

Chapter 3

Position Yourself for Profit!

■■■ **There's no doubt about it; business is more competitive than ever.** Is your business ready to take on the competition? (and make MORE money?)

Worried about the competition?

Worried about beating the competition *and* making a profit? How will you stand out with so many businesses for your customers to choose from? Knowing your competitive advantage will help you do that. **Your competitive advantage is also known as your position in the market place.** It means defining what you do best and letting your target market know about it.

You are the differentiator

You and your company are unique. **When products and prices are similar, as in the promotional products industry, YOU are the differentiator.** You are the reason your customers buy from your company. This means you must have a way to differentiate yourself from the competition, always standing out as the best choice when your customers make their purchasing decision. **In marketing and sales, this is called your "unique selling proposition" or USP.**

Your USP should identify that distinct and appealing benefit that will set you apart from other competitors in the mind of your choice customer. It's the added value you bring to each and every sale.

Who tries harder? We can all recite that USP from memory, right? **Avis®** -- *we try harder.* That short, and very memorable phrase, helps customers focus on what Avis® does best. How about: *We'll leave the light on for you?* **Motel 6®.**

Now it's your turn

Follow these steps to create your own distinctive and memorable USP. (Work with a friend or colleague who's good at phrasing things just right. Working with others helps boost your creativity!)

- **Make a list of what you DO BEST or DIFFERENTLY from others in the industry.** Here are some questions that will help you identify your unique competitive advantage:
 - Are you faster? How fast?
 - Are you more reliable? What makes you more reliable?
 - Are you more creative? How do you define creativity?
 - Are you available 24/7? What are all the ways customers can reach you?
 - Do you have a particular area of expertise?
 - Do you have specific product knowledge?
 - Do you offer additional marketing services?
 - Do you provide quality and event date guarantees?
- **Understand what your CHOICE client wants.** (Read more about using Hot Buttons to your advantage in Chapter 5.)
- **Look for NEEDS that aren't being met in the marketplace and meet them.**

INSIDER Information

Make it memorable

Modern Graphics, located outside of Philadelphia, does more than just sell promotional products; they provide a full range of marketing services, such as graphic design, printing and brand development to their customers. They use their USP, *“Look Smart, Get Noticed”* in all their marketing materials, including their website (www.modernonline.net.)

Their USP stresses what they want their clients to remember that Modern Graphics can do for them. And their one-stop-shop approach makes it easy for their customers to do business with them.

Quick Tip

You can use the same one-stop-shop approach without doing everything in-house. Just assemble your own success team of graphic artists, copywriters and printers and you're ready to offer your customers more.

Define YOUR Competitive Advantage

- **Delivery Speed** - How fast? In 24 hours, 48 hours or 3 days?
- **Quality** - How do you define quality? What guarantees do you offer?
- **Responsiveness** - How quickly will you return phone calls?
- **Creativity** - What unique creative services do you provide?
- **Cutting edge ideas** - What have you done that others haven't?
- **Product knowledge in a specific field** - Apparel, safety programs.
- **Services that add value** – What can you provide besides the product? Be a resource for marketing plans, graphic design, copywriting or fulfillment.
- **Longevity and stability in business** - How long have you been in business?
- **Outstanding customer service** - Find out what your customers want (and value) most and provide it.
- **A unique and varied website** - Provide tips, articles and special offers on your site.
- **Better delivery systems** - Order tracking, faster service and automatic follow-up.
- **Knowledge of a unique market** - Teens, Hispanics, Baby Boomers.
- **Knowledge of a geographic region** - Your city, state or region.

Create a USP of your own

Use this information to **develop your own USP, or unique selling proposition**, in the space below. Remember – it should be one line that describes what you do best or what you want to become known for.

INSIDER Information

Always let your customers know where you shine. I never leave a sales call without emphasizing that my extensive experience in the industry allows me to find things that others can't. I also explain that I can process orders quickly, and that I am a valuable resource for all their marketing needs. **What do you want your customers to remember about you?**

► *What Can You Do Now?* ◀

- Identify ways that **YOU stand out from the competition.**
- What **value does your company add** that is not readily available from others in the industry?
- List at least **FIVE things you want your customers to remember** about doing business with you.