



How to use non-patent literature for market reports – *Video Transcript*

Using NPL to assess the competitive environment

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Welcome back to Academy by PatSnap. I'm Sam Gibbon and I'll be guiding you through the topic of using NPL for market reports.

In our previous section, we identified a list of companies that we would place into our competitive analysis matrix for our target technology. Now, we can complete our view of the competition by trying to answer a series of questions about each one in turn. We will categorise the information into four areas:

One. Company details, such as size and revenues

Two. Technologies and resources

Three. Company news

And four... Commercial relationships

It is worth creating a grid, before you start researching the known competitors, to capture the data points for each company, in a way that you can compare each company, and its performance, side by side. For example, you can compare aspects such as the number of employees, the size of the R&D operation, target segments, number of alliances and partners, and give that a risk score based on your own targets and operations. You could also derive a score that evaluates how committed they might be to the target technology that you are pursuing.

The nature of companies that are operating in a specific technology area might define the extent to which you want to pursue a specific market. For example, if Google is offering free AI to all users in a technology area that you are developing in, it may not make sense to pursue this idea further. On the hand, it might make it a perfect target for new innovation, specialist rather than generalist skills or ready for disruption. So let's start making a profile of our competitors.

Much of this information will come directly from our data sources such as Crunchbase, Factset, company annual reports and other such sources. For companies that do not publish this information, it is then a case of deriving what information we can from the information types and making some assumptions on the blank fields!

Science and technical literature

Here you want to answer the question: What specific scientific and technical tests, experiments, projects has the company been pursuing within the target technology space? How many are they running and how does this compare to your position, and the position of others? Also, it's worth noting down at this point who they have partnered with for these projects, as this will be useful later when we try to draw up a relationship map to help us chart the ecosystem of this technology space.

Also, consider trying to find out how long they have been active in the area in comparison to the competition. Are they relatively late or early in terms of entering the target technology space?

Next... Market analyst reports

For an emerging technology, it may be that a specific company is not yet on the radar of a broader analyst report. So, in this case, we want to find out how many analyst reports appear to be tracking the competitor in question and whether there are any indications about market share.

In terms of expert opinion

From the blogs and articles that are available, what strategic moves is a company making and what is the expert opinion? What can we learn about the size of the specific team relating to this project – are there any hints to investment levels, confidence, teams being built, functions recruited? For this part of your analysis, it is worth consulting the jobs section of their websites as well, as often they are recruiting for specific skills in an area in advance of any projects or products being announced.

Finally, news...

News articles are often great sources of missing data points as well. Oftentimes, a figure is quoted about market size or amount of investment – especially in the trade press.

Alright, let's turn our attention now to our third focus: Company News...

In this part of our research, we are looking out for any key changes that could signify new emerging priorities within an organization – such as an evolving product line-up. It includes looking for product references to the key emerging technology, news about the success rates of trials or experiments, references to their R&D programs and commentary in blogs, articles and the news.

Starting with company-related information...

What information is available regarding the target technology within the competitor's annual reports or on their website? Changing product lines, and new features within products, can often reveal the direction in which a company is moving from a strategy perspective.

It's also advisable to check trademark databases to see if the competitor in question has registered a new trademark, of particular interest is if it's a trademark in a new area. Trademark databases are especially useful in this regard, as they reveal the exact technology area and countries that a competitor is pursuing.

Next, looking at the company's news page or press releases relating to the company:

What research programs are already being reported on their website and if they are willing to announce new projects publicly, then this clearly is a strong sign that they have high levels of confidence in the outcomes.

Lastly, commercial relationships...

For this part of a report, we'll want to now highlight any new relationships that are forming as a result of new technologies – these relationships could alter the competitive landscape and monitoring their success or failure should form part of the ongoing evaluation of the competitive landscape. Some facts to find out and track:

In the science and technical literature: who is conducting joint research?

Who else has an interest in the research in this space? E.g. Where do the manufacturing components come from? What would the nature of the supply chain be?

Then, on the other side, how is the competitor bringing the solution to market? Would it be direct to end-user, directly via channel partners or indirectly via distribution?

Are there press releases about strategic alliances, M&As, joint ventures or other collaboration between any of these partners?

Drawing up a relationship map, such as this example using 'Artificial Intelligence' can help to establish visually the network of partners and alliances that have emerged in a specific area.

Finally, analysts and experts. In analyst reports, what joint ventures/collaboration is commented on – or mooted as good potentials - by analysts? And in terms of expert opinion, what joint ventures or collaboration is commented on by experts? Are there any hints from interviews with 'people with knowledge of the situation'?

Alright, so at this point, you'll have a view of the market state and now a view of the ecosystem of players within this market area. In our next video, we'll combine this information with some final considerations that will help us to derive a market forecast. So join us in video 4 for that. In the meantime, thanks for watching, and see you next time.