

# Newsletter

## Finding Your USP

***Before You Do Anything Else, Develop a Compelling Unique Selling Proposition!***

A unique selling proposition (USP) defines your competitive advantage. You must identify what makes you different from your competitors and emphasize these advantages in your marketing.

The ultimate goal of your USP and marketing is to have people say to you... ***"Oh, yes I've heard of you. You're the company who..."*** - And then respond by requesting more information or purchasing.

Building your USP takes some effort, but using a powerful USP will make your job of marketing and selling much easier, enabling you to increase your sales and profits for the same budget.

Each advertisement must make a proposition to the customer. Not just words, not just product puffery, not just slick advertising. Each advertisement must say to each reader: ***"Buy this product, and you will get this specific benefit."***

The proposition must be one that the competition either cannot, or does not, offer. It must be **unique** – either a uniqueness of the brand or a claim is not otherwise made in that particular field of advertising.

The proposition must be so strong that it can move the masses (i.e., to bring new customers to your product).

Example #1 - Package Shipping Industry  
Issue - I have to get this package delivered quickly!

USP - ***"When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight."*** (Federal Express)

Example #2 - Food Industry

### **4X6 Digital Prints Make Low Cost Marketing Pieces:**

Have you noticed that Wal-Mart and other photo services are using the 4" x 6" (postcard size) print as a promotional (loss leader) at prices of \$0.19 each (regardless of quantity)? This provides businesses the opportunity to create glossy marketing pieces in small runs at a very low cost. Simply create your 4X6 ad in MS Powerpoint and save as a JPG file. Take the file (on your floppy disk or USB flash memory stick) to your local Wal-Mart Photo Shop and get as many 4X6 prints as you need. Hand them out at trade shows or similar events. It's a great way to feature new products or new programs in a classy format.

Issue - The kids are starving, but Mom and Dad are too tired to cook!

USP - ***"Pizza delivered in 30 minutes or it's free."*** (Dominos Pizza)

If you're stumped trying to come up with a creative USP, try generating a number of possible candidates (regardless of how outlandish or bizarre) and then, for each, answer the following questions:

- Will my perspective customers perceive this as an advantage?
- Is it significantly different from what my competitors are offering?
- Why my prospective customers actually believe in this USP?
- How will my customers benefit from this USP?
- Will this USP motivate customers sufficiently to actually make a purchase?

Having a USP will dramatically improve the positioning and marketability of your company and products by accomplishing 3 things for you:

- **Unique** - It clearly sets you apart from your competition, positioning you the more logical choice.

- **Selling** - It persuades another to exchange money for a product or service.
- **Proposition** - It is a proposal or offer suggested for acceptance.

Your USP needs to be so compelling that it can be used as a headline that sells your product or service. Therefore, since you want to optimize all your marketing materials for maximum results, create it before anything else (such as advertisements and marketing copy).

Clearly describe the **3 biggest benefits** of owning your product or service. Let's be blunt. Your prospect doesn't care if you offer the best quality, service, or price. You have to explain exactly WHY that is important to them. Think in terms of what your business does for your customer and the end-result they desire from a product or service like yours.

Write your USP so it creates desire and urgency. Your USP can be stated in your product itself, in your offer, or in your guarantee:

**PRODUCT:** "A unique baseball swing that will instantly force you to hit like a pro."  
**OFFER:** "You can learn this simple technique that makes you hit like a pro in just 10 minutes of batting practice."  
**GUARANTEE:** "If you don't hit like a pro baseball player the first time you use this new swing, we'll refund your money."

Identify which needs are going unfulfilled within either your industry or your local market. The need or "gap" that exists between the current situation and the desired objectives is sometimes termed a "performance gap". Many businesses that base their USP on industry performance gaps are successful.

Now take all the details about your product/service/offer from the steps above and sculpt them into one clear and concise sentence with compelling salesmanship fused into every single word.

Versions of your USP will be included in the ALL your marketing materials such as your...

- Advertising and sales copy headlines;
- Business cards, brochures, flyers, & signs;
- Your "elevator pitch", phone, and sales scripts;
- Letterhead, letters, & postcards;

## Retail Roundup.



"What we've done with Concept 20/20 [is offer] more space for our customers to browse," says Tracy Fellows, Canadian Tire's VP, consumer advertising and marketing. "It gives them clearer navigational signals. It inspires them because we can display products more broadly. The aisles are a lot wider and it's a lot friendlier, exciting and more inspiring a shopping experience." Merchandise offerings have also been spruced up - including the addition of the Debbie Travis line of products, for example - as part of an effort to attract the female consumer to the stores and completely discard its auto parts-only roots. Today, shoppers go to CTC for four reasons: driving, living, playing and fixing. This has been the foundation of the sizable rejuvenation of the brand, and to underscore the point, the words are now prominently displayed in large, red letters in the bulk of its stores.

**WAL\*MART**® Wal-Mart Canada has been expanding its range of photo-related products, an effort that e-mail is helping to sell to shoppers by bringing images into their inboxes that are often timed to seasonal demand. The winter hockey season, for example, coincides with e-mails showing suggested gifts such as player cards inserted with photos of team members or coaches. For Mother's Day, a big seller is blankets adorned with the image of child's photograph. E-mail promotions have also been effective at promoting personalized photo calendars that can be designed to begin with any month of the year. Instead of selling calendars in January and then offering them at 75% off the rest of the year, Wal-Mart can e-mail offers for photo calendars for Mother's Day that run from May to April.

- Website & Internet Marketing.

Be bold when developing your USP but be careful to ensure that you can deliver. Your USP should have promises and guarantees that capture your audience's attention and compels them to respond to you. Having a strong USP can make your business a big success, or a big failure if you don't deliver on it thereby ruining your reputation. In the beginning, it was a challenge for Federal Express to absolutely, positively deliver overnight, but they developed the system that allowed them to deliver the promise consistently.

**"Don't forget that it (your product or service) is not differentiated until the customer understands the difference." – Tom Peters**