



# Facilitation Focus

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# HOW TO DO MARKET RESEARCH AND ETHICALLY SPY ON YOUR COMPETITORS



The internet in today's day and age makes it easier for us to actually start up a business and have it running fast and hard with a given knowledge that we will experience success.

The reason this is so is because we now have tools on the internet that allow us to experience success. As you continue to read this article you will discover the free tools I use to analyze a market and see if there are even people interested in a product or service.

The first thing I like to do when researching a market is first figuring out what exactly I am trying to sell and give to the market place, because if I don't already have an idea in place then why should I even start?

The idea here is to be perfectly clear about what you are trying to offer, and then after that you move to the next step.

I then go ahead and find my niche online by doing a quick Google search to see if there are any sites that are already up and running with consistent traffic.

I know this because prior to doing a Google search I make sure to use the keyword planner to find relevant keywords to my market. This can range from anything to stuffed teddy bears all the way to expensive golf clubs.

After I find and compile a list of relevant keywords I quickly go ahead and search for the top ten websites on Google related to "teddy bears" and "expensive golf clubs". The reason for this is because I quickly go after and use

websites like [Quantcast](#) and [Alexa](#) to determine the amount of traffic each site gets on a daily to monthly basis. The best part about this is that if sites have allowed Quantcast to analyze their website then you will get exact demographics from age range, to buying habits, to even locations.

Now I have an idea of who is my ideal market, but this alone isn't enough. I usually visit the original site that I went to to see what type of advertisement is laid out. If I see consistent ads related to the niche, I go to the ads website to see what is being offered to get more ideas of what I can do to actually provide a product and service that will be useful to my market.

I know that if I see repeat ads that it is selling well and converting well in that audience. All I have to do now is create an offer that is better than my competitors, such as "200% return if 100% customer satisfaction is not achieved."

Of course, this is just an example and you want to analyze and brainstorm what it is that you want to do for your business.

Finally, after discovering the top websites that are ranking, discovering the ads that are consistently being shown, and coming up with an offer I also make sure to just provide content towards that target market to build a list and a following that I can continuously connect with and interact with in an engaging way.

That's all there is to doing market research in a free way and spying on the competition to ensure that you

produce similar results!

**\*\* The above article was written by [By Cesar A Soto](#)**

However, many people have asked "How ethical is it to spy on your competitors?"

[Kimberly Bauer, a Competitive Intelligence](#) expert says this:

*"The biggest misconception is that competitive intelligence is an act of espionage that may or may not include a series of unethical activities and detective level sleuthing."*

So, what exactly is Competitive Intelligence?

[Crayon](#) has this to say: *While competitive intelligence is the act of gathering intel about your competition, it's done through public and legal means.*

The simplest definition we've crafted is, **"Competitive Intelligence is the process of capturing and analyzing information about your competitors to drive internal strategy changes and tactics."**

CI is important because, while most companies have a great understanding of what's happening internally, external information is necessary to drive sound strategic decisions. The key here is making data-based, informed decisions based on the competitive landscape in conjunction with internal factors.

CI allows organizations to make more informed business and strategic decisions."





## DIY BUSINESS WEBSITE DESIGN COULD BE A BAD IDEA: HERE'S WHY

For some new businesses with limited start-up capital, it's easy to understand why they might want to design a website themselves. After all, new business owners are bombarded with DIY website design ads that make it look like a relaxing afternoon's work.

Moreover, maybe unbudgeted cost blow-outs have reared the ugly heads. And then there's just this desire to be in control and get on with it.

However, now is the time to resist the temptation. Make no mistake, your website will form the backbone of your business. Therefore, to be successful, it must be properly designed, produced, and to some extent be future-proof.

So, let's look at a few reasons why businesses should **not design** a website themselves.

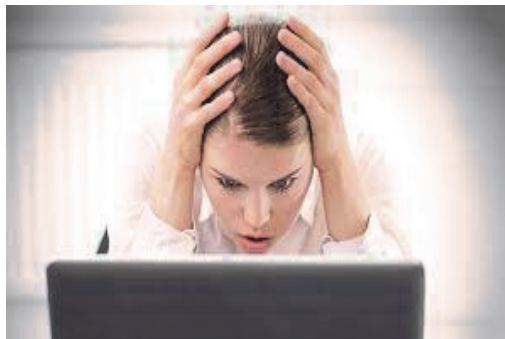
### 1. Wrong Priority

There's a myriad of essential tasks to tackle when starting a new business. Furthermore, business owners are usually specialists in a particular area. They have expertise that will form the core of their new business.

Therefore, it's unlikely that designing a website is one of them. Besides, why would you want to start a task with an onerous learning curve looming over you with all this going on?

### 2. If You Design a Website, It May Create the Wrong First Impression

Your business website will be your most crucial advertising and marketing tool. Moreover, it will usually be the first place potential customers will visit to check you out.



And, just like in real life, you'll have one chance to make a good impression. Why risk that?

### 3. DIY Design a Website Lacks Impact

Your new website is also your opportunity to showcase an effective brand. It needs to be unique to stand out.

Clearly, if you use a 'DIY design a website template', your site is in danger of looking just like hundreds, if not thousands, of others on the web. Essentially, what you're missing out on is the opportunity to work with a professional designer to build your brand from the ground up.

In turn, your professionally designed website will incorporate your brand identity perfectly.

### 4. My Website Isn't Appearing in Google Search Results?

If you do design a website yourself with a DIY template company, you'll likely suffer from poor search ranking. This is because most template programs limit the amount of **SEO (Search Engine Optimisation)** you can do to improve your ranking.

So, unless you have SEO experience and knowledge of website code, your new site is unlikely to compete well with a professionally produced website.

Above article [Author: Steve Brambley](#)

[Helios Web Design](#) believes there are numerous reasons why building your own website can sometimes be a bad idea: *"Using an online 'website builder' package maybe tempting for cost conscious businesses startups, but there are many reasons why this option is a bad idea. Website development requires behind the scenes coding and SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) that requires understanding of coding and internet processes. If you think of a website like a car, the 'engine' is the backend coding and SEO. Nobody really sees this, but it is essential for your website to work and rank well with search engines like Google. If your self build website fails to show up in searches, you are just throwing money down the drain."*

Do It Yourself website builders offer a degree of customisation, but there are limitations and most basic packages lack functionality, originality and are not interactive.

If you wanted to add extra features or functionality you will probably end up paying a significant monthly premium.

Website development is technical, and it takes time to build a great website that functions well.

If you're not a professional web developer, the hours upon hours you spend trying to create a website could be more efficiently spent generating business and growing your client base.

Hiring someone with experience and knowledge to build it, will save you time and money and will ultimately look and perform better.





## Your Business And The Community



**How does your business fit into the community? Is there a downside to usage of your product? Can the community be put at risk by using it?**

Carlton United Brewery (C.U.B) is spending literally millions of dollars on advertising urging us to be responsible.

It begs the question ... is it all too late?

There is a massive movement on now to try and prevent the "king hit" or the "coward punch" as it is more recently referred to - a violent assault fueled by alcohol.

McDonalds runs a lot of advertisements promoting its community work. Why? Because junk food is constantly being targeted by many pressure groups, including the Australian Medical Association (A.M.A).

However, McDonalds is investing a lot of money in showing the general public that they have a social conscience.

You may remember the CIG (replaced by BOC Gases Australia in 1994) advertisements featuring clear, blue oceans and happy, playful dolphins, but did you know that CIG is the largest producer of Freon, the gas used in fridges and air conditioners? CIG is also, reportedly, a major contributor to the hole in the ozone layer.

And how's this for ethical business conduct. A multi-national diet company based in the USA, sold its entire mailing list of over 600,000 names to a direct mailing chocolate company for a reported

\$1.5 million.

Unethical? Or is it simply good business? We both know the answer to that one. So, over 600,000 unsuspecting, diet conscious people are being invaded by junk mail flogging off chocolates. All of this without their permission or knowledge.

However, there is no law presently in existence to prevent it. ... and even if there was such a law, how many large or multi - national firms seem to get away with doing whatever they want.?

ADMA, the Australian industry body, has recently prosecuted two of its own members for unethical behaviour, but ADMA (and any other group) is severely restricted in their efforts to put the "baddies" out of business because of the limitations of the law.

Between 1 July 2019 and 31 December 2019, the ACCC received close to 3,600 complaints from small businesses. This was an 84 per cent increase from the first half of 2019. Enquiries from small businesses also increased dramatically. Franchising complaints rose slightly from 286 in the previous period to 309 this period, while franchising enquiries almost doubled.

[ACCC Deputy Chair Mick Keogh](#) said: "The growth in complaints received by small businesses and franchisees reflects the need to educate and empower the sector."

The Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia argues that ethical conduct has moved front and centre as corporations are increasingly exposed to the glare of

public scrutiny. In particular, there has been a fundamental shift over the past few years that requires a complete rethinking of the functions of compliance, governance and social accountability, putting ethics into the daily vocabulary of mainstream management.

*"Australians are exposed to unethical business practices on both the micro and macro level, from the preference of cheap foreign workers over long standing Australian workers; the selling of Australian mines to foreign Governments; pollution cover-ups; insider trading; to the bribing of local Government councillors to approve developments that are not in the interests of the communities they represent. All of these examples have one thing in common; the use of economic rationalism and little consideration for social and cultural impacts as having a societal value."* - [Vivian Roberts](#)

*"If you do not act with integrity ... you are not likely to enjoy the kind of reputation that will keep good people in your employ, or keep customers coming back for your products or services."* - [John Ralph](#).

Nothing, it seems, will prevent the shonks from preying on the community, not even the law. The only long-term hope we have is that the public becomes more aware and educated, and starts to lobby strongly and vigorously against these predators. ☑



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# The Tyranny of Email

## Editor's Note:

*Dr. Tim Baker is an international consultant, successful author, keynote speaker, master trainer, executive coach, university lecturer and skilful facilitator.*

*In a nutshell, he has conducted over 2,430 seminars, workshops and keynote addresses to over 45,000 people in 11 countries across 21 industry groups.*

*"Dr Baker leads the world in offering an innovative new approach to appraising employee performance. His research and energy in the specialised field of performance management is evidenced by his international profile as a renowned speaker, management consultant and facilitator". Stephen Hartley, Australia's leading expert on project management and author of "Project Management: Principles, Processes and Practices."*

How much time do you spend every week attending to email? It's a question worth answering. Although, I suspect you won't like the answer one little bit.

I was asked recently to assist a company to curb their chronic addiction to email as its supreme communication medium.

Here is a sad example of typical behaviour in this Australian-based company.

Two Engineers working on a complex project sat in a cubic opposite each other. The only thing separating them was a partition. One of the Engineers was upset with the other over some details in the project they were working on together and

fired off an angry email to the other. He did this when he could have simply got out of his chair and had a conversation with his colleague to share his concerns.

The other Engineer, very angry and defensive about the email, fired off a heated email response and copied in the Project Manager!

Back to the solution this company asked me to resolve.

I asked all 1,240 employees to anonymously complete a single simple log for the week recording the amount of time they 'invested' in reading, writing and responding to email. I collected the responses and calculated the average time per week spend on email. Guess how many hours of time were devoted to this single activity for each employee?

11.2 hrs!

Based on a standard 40 hour work week, that amounts to 28 per cent of the week. If we consider that while people are attending to their emails, they aren't devoting time to their core tasks, we could reasonably double this figure.

Accountants refer to this as an opportunity cost. Considering lost opportunities, the time is really 22.4 hours per week per person.

With 1,240 employees in this company spending 22.4 hours of time on email and nothing else, that amounts to a total of 27,776 hours a week on email-related activity.

The average wage of a full-time



Australian workers in 2013 was \$72,800 per year. Therefore the average hourly rate for a 40 hour a week employee was \$35. Based on these figures, email was costing this company \$972,160 per year.

I have no doubt that much of this time was well spent.

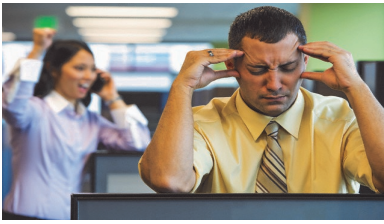
But let's assume that we could half that figure with better email protocol, that would save \$486,080 a year.

What does it cost you each year in your organisation to use email?

*This is an extract from Tim Baker's newly released book - [The End of the Performance Review: A New Approach to Appraising Employee Performance.](#)*

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## Six Ways To Fight Distractions

Time management is critical to business and personal success. Why is it that some people achieve so much in their day, and others seem to get virtually nothing done despite appearing to be very busy?

Every day you expect to get everything done but halfway through the day you find yourself checking your email for the umpteenth time, looking at cat pictures on Facebook, and trying to tune out your co-worker's loud conversations. You start the day with great intentions but did your productivity live up to your aspirations?

Distraction is the primary killer of productivity. According to studies, workers are interrupted by distractions roughly every three minutes. It can then take over twenty minutes to get back to the task at hand -- and the things you *think* are helping your productivity might be having the opposite effect.

Here are some tips that might help overcome some of these issues:

**Focus on you.** Set aside quiet time in the mornings by showing up early and doing some planning, the quiet atmosphere will really help you focus.

With less distraction you can focus on what matters and breeze through your most challenging projects. Don't be afraid to shut your office door for a little peace and quiet. This allows you to centre yourself and focus more fully on work.

**Stop multitasking.** You can either get one task done well or a bunch of tasks done poorly. Today we're living in a multi-screen world and have become multitasking addicts. A study showed 66 percent of people use smart phones and computers simultaneously, while 90 percent use electronic devices sequentially throughout the day. Every time you stop a task to quickly check Twitter or answer a text you're breaking your concentration. Put them on silent and give your full attention to your work for more productive results.

**Kick your email addiction.** Are you really getting anything done if you stop your work every time another email pops up in your inbox? Schedule specific times during your day to check your inbox and only check it then. Your phone still works, so don't worry about missing out on something important.

**Follow the 80/20 rule.** Twenty percent of what you do produces 80 percent of the results. Cut the extraneous from your to-do list in order to get the most out of your efforts. If your list is too long odds

are you won't get much done. Make it manageable and put the most essential tasks at the top. Focus your full attention on the top 20 percent of your work that will produce results.

**Make tough choices.** If you know you're a sucker for Twitter, it's time to say goodbye - at least temporarily. Shut out distractions by being tough with yourself. You know your weaknesses - whether it's messaging with friends or looking at baby animals. You're the only one who can manage distractions during your workday.

**Skip social media and pick up the phone.** Sometimes the quickest route to information is to just pick up the phone. Typical employees send about 43 emails per day and receive a whopping 130 messages. Instead of wading through a never-ending deluge of emails, picking up the phone can sometimes be a faster and more personal way of getting the information you need.

Not only will you be building connections with your co-workers, you'll be cutting down on your inbox.

It can feel impossible to cut out distractions and get back on track but productivity is right around the corner. Just learn how to say goodbye to distractions and get focused. ☒



## AIBEF 2020/21 INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

*"The business advice industry in Australia and in many other countries is self-regulated, and virtually anyone can call themselves a business or enterprise facilitator, advisor, coach, mentor or consultant. Business Facilitation and Coaching has copped its fair share of flak in recent years, primarily because the industry has a reputation for attracting spruikers and touts."*

*Denise McNabb, Sydney Morning Herald*

- **Do you provide Business Advice, Consulting, Mentoring or Facilitation Services?**
  - **Are you looking for recognition of your facilitation skills?**
- **Wanting to give clients the confirmation of your professionalism and experience?**
  - **The AIBEF is awarding 20 + Scholarships in 2020/21– Apply Now!**

**[www.aibef.org.au/aibef-scholarship-program](http://www.aibef.org.au/aibef-scholarship-program)**

A program has been launched to enable business advisors and mentors to achieve industry-recognised accreditation without the need for lengthy study or expensive courses.

The Australasian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators' (AIBEF) new scholarship program recognises the skills, knowledge and experience of business advisors and mentors who have the expertise but may not have gained relevant accreditation or qualifications.

**There are three Scholarship categories:**

- **Women**
- **Young Advisors (up to 29 years of age)**
- **General**

Additional details and Application Form is on our web site ([www.aibef.org.au](http://www.aibef.org.au)); or you can send an email to [info@aibef.org.au](mailto:info@aibef.org.au) requesting these forms to be sent to you.

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The Australasian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators (AIBEF) was founded in 1997 as a result of the recommendations of the Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills.

In their report, entitled *Enterprising Nation*, the taskforce recommended that: “.... a comprehensive accreditation process be established for small business trainers, educators, counsellors, facilitators and advisers so as to upgrade the quality of small business advice.”

It's a fact that, at the moment, the business advice industry in Australia is self-regulated, and virtually anyone can call themselves a business or enterprise facilitator, advisor, coach, facilitator, trainer or consultant.

Check out Google for instance; there must be a dozen (or more) sites on “*How To Start Your Own Business Consulting Venture*”.

The AIBEF is the Peak Body for Business Facilitators, Coaches and Trainers, and we, the AIBEF Committee, hope to continue the association's great work to further promote the professionalism and quality of our members, and to endeavour to act as a respected voice and advocate for the wider community.

The AIBEF represents a profession that is proud of its independence and confident of the service it provides, committed to continual improvement in the skills and knowledge of our members and Business and Enterprise Facilitators in general, who ably assist in the professional guidance and support of business, enterprise and community development.



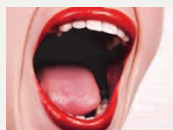
## Welcome to our Newsletter

*Facilitation Focus* is an opportunity for Business Facilitators, Coaches, Facilitators, Trainers and Consultants to ask questions, offer answers, and become part of a group where we can all join in peer-to-peer discussions and conversations about challenges, experiences and outcomes. ***It is also worth noting that 'Focus' can be included in your Continuing Professional Development (CPD)***

*Facilitation Focus* is a publication for a rapidly changing world.

Almost daily, SME's are facing constant changes, and it is vital that the Business and Enterprise Facilitator is current with their expert advice and guidance.

*Facilitation Focus* has as its main aim to access to a professional network of peers through the AIBEF, and by gaining more insight into business and industry best practices, as well as increasing the focus on the important aspects of their own business, an AIBEF Focus member can accomplish amazing results.



## Something To Say?

Letters and Article contributions from members and readers are most welcome

Please send your comments to [info@aibef.org.au](mailto:info@aibef.org.au)

## WHO ARE BUSINESS OR ENTERPRISE FACILITATORS?

Virtually any professional, qualified person or organisation involved in assisting entrepreneurs, organisations, or communities to improve their Skills; Knowledge; Business; Staff; and/or Life.

The role of a Business and Enterprise Facilitator is to promote local economic growth by providing support to local entrepreneurs, groups or entire communities wishing to start or expand a small business enterprise or to assist to develop a concept where the community will benefit

The concept of Business and Enterprise Facilitation is a model of development that supports the creation of wealth from within a community by nurturing the resourcefulness of its people.

The Australasian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators is an international not-for-profit institution that works with entrepreneurs, small groups and / or communities to establish sustainable, grassroots enterprise projects.

For more information please contact:

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