

A step-by-step process for creating a USP that will help you make the most of your marketing and business planning activities.

What is a USP?

A USP is one of the fundamental pieces of any solid marketing campaign. Simply stated, it's a summary of what makes your business unique and valuable to your target market. It answers the question: How do your business services benefit your clients better than anyone else can?

Successful USPs can be used as a company slogan and should be incorporated into all of your marketing activities.

Let's start creating one.

Step 1: Describe Your Target Audience

Before you can even start marketing your services, you need to know who you are targeting. In this step, you want to be as specific as possible. For example, if you are a Web developer with a CMS expertise, instead of targeting anyone who needs helping building or modifying a CMS, you may identify your target client as a small business owner who is looking for a developer well-versed in MODx to customize his/her site.

Step 2: Explain the Problem You Solve

From your prospective clients' perspective, what is the individual need or challenge they face that your business can solve for them?

Step 3: List the Biggest Distinctive Benefits

In this step, list 3-5 of the biggest benefits a client gets from choosing to work with you that they could not get from someone else (i.e., what sets you apart from your competition). Again, thinking from the clients' perspective, these benefits should explain why your services are important to them and why they would choose you over another provider.

Step 4: Define Your Promise

A big part of a successful USP is making a pledge to your clients. While this can be implied instead of spelled out in your USP, write down this promise you make to your clients in this step.

Step 5: Combine and Rework

Once you've completed steps 1-4, take all of the information you listed and combine it into one paragraph. There should be some recurring ideas and thoughts, so you'll want to start merging statements and rewriting in a way that flows and makes sense.

Step 6: Cut it Down

In this step, take your paragraph from step 5 and condense it even more into just a sentence. You want your final USP to be as specific and simple as possible.

Take your time while doing this exercise and do several drafts over the course of a week until you arrive at your final USP. A fresh mind and perspective is essential, so I would recommend doing this at the beginning of your day versus at the end when you are tired. You also may want to come back and do this exercise again, once you try out your USP for a while, or if anything changes with your business.

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