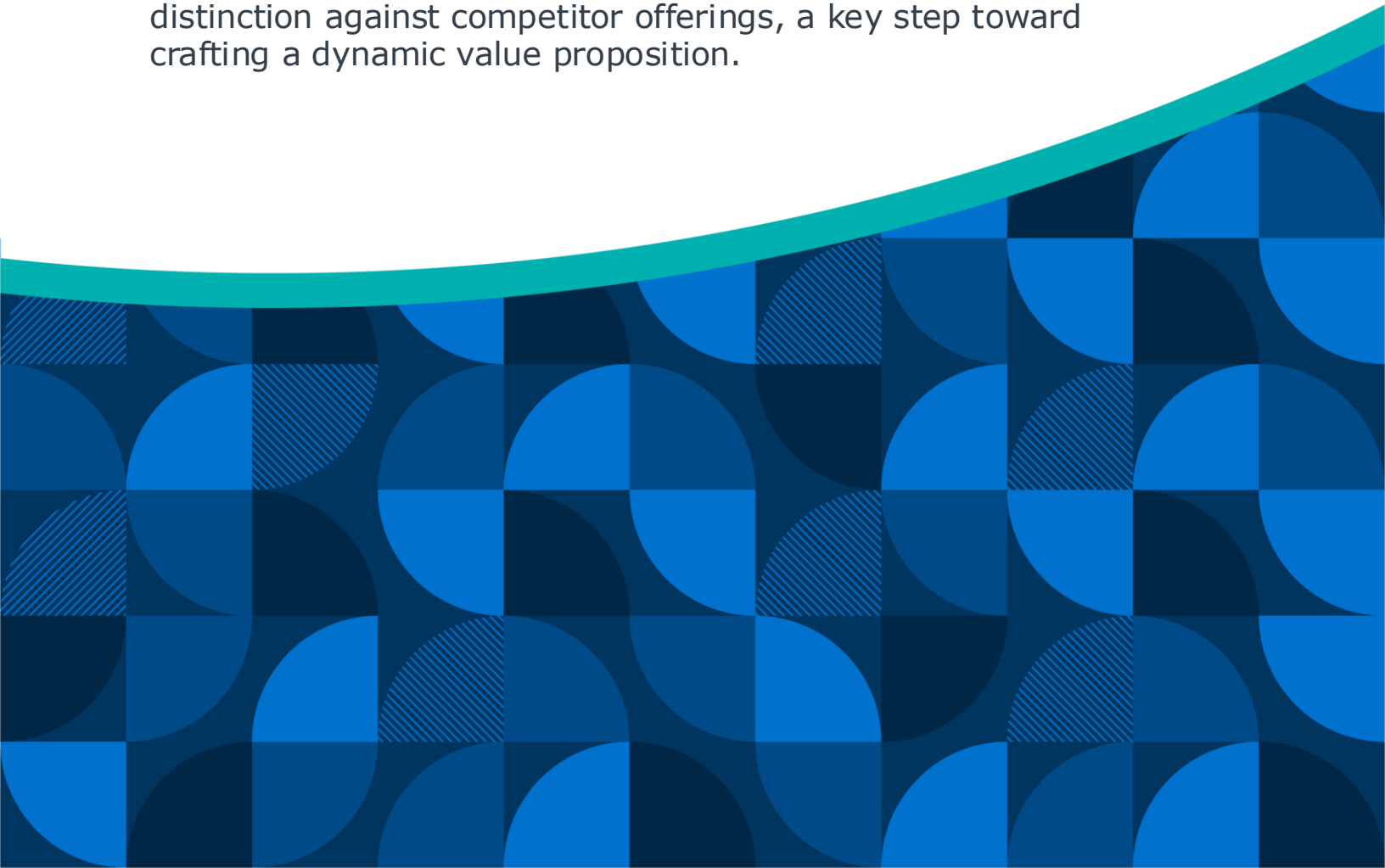




DYNAMIC VALUE PROPOSITION: DISTINCTIVENESS TOOLKIT

# Assessing Distinctiveness of School Offerings

This toolkit aims to help schools assess school offerings for distinction against competitor offerings, a key step toward crafting a dynamic value proposition.



# Independent School Executive Forum

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*Use this guidance for an overview of how to use this toolkit and how it fits into the larger 3-step process to achieve a dynamic value proposition.*

**School Offerings Distinctiveness Assessment. . . . .Pg. 5**

*Use these resources to determine which of your school offerings are most distinct and then plot each offering on the matrix using its relevancy and distinctiveness score.*

# How to Use This Toolkit

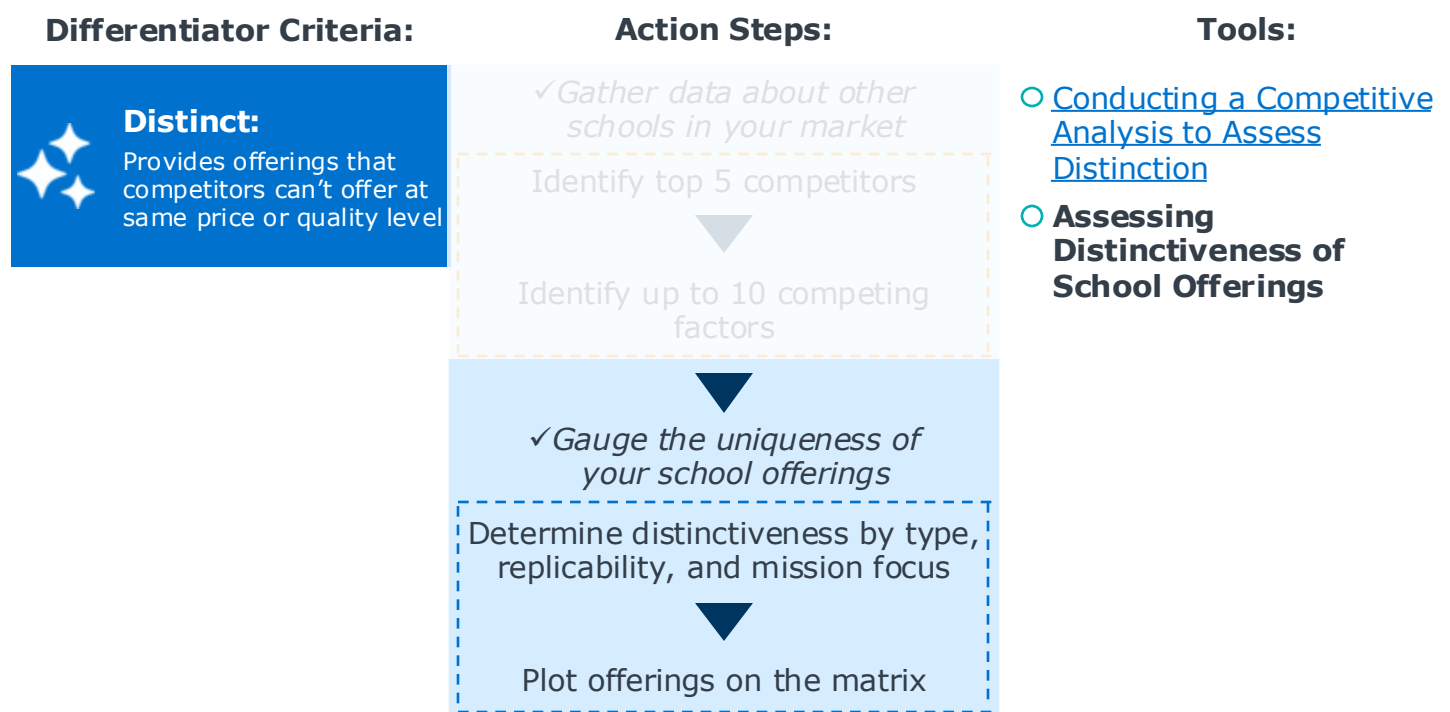
Independent schools often fall into the trap of trying to be ‘better’ instead of truly different. Simply keeping up with competitors or offering marginal improvements won’t attract more families—or set your school apart. True differentiation happens when your strengths directly address family needs (relevant) and do so in ways competitors can’t easily match (distinct). That’s the differentiation sweet spot.

This toolkit is *one of two distinctiveness toolkits* that will assist schools in completing step 2 of EAB’s 3-step dynamic value proposition. This tool should be used after you conduct your competitive analysis to assess distinction. Refer to **p. 5** of [EAB’s Value Proposition Management System Implementation Guide](#) for an overview of the 3-step process, and **p. 10** for an overview of step 2.

This toolkit starts with a school offering distinctiveness rubric exercise that will allow schools to answer questions about each relevant offering and calculate a distinctiveness score based on the answers. From there, schools will record the relevancy and distinctiveness scores for each offering, plot the offerings on the value differentiator matrix, and determine next steps using the matrix key.

See the graphic below for a step-by-step overview and track your progress using the action plan checklist on **p. 11** of the Implementation Guide.

## The Value Proposition Management System: Step 2





EAB's Dynamic Value Proposition

# **School Offerings Distinctiveness Assessment**

Use these resources to determine which of your school offerings are most distinct and then plot each offering on the matrix using its relevancy and distinctiveness score.

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## School Offerings: Distinctiveness Scores and Matrix

Follow the instructions below to score your school offerings for distinctiveness. This will further narrow down what should be your school's key value differentiators.

### Instructions:


1. Use the information gathered for each offering in the [Conducting a Competitive Analysis to Assess Distinction toolkit](#) to inform how you score your *relevant* offerings on distinctiveness on **p. 7-8**. Each of your offerings gets its own score.
2. Record the distinctiveness score of each of your school offerings on **p. 8**; relevancy scores from **p. 14** of the [Assessing Relevancy of School Offerings toolkit](#) can also be recorded on **p. 9** for your convenience.
3. Plot one point for each of your offerings on the matrix on **p. 10**. Refer to the suggested next steps on **p. 11** to determine which of your offerings you should invest in, refine, or deprioritize.
4. Complete the reflection questions on **p. 12** to consider additional steps your school can take toward investing, refining, and deprioritizing offerings.

## School Offerings Distinctiveness Rubric

Answer the following questions about your school offerings to the best of your knowledge. Leverage the data collected in your [Conducting a Competitive Analysis to Assess Distinction toolkit](#) on **pp. 12-16 to make your self assessment as accurate as possible.**

Repeat this assessment for up to 10 of your offerings (that ideally already have relevancy scores). Use the 3-point rating scale to answer the four competitive analysis questions below. For each question, add up the points in each section to get your total distinctiveness score. Track the scores on **p. 8** and plot them on the Value Differentiator Matrix on **p. 10**.

**Note:** For question #2, if the offering is deemed not distinct, please enter 0 in the Point Count column.

 <b>Distinctiveness</b>	<i>1 point</i>	<i>2 points</i>	<i>3 points</i>	<i>Point Count</i>
1. How many schools in your peer set are competing on this same (or similar) offering?	6+	3-5	0-2	_____
2. What is the type of distinctiveness of this offering?	<i>Quantitative difference</i>	<i>Different kind of program</i>	<i>True paradigm shift</i>	_____
3. How replicable is this school offering?	<i>Easily replicable</i>	<i>Difficult to replicate</i>	<i>Not replicable</i>	_____
4. Does this offering tie to a distinct core value, deepening the school's overall differentiation?	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	_____
Sum of Distinctiveness Score _____				

## Distinctiveness Score Tracker

Write distinctiveness scores for each relevant school offering in the table below.

### Distinctiveness Scores

<b>School Offering #1</b>	
<b>School Offering #2</b>	
<b>School Offering #3</b>	
<b>School Offering #4</b>	
<b>School Offering #5</b>	
<b>School Offering #6</b>	
<b>School Offering #7</b>	
<b>School Offering #8</b>	
<b>School Offering #9</b>	
<b>School Offering #10</b>	



## Gather Relevancy Score for School Offerings

Gather your relevant school offerings and accompanying relevancy scores from the Assessing Relevancy of School Offerings toolkit in the table below.

### Relevancy Scores

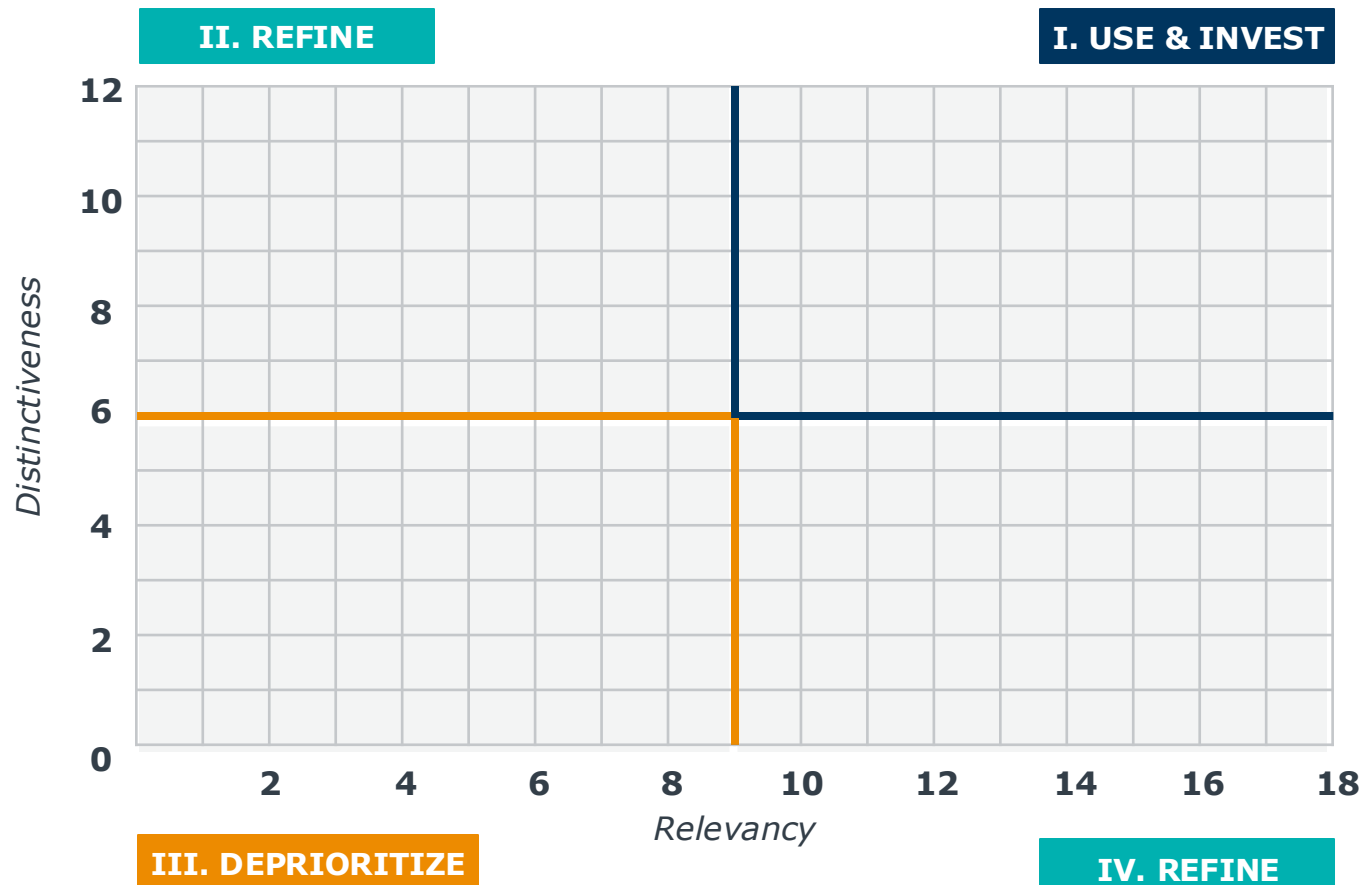
<b>School Offering #1:</b>	
<b>School Offering #2:</b>	
<b>School Offering #3:</b>	
<b>School Offering #4:</b>	
<b>School Offering #5:</b>	
<b>School Offering #6:</b>	
<b>School Offering #7:</b>	
<b>School Offering #8:</b>	
<b>School Offering #9:</b>	
<b>School Offering #10:</b>	

## Value Differentiator Matrix

Write relevancy scores from step 1 along with your newly computed distinctiveness scores for each school offering on the lines below. Using these scores as the x and y-coordinates, plot each data point on the below Value Differentiator Matrix.

Survey Question Scores	Offering 1	Offering 2	Offering 3	Offering 4	Offering 5
Sum of Relevancy Score (X-Axis)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sum of Distinctiveness Score (Y-Axis)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Survey Question Scores	Offering 6	Offering 7	Offering 8	Offering 9	Offering 10
Sum of Relevancy Score (X-Axis)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sum of Distinctiveness Score (Y-Axis)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____



## Value Differentiator Matrix (cont.)

For each point you plot on the matrix, reference the below guide for suggested next steps. Then, use the below space to list each offering under its respective quadrant.

### Value Differentiator Matrix Key

#### USE & INVEST

##### Quadrant I

- This offering should likely become a key value differentiator.
- Consider investing more resources into this offering to further emphasize its effectiveness and distinctiveness.

#### REFINE

##### Quadrant II & IV

- This offering may benefit from greater refinement, especially if it is also distinct from your competitors.
- Assess what changes need to be made to make this offering more relevant or more distinct.

#### DEPRIORITIZE

##### Quadrant III

- This offering should likely NOT become a key value differentiator.
- Consider deprioritizing or even disinvesting in this offering to focus resources & energy into more relevant/distinct offerings.

#### USE & INVEST

##### Quadrant I

#### REFINE

##### Quadrant II

#### DEPRIORITIZE

##### Quadrant III

#### REFINE

##### Quadrant IV

## Reflection Questions and Next Steps

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Answer the following reflection questions about the exercises completed on the previous pages. Then, determine potential next steps for your school.

### Reflection Questions

1. Of the school offerings that fall under **invest**, which do you already leverage within your value proposition? Did this exercise reveal any school offerings on which you should double down?

2. Of the school offerings that fall under **refine**, what measures are needed to increase their relevancy and/or distinctiveness? For each of these offerings, consider if the investment of time and resources could be worth the expected outcome?

3. Of the school offerings that fall under **deprioritize**, could you maintain status quo while investing less time and fewer resources into this offering? In other words, could you lower the operating threshold of this program without students, families, and faculty feeling a tangible impact? Reminder: Deprioritizing certain offerings allows you to prioritize programs that will set your school apart.

Source: Osterwalder, A. Pigneur, Y., Bernarda, G., Smith, A., *Value Proposition Design*, 2014; EAB interviews and analysis.



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