



Differentiation - The Key to Business Success Checklist

- How are you different? (FastEST, coolEST, etc.) List your "EST" below;

- What do your customers think makes you different? Are your perceptions the same?

- Make a plan to prove your uniqueness. (Making a comparison demo is ideal.)

- Use word-of-mouth advertising to your advantage and encourage referrals.

- Are you operating in an "already owned with big bucks" environment? Find your niche or exit.

- Review the Scale of Differentiation on page 4 of the Learning Guide to determine where to put your energy—understand why. Indicate below;

- Product Based
- Distribution based
- Promotion based
- Price and/or Packaging based

- Study high-cost competitors—make a plan to do what they won't. Indicate your general observations below;
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- Define the pricing structure that is appropriate to your risk tolerance.
- Do competitive research, following the Ideal or Minimum formulas indicated on page 6 of the Learning Guide.
- Review the Differentiation Model on pages 7-11 of the Learning Guide. What differentiation and traffic capabilities do you have? Indicate below;
 - Strong differentiation/High traffic
 - Strong differentiation/Low traffic
 - Weak differentiation/High traffic
 - Weak differentiation/Low traffic (If you checked this, how fast can you exit?)
- Make a marketing plan to match your place on the Differentiation Model.
- Honestly and thoughtfully answer the following **POWERFUL QUESTIONS**;

Positioning: If I sold my business today, what would the new owner do first to pay back his investment as fast as possible? (So, why don't I just apply that same way of thinking now?)
Am I willing to watch my competitor and do what they won't?

Resources: How can I get other people to do the work that never gets done, but which would build my business if it was done? How can I get other people to do the work I'm doing that prevents me from getting the other important work done?

Revenue: What is the fastest way that I can build huge numbers of pages with real content? What other ways can I monetize my existing sites? How can I 'play Monopoly' online? (own huge chunks of the market so most customers flow through me somehow)

Expert Status: How can I achieve guru status to differentiate myself in the eyes of other people? What 'low-hanging fruit' am I ignoring? (relationships I could create or key customers I could get in another marketplace)

Closed-minded Mentality: Am I whining like a victim and making excuses? Am I willing to do what it takes to change my closed-minded behavior into a positive and assertive one? What seeds could I be planting for tomorrow instead? What am I doing today to still have a business when/if my current model crashes?

□ Using the honest answers you gave to those powerful questions, **CREATE AN ACTION PLAN**. Your action plan should focus on specifics.

What changes do you want to make to your approach and result? Why?

How are you going to achieve these changes?

What risks can you identify that might keep you from reaching your goals? Can you avoid them or mitigate the damages?

□ Action Plan Summary / **GOAL SETTING**

List five goals, the dates you wish to realize each goal, and all risks that might keep you from attaining each specific goal;

Goal #1 Name _____

Date _____

Risk/Mitigation Plan _____

Risk/Mitigation Plan _____

Goal #2 Name _____

Date _____

Risk/Mitigation Plan _____

Risk/Mitigation Plan _____

Goal #3 Name _____
Date _____
Risk/Mitigation Plan _____
Risk/Mitigation Plan _____

Goal #4 Name _____
Date _____
Risk/Mitigation Plan _____
Risk/Mitigation Plan _____

Goal #5 Name _____
Date _____
Risk/Mitigation Plan _____
Risk/Mitigation Plan _____

- If you have not already done so, print out your specific segment of the differentiation model, as shown in the Learning Guide. Post to your wall.
- Now, print out your action plan and post it on your wall next to the model.

Revisit your goals often to gauge your progress and identify new risks. Adjust them as needed.