz
Mars-Wrigley
Molson-Coors
Morton Salt
PepsiCo
Sherwin-Williams
Tom’s of Maine
Unilever

FOOD SERVICE
QuikTrip
Wendy’s

GOVERNMENT
U.S. Navy

HEALTH
GlaxoSmithKline
Johnson & Johnson
Pfizer
Sanofi
Ultragyny
AstraZeneca
Merck
ACPNY/EmblemHealth
UCI Irvine Health
City of Hope
Janssen

LEO Pharma
Narcan
PHRMA
Walgreens-Boots
Lifescan
Myriad Genetics
Q-Collar
Stryker
Atara Biotherapeutics
AARP Member Benefits
Texas A&M EnMed

LIVING & COMMUNITY
Related Rentals
Vi
YMCA

SPORTS & ATHLETICS
Miami Dolphins + F1
NBC Sports
Chelsea Football Club
Q-Collar

TECHNOLOGY
BazaarVoice
Bose Google
Dell
GDMS

GE Aviation
Hikvision
Intel
Meta/Facebook/Oculus
Nikon Metrology
Microsoft
Oticon
PTC
Qlik

TELECOM
Cable & Wireless
Hughesnet
T-Mobile

TRAVEL & TOURISM
Airshare
Graceland
LEGOLAND Florida
Miami GMCVB
Tennessee Tourism
Knoxville Tourism
Nashville Tourism
Opry Entertainment

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The Trouble with Crowded Competitive Landscapes

IT'S HARDER TO STAND OUT.
IT'S HARDER TO COMPETE.
IT'S HARDER TO WIN.
The Sea of Sameness
Barriers to Competitive Advantage

- commoditization & parity
- knowing what to own
- slow to innovate
- time, bandwidth and budget
- fear of taking risks
- cultural challenges, buy-in
- customer perception
- it's a moving target
The Future of Search

Anticipate the new ways and places people will search, to meet them where they are with the information they need.
SEO isn't "dead."
It's commoditized.
WHAT IS COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE?
From meaningless mission statements...
“Profitable growth through superior customer service, innovation, quality and commitment”
Our Mission

Profitable growth through superior customer service, innovation, quality and commitment.

Mission Statement

At Carson Telecom our mission is to use our professionalism and integrity, on mutual trust and respect, as well as good decision making in preplanning your telecommunications / networking project.

Our Vision

MGT Vision statement is “profitable growth through superior customer service, innovation, quality and commitment.”

Mission & Core Values

Profitable growth through superior customer service, innovation, quality and commitment to our customers.

Our Mission

Profitable growth through superior customer service, innovation, quality, and commitment to excellence in all we do.

Our Vision Statement

Achieving long-term profitable growth through superior customer service, innovation, quality and commitment.

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...to worse "unique" selling propositions.
Can help you organize and speed up your invoicing

Invoice software that saves you time

Time-saving features keep you in control
Invoice Simple

Invoice your customers in seconds

A real-time view of your cash flow

Stop using and paying for 6+ different tools
How do you know if something is a true competitive advantage?
Start with your "est."

What is something that better delivers more value to customers, or comparable value for a better price?
Unique
Defensible
Sustainable
Valuable
Consistent

Something that serves a unique need, a unique audience, or in a unique way.
A distinct, specific claim. Not generic or vague. Avoids superlatives.
Lasting. Enduring over a long period of time.
Something the customer feels is a greater value than competitors.
Something that can be true in every aspect of your business.
AND TEMPORARY.
A Competitive Advantage Framework

DISCOVER → DIFFERENTIATE → DEFINE → DEFEND
DISCOVER
Tools to Identify Competitive Advantage
SWOT ANALYSIS
PORTER'S 5 FORCES

COMPETITOR RIVALRY

THREAT OF NEW ENTRANTS

THREAT OF SUBSTITUTES

BARGAINING POWER OF SUPPLIERS

BARGAINING POWER OF BUYERS

SOURCE: 5 FORCES FRAMEWORK, MICHAEL PORTER, COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

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PORTER'S 5 FORCES

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PORTER'S 5 FORCES

BARGAINING POWER OF SUPPLIERS

COMPETITOR RIVALRY

BARGAINING POWER OF BUYERS

THREAT OF NEW ENTRANTS
- Barriers to entry
- Economies of scale
- Brand loyalty
- Capital requirements
- Cumulative experience
- Government policies
- Access to distribution channels
- Switching costs

THREAT OF SUBSTITUTES
- Quantity of competitors
- Diversity of competitors
- Industry concentration (crowding)
- Growth rate of industry
- Quality differences between competitors
- Brand loyalty
- Barriers to exiting
- Switching costs

SOURCE: 5 FORCES FRAMEWORK, MICHAEL PORTER, COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
PORTER’S 5 FORCES

COMPETITOR RIVALRY

THREAT OF NEW ENTRANTS

BARGAINING POWER OF SUPPLIERS
- Quantity of suppliers
- Supplier quality
- Size and scale of suppliers
- Uniqueness of supplier products
- Suppliers meeting certain quality criteria or industry standards
- Your brand’s ability to substitute

THREAT OF SUBSTITUTES

BARGAINING POWER OF BUYERS
- Quantity of customers
- Average order value / size
- Customer price sensitivity
- Switching costs
- Buyer ability to substitute
- Buyer ability to abstain
- Competitive information available

SOURCE: 5 FORCES FRAMEWORK, MICHAEL PORTER, COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

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DEFINE
Choosing Your Competitive Strategy
You can't be all things to all people all the time.
Choose an area to focus.

Strategy is not just choosing what you will do, it's also choosing what you won't do.
Efficiency & Return on Ad Spend (ROAS) vs Volume or Share-of-Voice (SOV)
Broad Versatility vs Deep Specialty
Acting on your competitive advantage is almost as hard as discovering it.
What are the core activities that make up your business?
Who are the customers the brand was created to serve?
What do your potential customers, or a specific segment of them, want or need?
What do your customers value?
How does your brand, product or service solve a consumer need? What do you enable them to do?
When customers have a huge range of choices, why should they choose you?
Examine your answers. Look for clues and patterns.
Competitive advantage can take several forms.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homwork! Examine your brand.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customization or Personalization of Experience</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Serving Untapped Markets or Underserved Audiences</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Ratio of Relative Value to Relative Cost</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Morrals, Values, Commitments, Missions or Ethics</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Convenience, Access, Supply Chain, Speed</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Broad Reach or Scale</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Strong Following or Sense of Community</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Speed to Market with Innovation and Improvements</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Brand Trust, Reputation or Recognition</strong></td>
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</table>
We [do/provide/create] (brand) (circle one) (what the brand is great at)

so that (your target audience or a distinct segment of it) can (compelling customer benefit - not a function or feature)
Check your work.

UNIQUE
DEFENSIBLE
SUSTAINABLE
VALUABLE
CONSISTENT
DIFFERENTIATE
Bringing Your Competitive Advantage to Life

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What changes do you need to make to bring it to life for customers in your digital experience?
What are some things you won't do in support of your purpose?
What team members can you bring together from across functions to seize this competitive advantage?
How might you prove the competitive advantage with your customers? How will you know?
What indicators can measure how well you are communicating your competitive advantage to customers?
DEFEND
Evolving Your Competitive Advantage
REMEMBER: IT'S TEMPORARY.
Strong sales growth starts to diminish. Competition is increasing. Enhancing features, lowering prices.

Building brand preference and market share. Pricing competition still low, distribution increasing, broadening audience.

Raising awareness about your product, service or company. Aiming at early adopters.

Sales declining. Brand is faced with a choice: maintain & rejuvenate, cut costs and continue to offer, discontinue, or...

...reinvent the business or explore product extension to break into new areas and renew competitiveness.

The Product Lifecycle

INTRODUCTION

GROWTH

MATURITY

DECLINE

PRODUCT EXTENSION
Winners evolve.
Now you have the tools.
REINVENT
Thank you!

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