

McGraw-Hill publications ran a memorable ad many years ago which was so good that I still remember it nearly two decades later.

If you're interested, a copy can be found in David Ogilvy's famous book, *Ogilvy on Advertising*, which everyone should pick up for their marketing library. The advertisement pictures a balding old man, in bow-tie and glasses, sitting in a swivel chair staring at you with a stern countenance.

The grumpy old man is looking at you squarely in the face, saying:

- "I don't know who you are."
- "I don't know your company."
- "I don't know your company's product."
- "I don't know what your company stands for."
- "I don't know your company's customers."
- "I don't know your company's record."
- "I don't know your company's reputation."

Now - what was it you wanted to tell me? ...

Let's face it. Customers do not care about you or your company. They don't care how long you've been in business or how great you are. All they care about is themselves and the all important question, "What's in it for me? How do I benefit? What is the ultimate advantage I get from interacting with you."

You must therefore give prospects a compelling reason to buy from you rather than from someone else. That's why you have to come up with a unique selling proposition.

Tell My Why I Should Do Business With You!

- Why were you motivated to start your business in the first place ... what problem did you set out to address with your business?
 - Are you "famous with your customers" for an special ability?
 - Finish this sentence, "I am most proud of our ability to ..."
 - What would your most loyal customers boast about you?
 - What's the first thing customers think of when they hear your business?
 - Finish these sentences: "We're the best/first/only company to offer ..." and "Unlike our competition, we offer our customers: ..."
 - Our company enhances people's lives by ...
 - What frustrations in dealing with your type of business, do you take away from customers so that they don't have that hassle, headache, fear or worry when they deal with you as compared to others?
 - Do you offer a guarantee? Is yours the longest or best? Guarantees are probably the most powerful USP's possible.
 - Do you offer discounts ... for volume, frequency, or first time purchase?
 - Is your selection the broadest?
 - Are your discounts the biggest?
 - Do you serve a certain size company best, or a certain segment or customer type?
 - Are you the preferred provider of choice for a particular group of any type?
 - What about your service ... is it customized, speedy, great? How can you parameterize it? Are you closest to the customer in terms of customer intimacy? Do you give personal attention? Are you flexible and do you respond immediately?
 - Do you offer free, expedited, or various shipping options? Free shipping is a powerful incentive.
 - How about bonuses or premiums ... do you offer more than your competitors (and are they valuable)? Do you offer anything for free? Free is one of the most powerful USP's.
 - Do you offer deals, such as "buy two for the price of one"?
 - Do you offer better credit terms or easy, long-term payment options? For large ticket items, some marketers say this is the second most powerful USP.
 - Do you have in-house buying clubs or club memberships?
 - Do you offer special prices to sellers or out of season prices?
 - Is after the sale help, advice of consultation available? Are you proactive about it or passive (letting them call you)?
 - Do you have 24-hour assistance, or live-person assistance instead of just e-mail?
 - Working hours ... are you open nights, weekends, holidays, 24 hours?
 - Are you endorsed by an authority or celebrity?
 - Do you have success stories and testimonials? All your copy should list testimonials.
 - Do you carry more stock or inventory ... is a wide product selection instantly available?
 - Are you the preferred brand or vendor for a unique group of customers?
 - Are you the highest quality provider?
 - Do you offer the best quality/price ratio or value/cost ratio?
 - Are you the newest, latest, most innovative, or up-to-date? Are you the marketplace's product leader?
 - Do you have the most documentation? The most proof, evidence or highest credibility factor?
 - What about fashion or styling ... is yours the best, high class, or newest?
 - Do you have a long track record, history or heritage of business?
 - Do you have worked with the customer or client before? (A personal history with the client is a unique advantage.)
 - Do you have the cleanest, neatest or most impressive premises? (As a competitive strategy, McDonald's tries to have the cleanest restrooms in the fast food business.)
 - Is your image the most attractive?
 - Were you referred by others?
 - Do you have clients you can refer to! In other words, can you help customers with their business in other ways, such as by referring people to them once they become your client?
 - Do you have clearer labeling or packaging that is more attractive or easier to use?
 - Do you have installation options?
 - Do you have the most locations, a convenient location, or global offices?
 - Are you using breakthrough equipment?
 - Are your product (service characteristics more enjoyable, easier, exciting? Do you offer the best operational excellence?
 - Do you have favorable publicity ... are you famous in some way?
 - Do you give your customers more than what they need or expect? (This is the best way to establish a reputation.)
 - Is the way you make your product (or perform your service) different than others?
 - Do you best fulfill legal requirements, standards or constraints?

Getting a USP

Crafting Your USP

A Good USP is Marketing Gold

You stand out in the mind of the consumer.

A USP rights competition.

A USP lets you be heard.

The Harvard Business Review reports, there is a 370% greater chance of profitable success for new product or service offerings that are extremely unique versus just being copycat offerings.

The supermarket example

the average family gets 85% of its needs from 150 items

It ignores the other 39,850 items on the shelves.

Most likely, your market is blocking you out and not hearing you. They are on overload.

80% of all ads are forgotten in 24 hours

Of the 20% that are remembered, only 20% of those are influenced by them

Customers will remember exactly one thing about your product or service

It is up to you to make sure they remember the correct claim.

Your message must be:

- simple
- responsible
- believable

You must reduce your message to the one single benefit that stands out in your listener's mind

You must put yourself in the mind of your consumer before reading your message.

USP's Created by Reeves -

- what all of these had in common were - they are all in crowded fields but their USP made them stand out
- "How do you spell relief? R-O-L-A-I-O-S."
- "Certs breath mints, with a magic drop of relief."

Each advertisement must make a proposition to the consumer. Not just words, not just product puffery, not just show-window 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 competitor either cannot, or does not offer. It must be unique - either a uniqueness of the brand or a claim not otherwise in that particular field of advertising.

The proposition must be so strong that it can move the mass millions, i.e. pulled over new customers to your product.

By relying just on the practice of building powerful USPs and then advertising them everywhere until they penetrate deep into the psyche of the consumer, the Bates agency that employed Rosser Reeves became the fifth largest advertising agency in the world!

Rosser Reeves - Reality in Advertising

Creating a USP

you must be memorable

many people suggest being outrageous

you must claim unique and overt benefits

your message must reveal exactly how you are unique from the competition

Fed Ex - when the concept of overnight packages was submitted as part of a college project - the instructor gave it a C+. It was not believable. Now, everyone knows their USP. When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight."

Dominio's promised the pizza customer an experience that was rare in the home delivery marketplace. Its USP was "Hot, fresh pizza delivered in 30 minutes or less, guaranteed."

Dominio's Pizza doesn't promise the best tasting, homemade flavor, just it will be there in 30 minutes or less

Little Caesars said you would get two pizzas for the price of one "Pizza Pizza"

Papa John's said they had sauce made from scratch

- Money
- Improved appearance
- Security in Old Age
- Leisure
- Comfort
- Proof of Accomplishment
- Increased Enjoyment
- Self-Confidence
- Status or Social Advancement
- Popularity
- Praise
- Time
- Health

Victor Schwab, who wrote How to Write a Good Advertisement, found that people want various things in life which can serve as powerful motivators for ads and USPs:

Working in the area of psychology and influence, Professor Steven Rens from Ohio State University, found through his research that there are 16 basic desires that motivate our actions and which can become the core of an attractive USP:

- Power - desire to influence others and impose one's will
- Independence - desire for self-reliance and to feel free
- Acceptance - desire for inclusion
- Curiosity - desire for knowledge; to learn for learning's sake
- Order - desire for organization
- Warmth - desire for collecting things
- Honor - desire to be loyal to one's parents, heritage, ethnic group, culture, moral code, religion, city, nation, etc.
- Idealism - desire for social justice or fairness
- Social Contact - desire for companionship, to spend time with others
- Family - desire to raise and love their own children
- Status - desire for prestige and social standing
- Vengeance - desire to get even
- Romance - desire for sex and beauty
- Eating - desire to consume food
- Physical Activity - desire to exercise and movement
- Tranquility - desire for mental peace and emotional calm

Buy Direct From GEICO over the phone and you could save 15% or more on car insurance."

That promise of benefits is so important that some people don't like the "unique selling proposition." Instead, they flip it around and call it the "Unique Buying Advantage" or UBA, which is the advantage the consumer, buyer, client or prospect gets when they buy your product or service.

A USP is:

1. It Boldly Telegraphs the Promise of Big Benefits for the Customer
2. It Claims You are Unique and Dramatically Different
3. Being Focused, It Doesn't Try to Appeal to Everyone
4. It Addresses the Important, Relevant Customer Concerns
5. It is Short and Simple, Concise, Memorable and Easy to Communicate
6. Interesting or Exciting, It Grabs Attention
7. It has the Seal of Credibility since its believability is Self-Evident
8. Persuasive, Motivating and Compelling, It Prompts Customers to Act
9. It Penetrates All Aspects of Your Business, Which Totally Support It
10. It Must be Economically Feasible so that it can Support a Business

What do you do with your USP?

business cards

brochures

website

everything your company touches reflects its USP

your USP tells people what you excel at