

10 Ways to Define Your USP.

As varied as positioning statements may be in tone and content, they generally fall into one of 10 main categories:

1. Low Price

Guaranteeing the lowest price has been used

as a USP for many merchants. However, cutting profit margins too deeply is rarely healthy for a business or product. So, unfortunately, many who have chosen low price for a USP are no longer in business. The philosophy is low margins, but high volume.

If your business is small, however, you run the risk of setting off a price war. Larger players in your market who, due to economies of scale, can afford to match or beat your prices short term can easily force you out of the market long term. So think twice before focusing on price.

2. High Quality

The high quality USP is based on a high margin, lower volume philosophy. This USP is often found hand in hand with other USPs such as "Superior Service" and "Strongest Guarantee".

One brand that immediately comes to mind when you think about quality is the international watch leader Rolex. Rolex also has a short USP statement that communicates volumes.

Rolex - "Quality Takes Time"

3. Superior Service

Providing superior customer service is a wonderful way to add value as well as develop long-term customer loyalty. So superior service is an excellent USP. What I am talking about here is the "above and beyond" type of customer service. To surpass the competition, you must go beyond simply satisfying customers, you have to AMAZE them. A good example of a company that has adopted "Superior Service" as their USP is the web-based business Rackspace Managed Hosting. Rackspace sums up their USP statement in two words.

Rackspace - Fanatical Support

4. Size/Selection

Providing the largest selection of items can be a powerfully effective USP. The classic example of this is Amazon.com. For years Amazon's USP was "***Earth's Biggest Bookstore***"

Even though they were not the first and today they have intense competition from both online and brick-and-mortar bookstores such as Barnes and Noble, and Borders, Amazon.com still leads the pack in online bookselling because they clearly differentiated themselves early on by being the biggest.

5. Convenience

By removing as many obstacles to ordering, receiving or using your product or service as possible, you are placing the customers' convenience at the center of your business model. The "convenience" USP is based on centering your business on your customers' needs.

6. Knowledgeable Advice, Recognised Authority

This type of USP communicates the idea that, "I am the top in my field. You can trust my knowledge and experience."

It works well for professionals and other skill-or service-based organisations.

7. Customisation/Most Options

'Personalised' is a powerful option in a mass market world. That makes the offer of more options and custom-building to individual specifications powerfully alluring in a USP.

8. Speed

The speed at which your product or service is delivered can be a powerful USP in today's fast-paced world. Offering overnight or second day shipping as your standard service can give you a strong competitive advantage.

Federal Express changed the shipping world when it began guaranteeing overnight delivery of packages in this powerful USP:

FedEx - "When It Absolutely Has To Be There Overnight"

9. New and Unique

Sometimes your product is so new and unique that the product itself is the USP. Being the original or first mover in the market is a USP that nobody can duplicate. An online example of this is OilOnline.com.

OilOnline.com - "The Original Online Source for the Oil Industry"

Inevitably, a competitor will emerge with a knock-off or copy of your product, but until then, you can promote the newness and uniqueness of your product as the USP.

When the competition heats up, you can switch your USP so that it positions your business as the 'first' or 'original' one of its kind.

10. Strongest Guarantee

A clear, strong guarantee turns what is assumed into what is assured. Your goal is to make your guarantee so strong that it makes what your competition offers seem stingy by comparison.

Craftsman Tools is a prime example of this USP category. Like all carefully crafted USPs, the Craftsman statement leaves no doubt what their main advantage is.

Craftsman Tools - "Hand tools so tough, they're guaranteed forever"