



UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION (USP)

"Freedom means nothing unless it means the freedom to be different" — Marty Rubin

Your Unique Selling Proposition (USP) describes a set of unique features and benefits your product or service offers to your customers. To create or sustain a competitive edge, you must identify your USP and effectively communicate it to your potential market.

The following tips can help you in identifying a clear and concise USP:

1. Understand what customers value in your product or service.

Do a brainstorming session about the criteria that your customers consider during the purchasing process. This exercise should lay the foundation for creating and communicating your unique offer.

2. Rate competitors and identify the top performers in the industry.

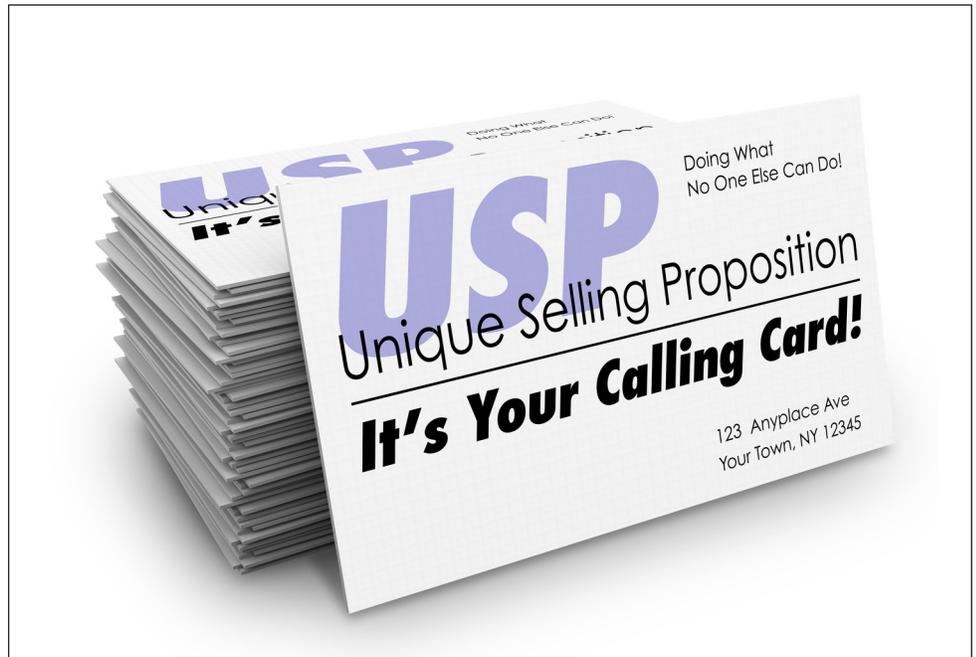
Competitive analysis is key. List all your direct and indirect competitors and rate each of them based on the criteria defined in step 1. At the end of this stage, you should get enough clarity about the alternatives available to your target audience.

3. Identify and analyze your rank in relation to the competition.

Rate your company as well to understand if there might be any gaps or opportunities for capturing the attention of potential customers.

4. Develop a simple, unique, and concise USP.

Beyond your USP being simple, unique and concise, it has to be one that resonates with your market. Which aspects of your service need to be included is relative, but remember



that the most successful USPs almost always share two things: they are memorable and difficult to copy.

5. Give yourself enough time to perfect your USP.

Make sure to spend adequate time developing the perfect USP because as soon as you start promoting it, your competitors will take notice and start improving theirs. Taking time and lots of creative input ensures that once your USP is ready to meet the market, it will be strong enough to keep the competition at bay.

6. Be consistent with your USP but don't forget to revise it over time.

Once you have created the ideal selling proposition, share it often, making sure you are consistent with its use. Your customers will start recognizing your company by your USP, but if you see a need do not hesitate to tweak it as you go. Business is a living and breathing thing that always evolves!

MENTORING AT WORK

“The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves.” — Steven Spielberg

Mentoring is a relationship in which one professional, usually someone more experienced and often senior in an organization, helps another discover more about his or her personal qualities, capabilities, and potential.

The following checklist will show you how to effectively leverage mentoring within your organization:

1. Pick a mentor with the right skills.

The mentor must have good listening skills, sophistication in using different forms of questions (opened, closed, probing, etc.), the maturity to suspend personal judgment, and experience in giving constructive feedback.

2. Define the mentoring relationship.

Make sure that both the learner and the mentor are clear on what the relationship is, and is not about. If appropriate, consider drafting a formal contract defining the details



regarding the participants' specific roles, responsibilities, frequency of meetings, and obligation to confidentiality. Make sure to set objectives for what the mentoring process is to achieve. Make the objectives relevant, specific, achievable and time-specific.

3. Let the mentorship relationship begin.

In the early stages of the relationship, the mentor needs to take lead. As the learner's confidence grows, the dynamics shifts and control of the learner's development should pass increasingly from the mentor to the learner.

4. Follow progress.

Each time learners reach a milestone, review not only their performance and success but also, lessons learned about themselves. Ask questions such as:

What happened?

How did you handle it?

Why did you handle the situation a certain way?

What did you learn from the experience?

5. Dissolve the mentorship relationship when goals are met.

Even though mentoring relationships between people outside work may flourish for years, inside the workplace, mentoring ends when the objectives are achieved. Having reached this point, celebrate the success of the relationship with a final review of the learner's progress.

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