



10 TOP TIPS FOR IDENTIFYING YOUR USP

And developing your corresponding
marketing messages

 up marketing

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EXPRESS YOURSELF

10 TOP TIPS

For identifying your USP and developing your corresponding marketing messages

Each print business is a unique collection of people, skills, experiences, equipment and services, but many market themselves using messages that convey little more than “we print stuff”.

Identifying our uniqueness and communicating that to our target audience is critical. It should sit at the core of all our marketing efforts and be reflected in our marketing messages. Here’s how to identify that elusive “Unique Selling Proposition” (USP) and use it to your marketing advantage:

1.

Analyse and understand the audience

One of the distinctive things about your business is your customer base, and what that customer base “looks like” will be a major indicator of your USP. So, analyse your customers by elements such as the vertical market they operate in, their geographical location, the size of their business, what they buy, etc. but, perhaps most importantly of all, who the individual buyer(s) within those businesses are and what role they play in it.

2.

What does the buyer need?

The needs and “pain points” of buyers vary. For example, an accountant or finance director will be more likely to make a decision based on value and accuracy, whilst a marketer is more likely to be driven by branding or design issues. Having previously met, and continuing to meet, those needs is a significant contributor to your business’s uniqueness.

3.

Your uniqueness should “ease their pain”

That you have a specific print engine or piece of finishing equipment is unlikely to be perceived as a differentiator in your customers’ eyes. That’s why fast food restaurants don’t try to appeal to diners by including images of grills or fish fryers! It’s what you do with the equipment, and the solutions that it helps deliver, which are important. If you feel the need to refer to equipment only do so in that context.

4.

Look at the competition

What do your competitors believe is special about what they offer and how do they say it? It makes sense to assume you cannot possibly be unique if you're doing/delivering exactly the same as them!

5.

Talk to others

The people that work in your organisation are likely to have different/additional ideas and may be better placed to identify elements within their areas of responsibility which you may not be aware of. And ask your customers what they think. They can be an overlooked source of intelligence about what is so distinctive about your organisation. They must have had a good reason for selecting you as a supplier in the first place!

6.

Be bold

Be loud and proud about what you are good at – there is nothing to be gained by being overly modest, particularly in a competitive industry such as print. So, for example, if your achievements single you out in some way (e.g. you have successfully tendered for a particular contract, won a specific business award, or been recommended by a high profile customer) make sure you incorporate those.

7.

Think outside the box

Of course we have to be truthful and there is no point whatsoever in fabricating your proposition, but there is certainly room to be creative. So, a business that produces a large number of employee handbooks can rightly refer to itself as “a specialist provider of employee communications”. Not only is it true and accurate, but one can immediately see how that “talks” to a prospective customer in an HR or personnel role who is looking for a service provider.

8.

The U is for “unique”

“First class service” and “high quality print” are not unique in our industry. You’ll have to go a long way to find a successful printer who is still in business and not offering both of those things. They are “a given” and have no valid place in your USP.

9.

Make a list

Make a list of positive words that describe what you do to help formulate your USP. Try:

- Simple statements of fact e.g. local, long-established, independent
- Positive adjectives e.g. speedy, reliable, efficient
- Descriptors that add “character” to your business too e.g. forward-thinking, proactive, early adopter, etc.

10.

Making yourself unique

While it’s an oxymoron, it’s nonetheless possible to make yourself “more unique”! You may wish to consider adding products/services to your portfolio or tweaking your existing offering to be just that in order to make you stand out from the competition.

EXAMPLE

USPS

All of these businesses might refer to themselves as “Printers” but they have unique characteristics:

Company #1's USP

Based in the City, we are London's longest established printer of statutory documents and are trusted by many of the major financial houses to deliver on time, on budget and to tight deadlines.

Company #2's USP

We work alongside local design agencies and professionals helping to translate their ideas and concepts into beautiful, compelling and brand-compliant marketing materials.

Company #3's USP

Our enviable client list includes a number of professional training businesses and educational institutions who rely on us for the print and distribution of training, employee and student manuals locally, nationally and worldwide.

Contact your Canon account manager for more information or visit <https://www.canon.co.uk/business/services/canon-ascent-programme/>

