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Introduction

What is USP?

USP stands for Unique Selling Proposition (or Point) and every business needs one. It's easy to spot a USP once you see one in action. It's the service or product that you offer which no other business is currently offering to their clients.

It's what your business stands for.

It's how you're different.

Your USP is why consumers should do business with you, versus the competition. It'll also be the reason they keep coming back to your business.

And contrary to popular belief, your USP can (and should) change over time, as market needs change, audiences prioritize different things and your overall industry grows and shifts.

That being said, your original USP will continue to deliver on the promise you made – it will just evolve over time.

In this special report, we'll look at a few examples of winning USP's so you can see what a USP is, and how to create one for yourself.

You may be thinking: This isn't going to work. What do I have to offer my customers that my competitors aren't already giving them?

After all, how many clothing stores, groceries, hardware stores, and gas stations are out there?

And yet, each one of them has its own unique selling proposition that attracts a certain type of customer.

HelloFresh, a meal kit delivery company, offers the following USP:

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America's Most Popular Meal Kit.

That's their selling point – what they're offering that the other meal kit companies aren't. They're the most popular choice, which provides social proof and validation. Just this alone will entice new customers to purchase from them so that they too are part of the "club".

Make sense?

If you look at their landing page, they include multiple benefits, all within their USP, such as:

- Offering largest recipe variety on the market of meal kit delivery services.
- They have the most 5-star reviews of all meal kit companies.
- They test each recipe 45 times to make sure each one is simple to make and delicious.
- And finally, they require no commitment, allowing people to cancel at any time.

If you're in the market for a meal kit delivery service, you'll like be attracted to a USP like that:

America's most popular.

Their USP has done the work at showcasing that they're the 'chosen' company – the one that most Americans have decided to use, which goes the distance in assuring potential customers that they should also subscribe to their service.

Take a look at what these USP's actually do.

They go beyond just a catchy phrase or slogan. Each part of their USP tells you one important point about the company's product and service.

Each one highlights something their competitors aren't doing.

And most importantly, every component of their USP answers the question,

"Why should I choose your business over another?"

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And that's the question you should be asking yourself about your own business when it comes time to create a USP.

You may not think that your business has a unique selling proposition... that it isn't different from another, but it is.

Why?

Because no one else is like you. Your story, the reason behind creating your brand, your goals and why/how you plan to help your market are all part of the foundation behind a successful USP.

Weave your own unique story into your notes when coming up with ideas for your USP. But make sure others will relate to it.

Your USP will and always should focus on how your products or services benefit your customer – not how it benefits you – but your own story is often an easy starting point when evaluating your business and how it's different.

So, start by jotting down notes about your business. Cover all angles, including why you decided to start your business and how you will help others.

You must believe in yourself and your business if you want to create a convincing USP. Without confidence and enthusiasm, you're not going to be able to stand out.

You need to be as excited about your products and services as you want your customers to be.

Are you ready to create your own winning USP?

Let's begin!

Creating a Compelling USP

A good USP answers the customer's first question when they discover your product or service:

What makes your product or service different from the competitors? And why should I choose you?

You'll need to do some serious brainstorming to come up with a winning USP. Forming a deliberate USP helps you to focus your marketing strategies. It influences your branding, messaging, copywriting, and other marketing decisions.

Your USP also plays to your own unique strengths and must differentiate between some aspect your target audience actually cares about, otherwise your message won't be nearly as effective.

A compelling USP should offer

More than just a slogan.

Of course, a slogan or jingle is one way your USP can be communicated and become memorable. However, your USP should go beyond that.

Tiffany & Company use their USP to sell jewelry – but is that all they're selling?

Their USP is **“The Right One is Worth Waiting For.”**

Are they selling the diamond ring – or are they selling the idea of a happily ever after?

They're clearly using emotional triggers within their USP to set themselves apart as being special, the go-to company for quality jewelry for that special someone.

Assertive statements that are defensible.

Your USP will be more memorable if it forces customers to make a case against competing products. Just saying “My products are high-quality” isn’t going to cut it. You’ll have to come up with something you can prove they can’t get anywhere else.

For example, if you create online courses, how does your course stand apart from others? Are you the only one offering a certain number of video-based content? Are you updating more frequently? Are you offering bonus auxiliary components not typically found in competitor’s courses?

Look for a way to be unique, even if it’s in a small way. What makes you stand out in the market could come down to the smallest detail so spend time closely analyzing your products and services to determine all of the many ways you could stand out.

What your customers need and want.

If your customers don’t care about your product, being “unique” won’t count for much, right? It’s your job to understand what your customers’ values and offer them a solution to a problem.

Fulfill their needs and wants and they’ll keep coming back for more.

This comes down to thoroughly knowing your market. You should spend time researching your niche or industry inside and out, long before you create your own product or service – and long before you decide on a USP.

The more you know your market, the easier it will be to create a USP that resonates with them, speaks to them and motivates them.

HubSpot, one of the leading companies of Inbound Marketing and Sales solutions, has a great USP when it comes to branding and communicating their marketing messages.

“There’s a better way to grow” is an excellent selling point because it outlines their unique proposition.

You start with their free tools and, as your business grows, HubSpot grows with you (at a price, of course!).

This is an assertive statement – our company offers you a better way – that they can defend and support this with their services, which start out free and increase in price as your company grows and needs more done.

It’s what their target audience wants. After all, when you’re just starting out, you don’t want to pay a lot of money for marketing services. Their USP demonstrates that anyone can get started, regardless of where they are in their career or business development and upgrade to gain access to additional resources as they grow and only when they need them.

And it’s much more than a slogan. “There’s a better way to grow” will garner interest, evoke curiosity (how is it a better way to grow?), and essentially is a winning USP that covers a lot of ground with just a few words.

Let’s look at another effective USP. Ben & Jerry’s indicates, “We make the best possible ice cream in the best possible way.”

Is that more than just a slogan?

Yes, because they carry their policy of sustainability and corporate social responsibility over into everything they do.

Their website links to pages explaining their caring dairy, cage- free eggs, fair trade practices, and non-GMO products. It’s also what their customers want. Today’s consumer cares about the environment, and so they want to buy products that reflect that care.

This is why it’s important to allow your USP to evolve over time. What matters most to your customer base today may change in a few years, so be flexible and willing to change your USP as your market demands it.

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Things to Avoid

When it comes to creating a compelling USP, here are some things to avoid.

Specific marketing strategies aren't always the best USP. 20% off, free shipping with orders over \$100, superior customer service, or a fair return policy – these statements may be convincing, but they're not unique on their own.

They're also not positions that will be easy for you to defend, because your competitors can easily copy your model.

When you get to the point where the only difference between you and your competitor is pricing, you've lost. They're almost always going to be able to undercut your sales prices, or offer better coupons or shipping prices. You'll slip into a deadly spiral of lowering prices only to lose more money.

Instead, focus on incorporating other benefits into your product or service that aren't so easy to copy.

Your USP should demonstrate the position and angle your business takes as a whole. It should be integrated into your products or services, your brand, and the experience you offer your customers. It should mean more than just a few words on a website. It should represent your entire business: what you stand for and what you represent.

Here's a good example of a USP that works very well. Back in the days when women's hosiery was sold only in department stores, the Hanes company came up with a unique idea. Since almost every woman wanted to wear hose, why not sell it in a place they spent at least one day a week in: the grocery store?

They even invented a package that called up the idea of groceries and sold their hose inside a plastic egg. L'Eggs hosiery could then cut prices because their hose didn't have to be pressed, folded, and packaged in a tissue-paper filled box.

L'Eggs then had two USPs they could work with – convenience and price.

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Remember, we want to stay away from pricing as the fundamental basis of your USP simply because once we've lowered our prices, our competitors may do the same and undercut us again.

However, convenience and that unique packaging were enough to set the L'Eggs company apart as the new market leader. Their idea to take a staple of women's fashion and put it in a place that sold other staples was genius, and when they added in that unique (inexpensive) packaging, they were off and running.

Targeting Your Audience

Before you start thinking about your USP, you should think about your ideal customer.

Who's going to be buying your product or service?

What are some of their characteristics?

Knowing your demographics means everything when it comes to creating a USP that will resonate with the majority of your market.

Think about the average age, gender, economic status, and political leanings of your ideal customer. Some businesses even go the extra step and create a snapshot of their ideal customer so that they can begin to visualize their base.

Some entrepreneurs "fall in love" with their own product or service and forget that it's the customer who must come first.

Don't make that mistake! Remember that price is never the only reason a customer makes a purchase. You have to put yourself in your ideal customer's shoes and discover what they really want and what means the most to them.

When you're identifying this person, think about the following: What does your ideal customer really want?

Spend time in some of the places that your ideal customer goes, such as Facebook groups. Read message boards and social media posts. Participate in the conversations and find out what's missing in that customer's life.

What is their need?

What aren't they getting from your competitors?

If you know that, you're halfway to selling them your product or service. And you'll be able to come up with a powerful USP for your business.

How can your product or service solve their problems?

Customers aren't looking for a product or service, they are looking for a solution to a problem.

If your ideal customer chooses your product, how will it impact their life and improve it?

You need to be able to articulate this solution clearly so your ideal customers will choose you over the competition.

What factors motivate their buying decisions? Are they looking for quality? Low prices? Safety or reliability? You need to know why they're looking for whatever they're looking for.

What circumstances will lead them to purchase your product or service instead of looking elsewhere?

Why do your existing customers choose your business over that of your competitors?

By this time, you should have a firm idea of what you have to offer your ideal customer that your competitor doesn't offer.

Now you have to communicate this to your customers in just a few words. This is going to be your unique selling proposition or USP.

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To create a strong USP, you need to analyze the profile of your perfect customer and market your product or service in a way that shows them you can solve their problems and meet their needs. You can give them what they want – something your competitors can't deliver. You'll want to include a little hyperbole at this point to get them excited.

Use words like “only,” “greatest,” “best,” “favorite,” or “first.” You need to communicate your confidence in that USP and using powerful words and triggers is a great way to do it.

Let's look at the cosmetic industry as an example. Cosmetic companies like Revlon don't just sell make-up. They sell glamor, glitz, beauty, confidence and style.

They're solving the customers' needs and helping them feel and look their best. Most customers would say their problem is not feeling glamorous or confident. The cosmetic companies offer a solution to that problem: buy our product and you will feel glamorous and confident. Charles Revlon used to say he sold hope, not make-up.

So, you really need to know your customers inside and out. Understand what their needs are and how you can solve these problems or concerns.

Remember your USP should be aimed at the customer. Instead of “We'll save you money” you should say “You'll save money,” which redirects the focus from you as the business owner to the customer who's doing the shopping.

Look at some long-standing USPs and you'll quickly notice a pattern: they make a promise and their product or service delivers on that promise of change, success or accomplishment.

Creating Your USP: Competitive Edge

Hopefully by now, you should have been able to come up with at least one thing your business is good at and how it is (even slightly) different from the competition.

Now you need to find your **competitive advantage**.

Make a list of your competitors and what they are offering to the market. Which needs are they filling for the customers? What are their unique selling propositions?

Now analyze those competitors. Look carefully at their ads and marketing messages. How are they fulfilling their USPs? How are they distinguishing themselves from the other companies? What exactly are they doing that you can do as well? And more importantly, what are they not doing? Is there an area of the market that's not being covered? Can you exploit that area with your own business and USP?

Your USP isn't just a compelling phrase on your business' home page. In the end, it's how you position your product or service – or even your entire business – to the rest of the world.

Look for a spot in the market where you can stand out from the crowd. There may be dozens of ways you could sell your product or service, but your USP will be the one that best positions your brand according to what your ideal customer cares about – and according to what the competitors aren't doing about it.

You also need to look at those wants and needs that aren't being taken care of at all.

What problems do your ideal customers have that nobody is solving? Is there a way your business can fulfill those needs for them? Can you take advantage of a unique need or want and be the first in a new area of the market?

If you pay attention to your ideal customer and put yourself in their shoes, you can come up with a successful USP.

Think of the key trends in your market as well. What's the business going to be like next year?

In five or ten years? Can you shift your USP to take advantage of those trends?

Maybe the trend is toward more online shopping and your business is poised to take advantage of that. Maybe there's a new product in the works that you can use in the future to reduce your prices, or come up with a totally new product or service of your own. You've got to think ahead if you want your USP to succeed.

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Saddleback Leather's tagline is "They'll fight over it when you're dead."

That phrase just grabs your attention, doesn't it?

What are they claiming here? That their product is so well-made it will outlast its owner. The company even offers a 100-year warranty. When was the last time a company encouraged its customers to put a warranty in their will?

This longevity, especially in a high-end expensive product like a leather bag, is a great USP. Most similar companies are marketing their bags as stylish, but replaceable merchandise – something you'll want to keep buying in order to keep up with the market.

Testing Your USP

Once you come up with a convincing USP, you'll want to test and refine that statement.

Start by interviewing a handful of potential customers and get their feedback on the different ways you're positioning your product or service. You need to see what your USP looks like from the customer's viewpoint.

Your interviews should help you choose the best positioning statement for your business:

What business are you in? Which area of the market do you cover? What products or services do you offer? What are you really selling?

Find out who needs your product or service and you're halfway to your perfect USP.

Your unique selling proposition.

This is the single most compelling benefit you're offering your customers; the unique point that sets you apart from your competitors.

How you deliver on your promises.

What exactly are you promising your customers? How are you going to keep those promises? What are you doing to fulfill their needs?

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Selling your product or service means you must be a bit of an amateur psychologist. You should know what makes your customers buy and what turns them off.

If you're just starting out, you may not have a lot of actual customers to study, so you may need to look at the competition instead. Visit one of the competitors' shops or websites and see what customers are buying. If you can, ask some of them what makes them buy here – what do they get from this competitor that they can't get elsewhere.

Go beyond traditional customer demographics like age, location, gender, income, or race. Figure out the rationale behind those sales. Find out what's drawing them to that particular business and see if you can offer something even better.

As your business grows, you can ask your own customers why they buy from you. You'd be surprised what you can find out if you preface your interview with "I'm trying to improve my business."

The Economist, a well known publication, knows that people want to keep on top of what's going on in the world. They watch the news, and that's just what most newspapers and media sources deliver. However, the Economist realized that customers want more than just a dry rehashing of current events so they added an unexpected twist to that idea. "You've seen the news, why not discover the story?"

Their USP is that in The Economist, you can read the story behind that news. They go above and beyond simply reporting the facts. They dig deeper and give the customer a story instead of just dry news.

Their website says, "Enjoy unrivaled analysis of the issues that lie behind the headlines."

This is also another USP because they claim their stories are unrivaled – and they can back that up with proof.

Why just read the news when you can have the story behind it?

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Communicating Your USP

Your USP should drive your marketing campaigns. No matter if you're creating a landing page, a logo, or a social media post, always be aware of how your USP is clearly represented in all your campaigns.

Remember to make sure your USP starts with "You" instead of "I," even if the "you" is unstated (as in "Save 15% in 15 minutes or less").

If you say "We (or I) can save you 15%," you're shifting the focus away from your customer, where it needs to be, and back onto yourself as the business.

Target your USP to each market you're utilizing. Do your homework and find out what customers in each market are looking for and change up your USP to fit that need.

For example, you'd give a mechanic a different USP than the one you gave to the doctor; you'd use different types of advertising depending on where you're selling. It's not hard to play with the wording a bit and change the USP to fit. Just remember to keep it focused on the customer.

K.I.S.S. This stands for Keep It Short & Simple. You don't want your customers scratching their heads trying to figure out what message you're trying to convey. If they don't get it the first time, they're not likely to read your ad again to see if they can figure it out.

In fact, your USP should be described in a couple of sentences.

You want to keep it short and to the point so that it lends "stickiness" to your campaigns and becomes quickly (and permanently) associated to your brand.

Another thing to avoid is jargon. Keep your language "plain English" (or whatever language you're using) instead of throwing around business slang that customers might not understand.

Offer a solution to their problem. Give your customers the obvious benefit of shopping with you: their lives will be easier or more satisfying if they do. You don't have to state their

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problem in your USP – they already know what that is. But your USP should show that you understand that problem and offer them a solution.

Keep your branding consistent. Everything you put out onto the market, from your website or landing page to your social media posts, should reflect your unique selling proposition. The USP should be a central part of your brand, helping both your current customers and prospective ones to understand what makes your brand different.

You can even add a “USP Bar” onto the navigation of your website. This is a link that quickly (and easily) reminds customers what your unique selling proposition is.

Use icons or images with minimal text. Consider a tagline as well – a short, catchy phrase that embodies your USP. Think of Nike (“Just do it”) or Maybelline (“Maybe she’s born with it”) and you’ll get the idea of a tagline. The point is to make your USP immediately understandable and recognizable as part of your brand.

Conclusion

Your Unique Selling Proposition (or Point) is the foundation of your business. It tells your customer base how you’re different, why they need you, and how they will benefit by taking part in your products or services.

It separates you from the competition and helps you stand out from the crowd.

Take your time studying the competition and better understanding your market. Spend time where your ideal customer goes so you can not only keep a pulse on your market, but so you’re able to create a snapshot of your customer base.

Take a hands-on approach to closely monitoring commonly asked questions, concerns and problems that your market is facing. Then, develop a powerful USP that speaks directly to your audience, makes sense to them and stands out.

Take your time crafting the USP for your business. It’ll be worth it in the end. Without a USP, your product will fade into the shadows, struggle to complete and leave an everlasting

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impression in the minds of your customer base. But with one, you'll set your business up for long-term success.

Your USP is the driving force behind highlighting the value of your product or service so you can create a recognizable brand in your market. There are businesses who have so carefully highlighted their USP that they can charge twice what their competitors charge, and still sell out every single time! To your success,

Two Ways I can Help You Further



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