



Different thinking
for **changed** outcomes

Creating a Point of Difference - Standing out from the competition!

To survive and prosper in business today it is more important than ever to have a clear point of difference relative to your competition – a “wow” factor, something that your customers will remember and tell others about.

With many businesses out there all looking for similar customers, you need to come across to the customers as being “different” to your competitors, that you truly understand their needs and provide solutions tailored to their specific need, problem or situation.

To give your business a lift and create a clear point of difference, consider the following:

Look at your business through the eyes of your customer

Make a list of all the ways you come into contact with your customers – no matter how minor or trivial. These “touch points” can include everything from your website and how it works, your promotional material, the way you answer the phone, how you greet your customers, the look of your store, its ambience, what you do after the sale, how you handle complaint etc.

For most businesses the list can be quite extensive – Important not to discount items as being trivial – as each “touch point” has the potential to impact on the customer experience!

The next step is to examine each “touch point” and score the business through the customer's eyes – using a range of - 1 for poor to 7 excellent. Then list what could be improved or changed to provide a better customer experience or create a point of difference? Could some be given more emphasis? Could some be removed?

You then create a Survey and ask some customers to complete it for you – this can be a great reality check and also provide invaluable insights.

Remember each “touch point” is important and influences how a customer perceives your business. They all count and can be a goldmine for those looking to change the way they do business and stand out from the crowd.

Examine your product or service life cycle

Examine your product or service life cycle - Is there a way elements can be introduced or eliminated to provide more value for your customers?

The product lifecycle may include things like, making it easier for your customers to do their research prior to making a purchase, the actual purchase process, delivery and supply, actual use of the product or service, after sales support, maintenance, disposal.

At each stage of a product life cycle, the opportunity exists to take a leap, change the game and create something that helps you really stand out from the crowd.

Hint – Look at the lifecycle through the eyes of your customer – think about their needs and what is really important to them!

Find out what the competition aren't doing and do it!

Take the time to review your competition – What do they do well and more crucially, what do they do poorly or not at all?

Examine the customer “touch points” and the product or service life cycle. Look for the opportunity gaps. Is there something you could introduce or eliminate that would deliver additional value to your clients? Is there something you could give more emphasis or focus that would help you stand out from the crowd?

Too often we look at our competition with a primary focus on price, yet whilst important, it is but one factor that influences your customers buying decisions – a more in-depth review of the competition can often unlock a gold mine of opportunity.

Change the ground rules for the way you do business

Develop a list of all the things your industry traditionally competes on. Ask which of these elements do our customers actually value?

Often we continue to provide things or do things a certain way, because that is the way it is done in this field or industry. Game changers however ask:

- “Is this truly important to our customers?”
- “What could be introduced or eliminated to provide our customers with exceptional value or an outstanding experience?”

Hint – If stuck for ideas as to what could be introduced or changed, look at successful businesses in different industries – is there something from this you can learn? What do they do differently to deliver value for their clients?

Change the focus of how you communicate with your clients

Review all your advertising, promotional material, website, and sales pitch – which “world” are you focused on? You're own, or that of your customers?

Do you paint a picture for your customers of how wonderful their world will be when they purchase your product or service? How it will be improved or changed? Or, like most businesses, do you talk about yourself and your product or service?

The fact is most customers don't really care about your product or service; only what it will do for them! The benefits it will deliver! The risks it will reduce! The problems it will solve! The peace of mind it will provide, and so on.

If you want to stand out from the crowd, start talking about your customer's world and how you can make it better. Communicate to them about their needs – paint the picture – engage them! Sell the sizzle, not the steak!

Hint – In all ways you communicate with your customers, talk 30% about your product, service, self and 70% about your customer's world and how it will be enhanced when they buy your product or engage your business. This alone will differentiate you from most of your competition!

Ask your clients how your product or service could be improved

Tap into the goldmine that is your customer base and ask them two simple questions:

- How could our product or service be changed or improved?
- What would they like to see changed or introduced in order to give you a "10 out of 10" score and recommend others?

As our customers are the end users of our product or service, they often can see what is lacking – The elements that can move their experience from acceptable to outstanding – but too often, we forget to ask them!

Unlock your "hidden secrets" – tell your customers about them

In many businesses, things are done to enhance the customer experience, improve quality or provide exceptional value, yet businesses fail capitalise on the opportunity and value they present – they remain a "hidden secret" the customer knows nothing about. Yet they can be used to set a business apart, even in the most crowded marketplace!

Hidden secrets may be processes you have in your business that ensure delivery of a quality product, the process you go through to source stock, things you do to reduce the costs for your clients. Too often we think of these things as just "the way we do business here", yet if we were tell our customers about them, it could really set us apart from the competition!

Creating a point of difference can be an exciting, fulfilling and rewarding experience. It is about truly focusing on your customers and their needs.

Bruce Hall