The Competitor Role Check

Plain-English portable decision handoff · Illustrative example

Illustrative example — not a live approval

This four-page handoff is a portable decision record. The populated example is fictional and is not a client result, observed study or external validation.

How search visibility is used

Search overlap supports the assessment, but it does not establish a competitor role by itself. A separately observable and supported publishing, comparison, discovery, transaction or market-access function is required.

The decision chain is: decision details → evidence questions → observable function → role or roles → use in the analysis → permitted conclusions → review or reopen.

Decision details required for an approved handoff

Required detail	Illustrative value
Domain set	Fictional clinic mixed-list classification
Decision	Improve local patient acquisition without mixing unlike domain roles
Customer	Local patient choosing a provider
Commercial result	Booked consultation
Comparable offer	Private clinical consultation
Market / geography	Illustrative local clinic market
Search need / query group	Local treatment, provider-comparison and booking searches
Evidence date	17 July 2026
Record owner	Example owner
Reviewer	Example reviewer

Approval boundary

All ten decision details are mandatory. Missing ownership, review, offering or query information means the classification cannot be completed and the record cannot enter the handoff.

Illustrative classification set

Only complete, ready-to-use, approved and aligned records enter a live handoff

Candidate	Public role	Other supported roles	Use in the analysis
Comparable local clinic	Direct competitor	None	Core competitor
Commercially active clinic with weak search visibility	Direct competitor	None	Core competitor
Health publisher	Search visibility rival	None	Context only
Provider directory	Choice influencer	Market access platform; Search visibility rival	Context only
Appointment marketplace	Transaction gateway	Choice influencer; Market access platform; Search visibility rival	Context only
Review platform	Choice influencer	Search visibility rival	Context only
National information portal	Ranking-only domain	None	Exclude from this decision

Direct-provider protection

A direct provider remains a Direct competitor with no secondary roles when the direct-commercial conditions pass and no additional observable intermediary function is supported. This remains true when search overlap is Supported or Partial.

Provider and platform requirement

A Provider and platform result requires supported direct-commercial conditions, an owned and fulfilled comparable offer, and at least one actual additional supported function. Search overlap alone cannot satisfy the additional-function requirement.

Search overlap without a verified function

When direct-commercial conditions do not pass, search overlap is Supported or Partial, and no observable function has been established, the status is More evidence needed. No final role or use in the analysis is forced. The next action is to verify the domain’s actual publishing, comparison, directory, review, discovery or intermediation function.

Evidence and role stay separate

Evidence describes what was observed. Observable function describes what the domain does. A role is assigned only after the function qualifies.

Permitted uses and conclusion limits

Use each role only for the analytical task its evidence can support

Public role	Permitted analytical use	Prohibited inference
Direct competitor	Comparable offer, pricing, positioning and customer-choice analysis	Do not assume equal scale, resources or unit economics.
Search visibility rival	Search-result composition, content formats, topic coverage and answer visibility	Do not infer product, pricing or commercial dominance from rankings alone.
Choice influencer	Reviews, comparison criteria, trust and referral analysis	Do not treat influence as commercial substitution.
Transaction gateway	Booking, fees, lead access, customer ownership and transaction architecture	Do not infer provider delivery or capacity parity.
Market access platform	Market access, listing rules and platform dependency	Do not use as a direct product or pricing benchmark.
Ranking-only domain	Explain mixed search intent when relevant	Do not use as a business, product, pricing or investment benchmark.

Evidence states and incomplete records

Supported, Partial, No and Unknown remain distinct. Unknown is never converted to No. Missing required decision details means the classification cannot be completed and the exact missing details must be named. Contradictory or unresolved evidence returns More evidence needed or prevents completion; it cannot approve a Core competitor result.

What the record cannot prove

- This record does not establish a legal relevant market or market share.
- It does not prove ranking causality, revenue impact or return on investment.
- It does not create a permanent or universal label for a domain.
- External sources may provide context but do not validate the taxonomy or classify a candidate by themselves.

When more evidence is needed

Use More evidence needed when critical evidence is Unknown, Partial or contradictory, when search overlap lacks a verified function, or when a Context only purpose or exclusion reason is missing. Record the missing evidence and next action instead of forcing certainty.

Approval, handoff and reopening

Preserve reviewer accountability and reopen the record when material conditions change

Handoff eligibility

A record is eligible only when all ten decision details are complete; the calculated and reviewer-confirmed status are Ready to use; approval status is Approved; primary role, complete secondary roles and use in the analysis match; and a final use category is present.

Reviewer conflict control

Prior reviewer-confirmed values are not silently erased. When evidence, function or decision details change, the record is marked Requires re-review, the prior version is preserved and the stale record is excluded until review is completed.

Reopen when	Required action
Decision changes	Reclassify for the new decision.
Market, geography or search need changes	Reclassify for the new scope.
Owned comparable offer changes	Recheck whether the domain is a Provider and platform.
Transaction or customer-data ownership changes	Recheck transaction and market-access roles.
Business model or fulfilment responsibility changes	Recheck the commercial and functional evidence.
New evidence resolves or contradicts the record	Update the evidence and review again.
Evidence becomes stale or is challenged	Revalidate before reuse.

Illustrative approval record

Field	Value
Classification status	Ready to use — illustrative
Approval status	Illustrative example — not live approval
Owner	Example owner
Reviewer	Example reviewer
Next review	When any reopening trigger occurs

Optional technical appendix

For auditors and maintainers only. Readers do not need these identifiers to use the handoff. The controlled logic identity is A20-INTERMEDIARY-CLASSIFICATION-1.0.3. Decision fields are A20-B01–A20-B10; evidence tests are A20-E01–A20-E06; roles are A20-R01–A20-R07; statuses are A20-ST01–A20-ST03; dispositions are A20-D01–A20-D03; visibility-role authority is A20-P14–A20-P20.

Live handoff rule

Use the Article 20 workbook for the complete evidence log and audit history. Generate a live PDF only from a record marked Eligible for handoff.