

Title:

Are You Unique?

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563

Summary:

Learn the importance of discovering your own unique selling proposition, or what makes your business unique.

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Article Body:

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There is something that I have talked about on several occasions here on this site, as well as in the Doba newsletter. In fact, it was one of the very first things I talked about shortly after joining Doba a couple of years ago.

Even though I've discussed this before, it's always worth bringing up again.

I want you to ask yourself a question regarding your business. Are you unique? And what is unique about you or your business?

If somebody were to ask me that same question in regards to Doba, I would say that we offer access to more products and more suppliers than any other drop shipping service.

This unique thing about your business is what marketers refer to as your unique selling proposition, or USP (I covered this in part in the June 2004 issue of our newsletter, and referred to it as the unique selling point in the October 2004 issue).

Your unique selling proposal is how you separate yourself—in the eyes of your customers—from your competition. In essence, it's the reason you give your customers to buy from you rather than the competition.

So what is your unique selling proposition? If you haven't given it any thought before, what would you like it to be? If you said, "To have the absolute lowest

price," you should do some more thinking. That is one of the worst USP's you could possibly have.

Having the lowest price simply means you make less money, and that cut in profit affects more than just your bottom line. It affects all aspects of your business, such as the inability to provide good customer support (because you can't afford it), develop new and innovative tools for your site, conduct usability tests, and so forth. Your business will begin to appear more and more like a fly-by-night store rather than a legitimate company that can instill trust in its customers.

There's no way around it. Running a business costs money. Running a business well costs even more money. Don't let your business go under trying to be the low price leader. Instead, find a unique selling proposition for your business and do that one thing better than anybody else, or better yet be the only person that actually does it!

Here's a personal example of a unique selling proposition I came up with when I ran a retail computer business. My USP was to offer home delivery and setup of newly purchased computers. Furthermore, I would offer on-site tech support.

I never did it because it simply cost too much. The solution was to charge for it. But I never did that because I didn't think that anybody would pay for it. In a world where every computer reseller offered free support over the phone, why would anybody be willing to pay for on-site support?

Well, have you ever heard of Geek Squad? The founders of Geek Squad had the same idea I had. The difference is they actually implemented their idea. Now they are running a successful and thriving business. And a big reason for their success is they found a unique selling proposition that would elevate them above the competition.

The lesson here: don't be afraid to be unique! Embrace your uniqueness and watch your business grow.

Read some great examples of companies that have successfully marketed their USP.