

USP / Slogan

Introduction

You may be in a situation where you are struggling with the marketing of your business, be it a product or service oriented endeavor. Perhaps, what you are missing is an effective USP or Slogan.

USP is the abbreviation for Unique Selling Proposition. Oftentimes, the USP takes to form of a slogan. Your USP is a carefully crafted, precise statement of why your business is special. Your USP is that unique advantage(s) that distinguishes you from your competitors. Further, your USP should state at least one unique benefit to your customer. Moreover, it needs to be specific, concise, and meaningful.

“Why should I do business with you versus any of the other options that are available to me?”

Your USP must address this very basic, very real, and very important question in your prospects mind. A good USP will also help you to develop the kind of emotional attachment and association that breeds customer loyalty.

What makes a good USP?

Quite simply, a good USP is memorable in the minds of your target prospects and customers. A good USP is intertwined in their thoughts and consciousness to such an extent that when they begin to think of a product or service (which you offer), they immediately think of your company.

Here are a couple examples of some of the very best in USP's:

Domino's: “Fresh, hot pizza delivered to your door in 30 minutes or less, guaranteed!”

Nordstrom's: “Service Above And Beyond All That Is Expected.”

These are very effective USP's because they specifically answer the questions of why I should do business with them. These USP's are meaningful and very specific. Further, these USP's evoke a natural response, a curiosity in the marketplace of “Really? How is that possible? How can you do that?” When your USP can evoke this type of natural curiosity, you have begun to put your message into your target's mind. That's what makes a winning USP.

Elements of your USP:

The following are typical elements of a good USP. You may choose to include any combination of these elements in your USP.

A description of how your products and/or services benefit your customer. People purchase goods and services to solve a problem, relieve a hurt, or make them feel better in some way. You need to focus your marketing message on these types of benefits.

A description of how your products and/or services are better positioned to benefit your customer. Position yourself as an expert in serving the needs of a special group of customers.

A description of how your products and/or services offer better price/value benefits to your customer. This does not necessarily mean that you are the low cost leader in your market. You want to emphasize how doing business with you gives your customer the best overall value for his money.

A description of how your products and/or services offer a unique approach to solving your customers' problems. For instance, you offer a 24/7 technical support line.

Tips on developing your USP:

1. ***Survey your competition.*** Do they have USP's? You can not effectively compete against them if you do not know what you are up against. Research their strengths and weaknesses.
2. ***Survey successful companies in the marketplace.*** Look at their USP's. There's nothing wrong with borrowing ideas from successful companies!
3. ***Put yourself in the role of your customer.*** What is really important to your customer? Start making a list of the things that are important to your customer. Take care not to list the things that are important to you.
4. ***What is your company's unique strategic position?*** What is the unique position that you occupy in the public's mind? What is your company's area of expertise or dominance? What makes you special? It is impossible to be the leader in all categories. So, you need to determine what makes your company unique and what your strategic positioning will be. What is the best battlefield (Strategic Position) for your company to take?
5. ***If you don't know what your strategic position is, then you need to do a survey of your top customers.*** Follow the 80/20 rule to target these key customers. You need to find out why they are doing business with you instead of someone else. You are looking for your real niche or core competency, which is another way of saying your strategic position. Hopefully, what you believe to be your strategic position and what your customers believe will jibe.
6. ***Good positioning differentiates you from your competition and others in your industry.*** You need to get into your prospects' minds through a unique position that is communicated over and over.
7. ***Now, you need to communicate the following things in your strategic position:***
 - Who you are
 - What you do
 - Why you are different
 - How you can benefit your prospects

8. *These benefits answer your customer's question: "What's in it for me?"* People will not do business with you unless there is some benefit to them greater than their current solution.

9. *Benefits do not include vague and unspecific items such as the following:*

- We really care
- Locally owned and operated
- Friendly service

10. *Instead benefits need to be specific to your customer.* Many businesses often confuse features with benefits. A benefit is what a feature will do for someone.

11. *Compare the benefits that you have written down with what your customers' perceive.*

Putting It All Together:

You want your USP to have some emotion. Purchasing is often an emotional decision. Your customers want to do business with you because they like you or your products and services make them look smart. Whatever may be the case; your customers still need cold hard logic and facts to back up their decision. Keep this in mind.

Your USP should be no more than three or four sentences, a paragraph. Ideally, you want your USP to be one sentence long. Keep honing away at your work in progress until you eliminate all the dead weight. Don't stop until you have crafted a concise, powerful USP that you can immediately put into action.

Why is a USP important to your marketing?

The answer is that your USP will be used in all of your marketing. It is the thread that ties all that you that your company is. If your actions do not, in some way, support the furtherance of your USP, and then do not proceed with these actions! That's how important your USP is!

Can you have more than one USP?

Absolutely. However, these USP's must be marketed separately. Also, you might want to avoid having too many USP's. You want to be a specialist, not a generalist in everything.

Get your USP message out there!

It makes no sense to have a finely crafted, concise, and elegant USP and keep it to yourself. You need to make your marketing more cost effective by regularly contacting your target customers and prospects with marketing messages that include your USP.

You need to commit to using your USP regularly for at least six months. Certainly, you can do some fine tuning to the copy and presentation; but, you need to stay the course and not get frustrated if new customers are not stampeding your offices from the start. The only way you'll ever get to the point where your customers think of your name as soon as they start to think about the particular good or service that you offer is with a strong and consistent message. Once you start to get referral calls from people whom you've never previously contacted, you will know that your USP is working with your marketing message.