

## **3 Step Process to Developing an Effective USP**

### **By Debbie Allen**

Developing your USP (unique selling position) requires some brand-storming and creativity. One way to start is to analyze what clients say about the services you provide. What are the biggest and best benefits you have to offer? Also pay attention to how other companies use their USPs to their advantage.

This process requires careful analysis of your marketing message to your 'ideal' client. If you analyze in detail what you have to offer (not just your products or services) you can learn a great deal about how to distinguish yourself from the competition.

For example, the late Charles Revlon, founder of Revlon, always used to say he sold hope, not makeup. Some airlines sell friendly service, while others sell on-time service. Neiman Marcus sells luxury, while Wal-Mart sells bargains.

Each of these is an example of a company that has found a USP on which to hang its marketing strategy to stand out.

Here is a 3 step process to help you uncover your USP and use it to jumpstart your marketing results:

1. Put yourself in your customer's shoes.

Too often, entrepreneurs and business owners fall in love with their product or service and forget that it is the customer's needs, not their own, that they must satisfy.

Learn how to step back from your daily operations and carefully scrutinize what your customers really want. And remember, price is never the only reason people buy. If your competition is beating you on pricing because they are larger or more well known, you have to find another sales feature that addresses the customer's needs and then build your marketing efforts around those benefits.

2. Know what motivates your customers' behavior and buying decisions.

Effective marketing requires you to be an amateur psychologist. You need to know what drives and motivates customers. Go beyond the traditional customer demographics, such as age, gender, race, income and geographic location, that most businesses collect to analyze their sales trends. Cosmetics and liquor companies are great examples of industries that know the value of psychologically oriented promotion. People buy these products based on their desires (for pretty women, luxury, glamour and so on), not on their needs.

3. Uncover the real reasons customers will want to buy from you instead of a competitor.

As your business grows, you'll be able to ask your best source of information: your customers. You will be surprised how honest people are when you ask how you can improve your service. If your business is just starting out, you won't have a lot of customers to ask yet, so "shop" your competition online instead. Do some research on [www.Google.com](http://www.Google.com) and find out who your competition is pay attention to what they are using to make themselves stand out. Then go one better!

Be Brutally Honest for Best Results

Once you have gone through this 3-step process, you need to take the next step. Clear your mind of any preconceived ideas about your product or service and being brutally honest with yourself.

What features and benefits of your business jump out at you as something that 'really' sets you apart?

What can you promote that will make customers want to do business with you?

How can you position your business marketing to highlight your USP?

Do not get discouraged with this process. I'll support you to help get the final USP defined quickly. But first the initial words must come from you.

Successful business ownership is not about having a unique product or service; it's about making your product stand out in the marketplace.

This is just the beginning to turn more opportunities into business, more sales and more income for your business.

Supporting your ongoing success, Debbie :)