# COMPETITIVE TESTING GUIDE

## STEP 1 : DEFINE PURPOSE

**Understand your research objectives**, they should be clear before you start planning. Look into:
- Why and how users behave in a certain way?
- Do you want to research about specific features?
- Do you want to test a particular advantage or distinctive characteristic a product service has?
- Do you want to discover opportunities or unmet needs and/or do you want to compare a product performance and user's preference to others?

It can be useful to be clear with the preconceptions you have about the dimensions to explore and **write down you hypothesis** to confirm or refute them after the testing.

**Identify your target audience.** This tool gives you the opportunity to look beyond your and your teams and acquaintances opinions into the user's experience. Focus your research on your target audience. It can be useful to consider a couple of extreme users that can give you a new perspective.

> Complementary tools: personas.

## STEP 2 : SELECT COMPETITORS

Select what products or services you are going to compare according to your goals. **Choose 2 to 4 competitors** (at least as a start) more than that can be overwhelming for the study and the participants.

Some suggested **criteria** to choose from are:
- principal competitors or best rated by users
- innovative offer
- address same needs
- have similar functionalities
- competitors users usually compare
- have the same mission or values

Look also into alternatives that are not direct competitors, they can even be from different industries as long as they share the objectives you are researching.

> TIP: consult with an expert in the industry or dimensions to research to help you decide.

## STEP 3 : PLAN

Develop a test plan determining the **type of information** you want to collect. Focus on what's relevant to your objectives and challenges.

Define **who** is going to conduct the test, **how and where**.
- Choose the best way of recolectiong information for your objectives. This will probably include an observation tool that doed not intervene in the users interaction with the product, with a posterior self-reporting or interrogative tool to gain insight on why people behaved in certain ways.
- Context is an important variable, when possible, test on a "real environment" or where the product it is usually used.

> Complementary tools: interview, survey, fly on the wall, customer journey, AEIOU, users journal, among others.

## STEP 4 : TEST

**Find participants** that represent your target audience.

Be creative in how you conduct the testing to get **access to competitors** that may be inaccessible for a studio or difficult to register. For example, asking participants to take pictures of features they likes in a service. Although the ideal scenario is to be able to witness or observe users behaviors and interactions in addition to asking them for their opinion.

Because it is a comparison, try to **control the variables** as much as possible (or at least be aware of the differences in testing). Reduce bias and conduct the testing rigorously in order to have useful information to compare in the analysis. Use a script or checklist to guide the testing.

> TIP: be open to discover unexpected opportunities.

## STEP 5 : ANALIZE RESULTS

Analyze the information recollected **recognizing insights and patterns** of user's behaviors and reactions. While you can obtain metrics about performance usually the interesting insights lie in the details and qualitative feedback. Use **examples** to support your findings, showing evidence from the user's point of view is the most compelling argument.

Draw conclusions of what works as well as what doesn't work. It is useful to identify good practices others have already discovered to build on them.

> Complementary tools: mindmap, clustering, 2 axis diagram, among others.