

Determining your USP

What makes your business unique





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Your Unique Selling Proposition (or USP) is what makes you unique and will win you business over the competition.

Determining your USP involves looking at your company and product or service in detail, and matching it to your target market.

The four key steps to finding your USP are:

1. Evaluate your company's greatest strengths and competencies – This is where your SWOT analysis comes into play. Find your strengths and also look at what differentiates your product or service's best qualities from the rest of the market. Is it your excellent after-sales support? Your superior analytical skills? The quality or value of your product? The speed at which you deliver? Try to quantify the differences as much as possible!
2. Which benefits are most important to your target market – Think about what your customers (and potential customers) value most highly. Do some market research – talk to your customers. You can also read trade journals, the internet and relevant sector newsletters for trends about your target market or 'niche.'
3. Now compare your answers from last two points – Put a circle around the matches. When details from both lists match, you can start to build up your USP around these factors. If you haven't got any matches at the moment, dig deeper until you find some, it isn't always easy but if you think long and hard you will find some. If not perhaps you need to work on refining your offering so that it is more in tune with your market, or perhaps you need to consider which market you're operating in and whether you need to think about moving into different markets or differentiating your offering.

4. Use your top match or matches to position yourself in the market - Summarise the results from step 3 into one sentence that describes what it is about your company that makes you unique and what your niche is looking for.

If you're having problems finding a good USP, here are some questions to ask yourself during step 1 and 2.

A good way of doing this is by carrying out a communications audit, and having someone interview your customers, suppliers and staff to answer questions like:

- What exactly is it that your company does?
- What services and/or products do you provide?
- To whom do you provide these services/products; who are your customers?
- What makes you better than other companies?
- Why do you do that better; how and how much?
- What needs do you fill for your customers?

Read our other guides in the range:

- **Understand your competitors**
- **Determining your USP**
- **Know your tactics**
- **Raise your profile**
- **Acquiring new clients**

Horizonworks Marketing is a strategic marketing company based in the North East of England specialising in the science, technology, healthcare and manufacturing sectors. We provide a range of services to clients including:

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- Events management
- Sales and marketing campaigns
- Mentoring



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