

# Fruitful Differentiation

As a human being, you are unique. You are one of a kind amongst billions of human beings.

Think of your business in this way. What is special about it? What makes it truly different from your competitors? If it were a person, what would its values be? Or its sense of humour? Or its fashion sense? Or its friends?

There are only three fundamental business strategies: lowest cost, best customer service and differentiation. There are many companies out there who promote their low prices. This is fine - as long as they can sustain low costs. However, many new companies choose low low prices as their differentiation, and go out of business fast fast fast.

Customer service is ALWAYS something you should aim to excel at, whatever your business, so the other fundamental strategy, is 'differentiation'. Another way of saying this is: 'Standing out from the crowd'.

The first question to ask is - what is your USP (Unique Selling Proposition)? Once you know your real USP, there are many things which you can do to make your enterprise 'stand out from the crowd'.

Here is one way in which you can figure out your USP. Set aside at least half a day to do this exercise. Gather together a team of people to help you if you can. Here are the 11 steps you need to complete:

- Start with the features of your products or services
- Understand how and why your customers use them
- Identify features of your competitors products or services
- Choose one product or service that is most profitable or you have most information about
- Write all the features down the left hand side of a piece of paper
- 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)
- Rank the benefits in order of priority, based on your customer's needs
- Consider whether each benefit is standard in your industry or unique to you
- 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
- Once you have your USP, state it consistently in all your marketing communications
- No USP will last forever. By constantly understanding your customer needs you can keep your products and services at the forefront.

Keep educating them about why you are so special. Once you've told them, tell them again

