

# Lead By Being Unique

By Pete Becker

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"Fair and Balanced Reporting". That's how the Fox News Cable Network distinguishes itself from the rest of the pack. This phrase is a clear descriptive slogan that provides people with an identity of Fox's product and is repeated throughout their newscasts and shows. In addition, it rings true to many Americans of the spirit of America and what we, as Americans, believe is our place in the world.

This slogan is what is referred to as a Unique Selling Proposition or USP. It speaks to the customers you want to capture and sets your company apart from the competition. There are four benefits from a clearly defined USP. One helps your organization, and three identify you to your customer. Remember them in the word FAIR.

Focus: Keeps your team pointed in the right direction and focuses your group on delivering the promise.

Advantage: Tells your customer what the specific advantage your organization has over the competition.

Image: Creates a persuasive image for your customer of what you will do for them.

Reason: Gives a distinctive reason for the customer to buy from you.

In general, common factors such as price, guarantee, and service are not enough of a reason to set you apart, unless of course you can provide something unique and far above the rest. It must address a need that is really important to your clients.

Federal Express capitalized on airlines lack of foresight in moving freight on their schedule and according to their needs, not companies. FedEx had their own planes and rather than using "we have our own planes" as their USP, they promised "When you absolutely, positively have to have it overnight They promised a benefit and capitalized on it, even delivering the package to the customers door". After a short time, companies were beating a path to their door.

I remember this well, because often times I would have to drive overnight from Chicago to Detroit for the chemical company I worked for to deliver a package to one of our labs. Getting the package out through Chicago's O'Hare airport was a nightmare and usually took two or more days. FedEx provided the solution and everyone knew their name by their USP.

A similar story is true for Domino's Pizza. Regardless of whether the quality of their pizza compared favorably to the well known pizzerias in Chicago and New York, the promise of a pizza being delivered "in 30 minutes or less or it was free" created an easily identifiable image for Domino's, one that they are still known for today.

Your USP should be used continually on all your product information and marketing materials to create your company's identification in the consumers mind. If your business is actually a website, then build your website around your USP, not the other direction. This is similar to finding a market and creating products for it, rather than trying to create a market for your products.

A good USP like good marketing, is measurable, specific, and provides a distinct benefit. FedEx guarantees delivery overnight and to your door. Domino's Pizza is fresh and delivered in thirty minutes or it's free.

How do you create a good USP? Ask yourself these questions, for starters:

- 1) What do we do that is special or different?
- 2) Why are we better than the competition?
- 3) If I were the customer, why would I buy from me?
- 4) What's the main benefit to the customer?

Be specific and clear. It must not be confusing to your customers or you will lose them.

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