



# Exercise 2.A: The Competitor Matrix

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Competitive benchmarking and strategic differentiation

## **LESSON 2: Market Validation, Identity, and Competitive Strategy**

**MODULE 1:  
BUSINESS PLANNING FOR CREATIVE  
ENTREPRENEURS**

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## **Exercise 2.A: The Competitor Matrix**

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### **Purpose**

To move creative entrepreneurs from assumptions to evidence-based strategic positioning by systematically comparing their offering against relevant competitors and identifying clear market gaps.

### **Concept Focus:**

Competitive benchmarking and strategic differentiation

### **Format:**

Individual work using a structured template

### **Duration:**

20 minutes



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### **Task: Score Your Business Against the Competition**

Participants analyse how their creative business compares to alternatives available to their target customer, with the goal of identifying where they can compete meaningfully.

### **Step 1: Identify Your Competitors (5 minutes)**

List three alternatives your Ideal Customer Segment might choose instead of you:

- Direct Competitor
  - Offers the same type of product or service
  - (e.g. another freelance graphic designer)
- Indirect Competitor (Alternative)
  - Solves the same problem using a different approach
  - (e.g. a stock photo library instead of custom photography)
- Benchmark / Aspiration Competitor
  - A successful, high-quality business you admire and want to learn from



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### Step 2: Define and Score the Criteria (10 minutes)

Using the matrix, score your business and each competitor on a scale from 1 (Weak) to 5 (Strong) across the following criteria:

Criteria	You	Direct Competitor	Indirect Competitor	Benchmark Competitor
Quality / Craftsmanship				
Speed / Turnaround				
Price Positioning (Affordable ↔ Premium)				
Visibility / Reach				

Scoring note for price positioning:

- Score 5 if affordability or accessibility is a key advantage of the business model
- Score 1 if exclusivity or premium positioning is the advantage



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### **Step 3: Insight and Action (5 minutes)**

Review your completed matrix and answer the following:

- Strategic Advantage
  - Which single criterion do you score highest on relative to competitors?
- Market Gap
  - Where do competitors consistently score low (1–2), and you score high (4–5)?
- Positioning Statement (Draft)
  - Write one sentence describing the gap you can fill.
  - (Example: “We provide high-quality custom work with a guaranteed 48-hour turnaround, in a market where speed is consistently weak.”)



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## Learning Outcome

By completing this exercise, participants will:

- Understand their competitive landscape more clearly
- Identify realistic market gaps
- Base positioning decisions on evidence rather than assumptions