WeWork is not only a major player in the Coworking industry, they are one of the biggest companies in the world. If you operate within a major metropolitan area then chances are you probably have one as your competition.

This ebook will cover 5 practices you can incorporate into your workspace strategy to “beat” WeWork and continue your growth as a Coworking operator.

We’ve conducted our research and anonymously reached out to various local operators who have experience successfully competing against WeWork. We will show you the five most important steps they’ve covered to keep up with the expansion of their competitor. By following the advice outlined here, you can take the initiative to keep your space a step ahead.
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5 Tips to “Beat” WeWork as a Local Shared Space Operator

WeWork today has a valuation equivalent of $550,000 per customer. If you do the math in some cases you’ll find that the floor WeWork leases in a building is worth more than the building hosting the WeWork.”

WeWork is making changes as we speak. They’re gunning for Corporate Clients, helping them connect and evolve better, and they’re still doing it with community. “There is clearly a huge market for what WeWork provides, despite what the critics have said. Investors don’t normally get out their chequebooks to splash billions on abstract concepts like “community” and “collaboration”, but somehow the company has managed to bottle them up and sell them like no-one else.” They have appointed systems of management to gauge the need for Coworking spaces and meet the demands for millennials, baby boomers, and all the sweet spots in between.

We have five ways in which you, a local Coworking or shard space operator, can stay competitive. We’ve spoken to several operators within major markets who operate spaces adjacent to WeWork, noting what they have done to stand out amongst the competition.

The key lies in the following 5 approaches:

1. Making Sure your Amenities Are Not Just On Point, But They Stand Out
2. Boutique vs. Corporate
3. Focus on Niche Audiences
4. Professionalism
5. Being More Cutting-Edge
About Those Amenities...

It's not just the internet connectivity, wi-fi, and having conference rooms. WeWork has a technical infrastructure in place that inspires collaboration.

They have an app that allows for members to communicate with each other through a messaging system of its own. To make the most you should research this application and find what ways they would succeed and fail to serve your members.

For instance, you should find a way to match their messaging application as well as other methods they have for connecting users within the workspace. Going to a respected workspace technology provider and getting a system for conference room booking, a member portal for communication, and avenues for project collaboration is necessary to keep up.

You should see how you can use your technology to drive collaboration, such as using a portal to assemble parties or projects between members of different companies. Furthermore, you should do your research and see how people are getting to work.

Say you live in a metropolitan area with unreliable public transportation, where many members must drive. If you can offer adequate parking to those in the workspace without having to assess out of pocket fees for the members, that's another way to win.
Boutique vs. Corporate

It’s important to note that WeWork is a competitor to your local Coworking space, but not the enemy. If anything what they’ve done could always be used to your advantage. WeWork made Coworking extremely popular and attractive to real estate investors and the millennial workforce. Now they're in the eyes of corporations, and to compete you can take this both ways.

The first way is to establish yourself to be more professional and corporate. Having better private spaces—such as offering more than glass “fishbowls”. The second way is to attract a bigger Millenial audience by having a design that’s less generic looking and an already unique and established community. The advantage to catering toward a boutique audience is that you can give them a more-dedicated more-personalized level of service suited to your members as well as the local culture. Largely-structured companies are inherently at a disadvantage given how they must operate through a corporate machine that is more standardized.

Having members that have started businesses with other members, as well as members who have forged strong friendships with others will go a long way toward attracting millennial businesses looking for a place to fit in and grow. What you can also do is frequently perform bid comparisons, find what they’re quoting your prospects and beat them to the punch. Don’t just look at it in terms of pricing though, make sure you know if your local competitor is more geared toward start-ups and established businesses.

You will find the way. They spend a great deal of money trying to know what you know about your own backyard. You need to master the lay of the land, one of the most important elements to Sun Tzu’s Art of War. By doing this you will always have a “homefield” advantage over your competitor.
Focus on Your Niches

It’s very important to understand that Coworking or shared space is not a “One Size Fits All” type deal. WeWork is now trying to differentiate and provide a service more specific to their members. Smaller spaces that are thriving are doing so because of a deep commitment to creating a strong, mutually-supportive community.

Some of these niche Coworking communities can be for a cause such as a space for artists, a space for all women, or a section for law offices that rely on having similar items in common to assist with working together. These communities bring people together and create new opportunities through collaboration. Best of all, this is all done organically.

With an authentic social connection, taking an active part in the local entrepreneurial scene, and having a genuine interest in the growth of your members business endeavors, you can more than certainly differentiate yourself.

Some people want that experience that Starbucks brings, but a Niche community wants something more handcrafted. If you can give them a sip of the special magic in the small batch brew, you can show members that your approach is more suited to their growth.
Professionalism

By getting to know the culture and layout of the WeWork space located by you, take the opportunity to see in what ways you can be taken more seriously in the eyes of established, professional businesses as well as the major corporations.

By showing that you can provide the amenities and benefits to Coworking, while giving special attention to detail in providing an environment that is more comfortable to them, you can go a long way.

Just because WeWork is focusing on attracting corporate clientele, and companies such as Dell has leased their spaces, doesn’t mean they have the experience and expertise of an operator who has walked the fine line between Executive Suites, Business Centers, and Coworking.

These same corporate entities could also utilize your Coworking or shared space for short-term contracts and assignments outside of its home base.” It’s best to get creative in attracting corporate clientele and offering a more advantageous experience for them.
Make WeWork look like their predecessors

Several local operators have said that with the exorbitant growth of WeWork they could very well go to way of Regus. Whether or not this is true is up to them, but you can sure leverage your space to make them look like one. For one thing, operators have noted that they've been able to attract members from WeWork by offering contracts free of hidden fees.

By using a system in place to make your pricing clear and without complications, you can beat WeWork by beating bureaucracy to the punch. By making your pricing all-inclusive, and managing your space to streamline for profitability, you can provide a better experience. The truth is that WeWork isn't innovating as much as it's just cleaning up the perception left by other large providers by trying to bring a cleaner and more organic Coworking environment into the mainstream. This is where it's time to differentiate. According to an article by The Independent, “WeWork designs and manages the space for them.

In its latest offering, the company even goes into clients’ own buildings and redesigns their spaces for them. But the company is now facing a difficult balancing act. As it grows bigger by the day, it needs larger clients to fill increasingly space. This is a solution to a key problem.

WeWork takes on long leases, of up to 25 years, but rents out its space to people on a flexible one-month basis, leaving it vulnerable if people leave in large numbers. Corporates take the space for longer, which provides greater stability. But does it not detract from the cool credentials on which WeWork is built if a team of, say, management consultants, move in and take up half a floor? If the balance is wrong, WeWork risks alienating the very customers on which its huge success relies. For now, though, there's no sign yet of an exodus of hip startups – most of, many of its clients still fall into this category.”

By understanding how your local WeWork is locking in members, you can create new opportunities on the fly and beat them the same way WeWork is beating their competitors. It’s possible, it just takes awareness.

In summation, it's not as David and Goliath as you think. It's about mastering the experience in the same way they are using their time and resources. By understanding the lay of the land (your area), you can research and see how you can take them on these five fronts. Make your amenities stand out, find where to go boutique, cater to your niches, one-up the professionalism, and leverage your space and community, your space will stay thriving even under the shadow of the multinational giants.
About WUN

WUN provides all the tools needed to grow a smart and connected shared workspace.

Designed for overcoming operational complexities, KUBE by WUN is an award-winning Workspace Management Software and Technology Platform empowering operators to increase revenue, maximize productivity, and build community.

KUBE by WUN provides a complete package for software, data, internet, voice, as well as 24/7 door access. KUBE empowers operators and members with greater accessibility when it comes to billing, booking spaces, managing opportunities, and communication. Over 80,000 members utilize WUN’s technological solutions across the world making WUN an industry leader in providing avenues for automation, integration, and collaboration.

Learn more about how a workspace management platform can optimize your Coworking and Shared Space at:
www.wunsystems.com