

11 Steps To A Unique Selling Point

It's often a problem when we start our own businesses, because we know everything about our product or service, so that's what we want to talk about.

But, in the nicest possible way, customers don't care. They care that it will make them richer, more successful, less stressed, more attractive, etc.

So creating a USP, or Unique Selling Proposition, is going to be a big part of getting into your customer's mindset.

A USP is one of the basics of effective marketing and business, that has stood the test of time. It is the distinguishing advantage you state in all your marketing, advertising and sales.

A USP can help customers by saving them time when they are considering buying a product or service. By stating simply and clearly why your product or service is different, it will stand out from the competition. You can create different USPs for every product or service in your range if appropriate. Or you can create a company-level USP, focusing on your incredible customer service or technological investments, for example.

Every business needs a USP for its products and services. We are faced every day with over 5000 sales and marketing messages – to stand out in this crowded marketplace you must be better, faster, cheaper, nicer or more exclusively than your competitors.

Why would people be interested if your proposition is no different to your competition? Emphasise what makes your service special and new. Unless your code of practice prevents you from claiming superiority over your competitors, you should put as much emphasis as you can behind your USP, and either imply or state directly that you are the only company to offer these things.

The process of identifying a USP helps you to focus on the key benefits that help to sell your products or services. And as I'm sure you know by now, the three key areas for focus in marketing are BENEFITS, BENEFITS, BENEFITS!

Here are 11 steps to a really unique USP:

1. Start with the features of your products or services
2. Understand how and why your customers use them
3. Identify features of your competitors products or services
4. Choose one product or service that is most profitable or you have most information about
5. Write all the features down the left hand side of a piece of paper
6. Against each feature, write the benefit to the customer of that on the right hand side (an easy way to get into the mindset is to write "which means that..." after the feature)
7. Rank the benefits in order of priority, based on your customer's needs
8. Consider whether each benefit is standard in your industry or unique to you
9. If the benefits are not unique, think about how you could develop your product or service features to deliver new customer benefits that are not provided by your competitors
10. State your Unique Selling Point(s) consistently in all your marketing communications
11. No USP will last forever. By constantly understanding your customer needs you can keep your products and services at the forefront.

