

Visible Firm Benchmarking Self-Assessment Worksheet

How visible is your firm? Are you using the right techniques to reach your target audience? Are you seeing a return on your marketing efforts? This worksheet is designed to help you find the answers.

Use this questionnaire to work through an abridged version of Hinge's Visible Firm benchmarking process. The complete benchmarking analysis accounts for many more variables in greater depths, weighting each data-point based on a proprietary algorithm. In this workshop, we will develop a provisional understanding of your firm's visibility and place within the industry.

Categories Assessed

Marketplace Profile

How well your firm is positioned to compete in the markets where you operate.

Expertise

How effectively your firm's expertise is demonstrated to your target audience such as prospective clients, influencers, or potential employees and business partners.

Visibility

How visible your firm is to your target audience such as prospective clients, influencers, or potential employees and business partners.

Business Development

How effective your firm's process is for increasing engagement with potential clients, identifying qualified opportunities and turning them into new business.

Marketing Infrastructure

How capable your marketing infrastructure is of supporting the activities of a high-growth firm.

Impacts

To what extent your firm is enjoying the impacts expected in a high-growth, high-visibility firm.

Instructions

In this abridged version of the Visible Firm benchmarking exercise, we will examine each category's top five indicators. For each statement, select the number (on a scale from 1 to 5) that best represents your firm and write it in the box labeled "Score." There are three statements or anchor points for your reference that are associated with ratings of 1, 3, and 5. For example, if you're somewhere between a 3 and 5, give yourself a 4.

Example



SCORE: 4

Marketplace Profile

1. *Your firm has a clearly defined, limited in scope, and well-articulated target audience.*



1
Your firm has a broad audience, across many industries, revenue sizes, and organizational roles.

2
3
Your audience is limited to multiple industries, firm revenue sizes, geographic markets, or decision-making roles. You may be concerned about focus.

4
5
Your firm has a clearly defined, well documented profile of a narrow target audience, including a target industry, revenue size, decision-making roles, key issues, and psychographics. This profile is well understood and widely enforced.

SCORE:

2. *Your firm does systematic, primary research on your target audience regularly.*



1
We don't feel the need to do research on our target audience.

2
3
We have done research on our clients, but don't do it regularly or frequently.

4
5
We conduct primary, original research on our target audience at least quarterly.

SCORE:

3. *Your firm has easy to understand, believable, and provable differentiators that are important to your audience.*



1
We're not sure if we have the right differentiators.

2
3
We have differentiators we believe are good, but aren't sure because we get a lot of pushback on price.

4
5
We're sure our differentiators are easy to understand, believable, and clearly important to our audience.

SCORE:

4. *You do not face growing competition from powerful firms.*



1
We do have increasing competition from powerful competitors.

2
3
We have growing competition, but are staying ahead of it.

4
5
We're recognized as the market leader.

SCORE:

5. You have specialized solutions to issues that are important to your clients.



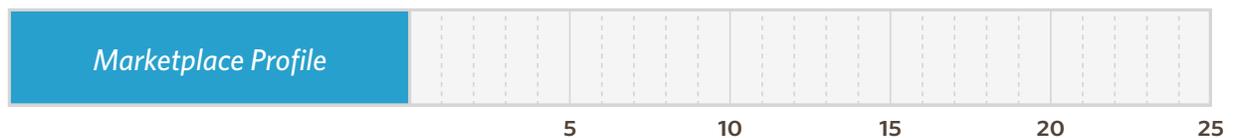
1
Our firm offers a wide variety of services and can address many issues.

3
We are specialized, but other firms share the same specialization.

5
We have very specialized services and solutions that no one else offers.

SCORE:

Your Total Marketplace Profile Score



Expertise

1. Your firm has nationally recognized experts in the services that you offer.



Our firm has experts on staff recognized in-house as the “resident” expert, but not beyond the firm.

Our firm has experts that are beginning to be recognized on a regional or national scale.

Our firm has one or more nationally recognized experts whose name is known by almost everyone in the industry.

SCORE:

2. Your firm or your experts have a book reflecting your specialized expertise.



We have not published a book.

We have published a book relevant to our industry expertise, but it is not a best seller or standard reference.

We have published a book relevant to our industry expertise that has achieved “best seller” status or is very widely recommended throughout our industry.

SCORE:

Expertise (cont'd)

3. Your firm does original research in your area of expertise and/or on issues important to your clients, and is widely cited by industry publications and opinion leaders.



We do not conduct original research on our target area of expertise or on issues important to our clients.

We do original research, but it is not widely cited by peers or publishers

We are an industry leader and pioneer, conducting primary research on emerging industry trends or issues. Research by our firm is widely cited and referred to by industry peers and publications.

SCORE:

4. Experts within your firm are invited to do presentations and keynote addresses to your target audience.



We are not regularly asked to do presentations or keynote addresses.

We do some speaking but need to evaluate it and may not always receive top billing.

Experts within our firm are invited to give keynote speeches at nationally or internationally recognized conferences. They are THE go-to person and command top billing.

SCORE:

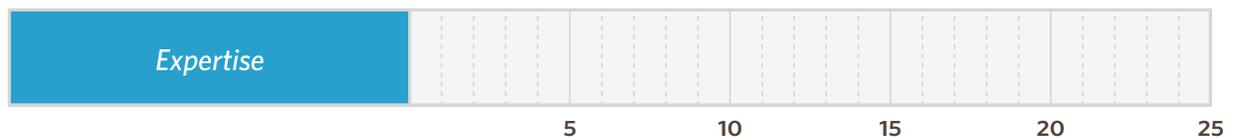
Expertise (cont'd)

5. Your firm does regular, frequent blogging and/or articles on your firm's blog.



SCORE:

Your Total Expertise Score



Visibility

1. Your firm incorporates Search Engine Optimization (SEO) best practices in your marketing and/or runs Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising campaigns.



We don't focus on search engine rankings or PPC advertising.

We have done SEO or PPC but are not sure we are seeing a positive return.

We are heavily focused on SEO and/or PPC, monitoring it, and are seeing a positive return.

SCORE:

2. Your firm contributes guest blog posts or articles regularly to outlets (i.e. blogs, journals, magazines) read by your target audience.



We don't contribute blog posts or articles to outside publications.

We do it as often as we can but not every month or not necessarily in the right publications.

Our firm or practice posts a blog at least once per month in outside publications read by our target audience.

SCORE:

Visibility (cont'd)

3. Your firm does regular, frequent webinars or other online events attended by your target audience.



SCORE:

4. Your firm and professionals are active on social media followed by your target audience.



SCORE:

Visibility (cont'd)

5. Your firm is approached by business or marketing partners who want to work with your firm.



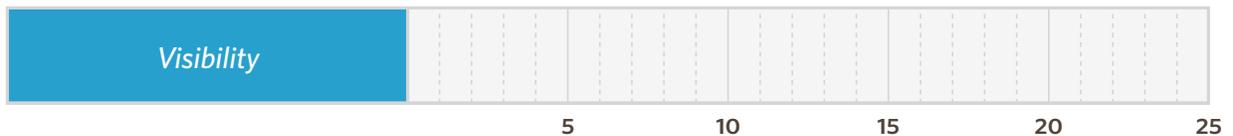
Partners do not approach us. We would need to approach them.

We both seek out and receive invitations for business or marketing partnerships.

We have no need to seek out business or marketing partnerships, they approach us. We can be highly selective with the partnerships considered.

SCORE:

Your Total Visibility Score



Business Development

1. Your firm offers formal business development or sales training for all professionals involved in developing new business.



We don't have formal business development / sales training.

We have some training, but not for everyone.

We have formal training for all client facing professionals.

SCORE:

2. Your firm has a "funnel" or "pipeline" system that systematically qualifies prospects and moves them to higher levels of engagement. You regularly collect data on progress through the pipeline and make adjustments based on that information.



We don't have a formal, documented process for prospect qualification and development.

We have a general process, but we are not consistent in implementing it or tracking progress and results.

We have a formal, documented process that is consistently implemented. Data is tracked each week and adjustments are made based on the results.

SCORE:

3. Your firm has a regularly scheduled system of outbound communication with clients and prospects such as newsletters, emails or phone calls.



We communicate with clients and prospects from time to time but not consistently.

We have some regular communication, but not sure how well it works.

We have a well thought out program that is consistently implemented and is effectively tracked.

SCORE:

4. Your firm offers regular opportunities for substantive and insightful conversations with clients, prospects and/or teaming partners about their needs.



We have conversations as time allows.

We have plans but different people approach it differently.

We have specific offers for substantive conversations with prospects, clients, and business partners.

SCORE:

Business Development (cont'd)

5. Your firm has a standardized, repeatable process for producing compelling proposals.



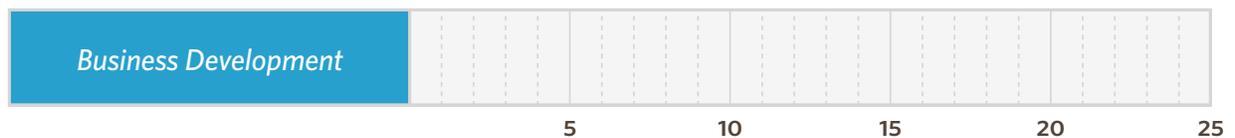
Proposals are done differently by different people.

We try to be consistent, but quality varies.

We follow a consistent, repeatable process and produce very compelling proposals.

SCORE:

Your Total Business Development Score



Marketing Infrastructure

1. Your firm has a written brand positioning statement and specific messaging to each important segment of your target audience.



We don't have a firm-wide written brand positioning statement or formal messaging to each target audience.

We have a brand positioning statement in place but it may be outdated or incomplete.

Our written brand positioning statement incorporates relevant, believable, and provable differentiators and messages are tailored to clearly defined target audiences.

SCORE:

2. Your firm has a modern website that reflects your brand positioning and shows visitors how you can help them.



Our website is out of date and/or not very effective.

Our website is not bad, but it could certainly be improved.

Our website is modern looking, easy to navigate and mobile responsive. It reflects our brand positioning, and shows visitors what we do and how we can help them.

SCORE:

3. Your firm has CRM/Marketing Automation tools that allow you to manage and track the impact of your efforts.



We don't have these tools.

We have some of these tools, but don't get the most from them.

We have these tools and use them to implement, track, and adjust our marketing efforts.

SCORE:

4. Your firm has accurate and up to date social media profiles for your firm and key professionals on all platforms widely used for business by your target audience.



Our firm isn't on social media.

Our firm has social media profiles set up, but are not updated regularly.

Our firm has active, robust social media profiles that reflect brand positioning and are updated frequently (at least weekly).

SCORE:

5. Your firm has compelling, up to date marketing materials, including video, explaining how you help your clients.



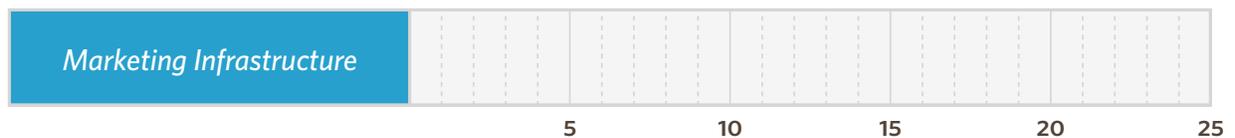
We have some marketing materials, but they are outdated or not of professional quality.

We have mostly up-to-date marketing materials that are of professional quality, but others are needed.

We have compelling, up to date marketing materials, including video, explaining how we can help our clients.

SCORE:

Your Total Marketing Infrastructure Score



Impacts

1. *Your firm has enough business leads seeking you out to allow you to be selective and maintain margins.*



We could definitely use more leads and/or better quality leads.

We are consistent in lead generation or lead quality, but not both.

We have plenty of high quality leads and can be very selective.

SCORE:



We have to educate our leads about our services and value.

We have some leads that are well educated about our services and value.

Our leads are well educated and understand our services and the value we offer.

SCORE:

3. Your firm is able to attract top talent in sufficient numbers to support growth.



SCORE:

4. Your firm is growing many times faster than your industry as a whole.



SCORE:

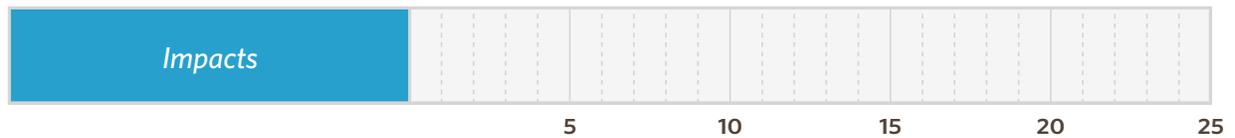
Impacts (cont'd)

5. Your firm is at least twice as profitable as your closest competitors.



SCORE:

Your Total Impacts Score



Benchmarking Your Firm

In the table below, shade the box up to the sum total for each section. For example, if your *Marketplace Profile* total score was 19, shade up to the number 19 in that section of the table below.

SECTION	SCORE				
<i>Marketplace Profile</i>					
<i>Expertise</i>					
<i>Visibility</i>					
<i>Business Development</i>					
<i>Marketing Infrastructure</i>					
<i>Impacts</i>					
	5	10	15	20	25

Now add up the ratings for each of the five sections and write your total score below.

TOTAL SCORE
30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110 120 130 140 150

What does my score mean?

- A score of 135-150** The profile of your firm is characteristic of other high-growth firms that allow you to increase visibility, own a niche in the marketplace, and grow.
- 105-134** Your firm is on the right track, but could improve in key areas.
- 104 and Below** Your firm faces important opportunities to build your visibility and grow.

About the Visible FirmSM Program

Designed to deliver more referrals, higher profits, and faster growth, the Visible FirmSM Program will build a powerful marketing platform to engage your audiences and increase your visibility. Based on the most extensive research into high-growth firms ever conducted, the Visible FirmSM Program will ground your marketing in science and leverage your firm’s expertise to draw in the right audiences.