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small change adds up big

What Makes
YOU
Different?

A Value Proposition

is an inherent promise of benefit that a company gives its customers, employees, or business partners. That value is usually measured in terms of “benefit minus cost.” Of course, a large part of determining value lies in comparing the alternatives.

A Unique Value Proposition

communicates the unique contribution your company, products, and/or services are able to provide to the market—in a way **that is different from your competitors**. It’s paramount to communicate the *unique* part of the UVP, answering the “Why should someone choose you in particular?” and “What makes you different?” questions.

Start by brainstorming, as a team, asking, “**Who are we, as a company?**” It’s a big feat to be able to clearly and concisely answer the question. There are several ways to look at it, though. You can provide **several kinds of definitions**, including...

- A technical definition, which outlines the **specific services** you’re able to provide;
- A character definition that says something about **the personality of your group** of people; or
- A market map definition, which identifies **where you fall within your group of competitors**.

Marketing message expert Olga Mizrahi

is honored to speak at the California Women's Conference about how to start and run a successful small business. For the past 17 years, Olga has worked as a change agent, serving as the "first" in every one of her previous positions, both in corporate and academia. She was the first web design professor for University of California, Irvine Extension and Coastline Community College; the first web developer and new media lead for bond fund giant PIMCO; the first e-commerce director for a nationwide catalog retailer, which was eventually bought out by a Fortune 500; and the first to bring many contemporary retail brands, like Splendid and William Rast, online direct-to-consumer. After earning her MBA from Pepperdine University, Olga started a successful marketing and web design agency ohso! design in Long Beach, CA, which was the first to take dozens of small businesses in the LA and OC area to the next level. She serves on the PBS SoCal Interactive Advisory Board, California Women's Conference Advisory Board and the Women's Business Council of the Long Beach Chamber. Olga is the author of a soon-to-be-published business book, *Chunk of Change*, in which she advises businesses to continuously make small, actionable, easy-to-implement changes in order to increase their bottom lines. Her popular blog, ChunkofChange.com, has led her to numerous speaking engagements on marketing strategy, including Tedx Irvine and the Edge Series in Southern California.



If You Provide a Product

Your unique value proposition might consist of:

- A high perceived value;
- Unique packaging;
- Standout design;
- Ease of use; or
- The ability to fill a need better than competing products

If You Provide a Service

You might be different because of:

- Faster response time;
- The ability to offer more for less;
- A high level of expertise;
- The perception that you bring more to the table; or
- The ability to time the service offering that you have with a particular need.

If You Provide Something Else

Even if you're not selling a product or service (as is the case with many nonprofit organizations), you still have to tell people what unique value they'll get for their money, which may include:

- A "fit" with a particular value system (i.e. it elicits an emotion);
- Personal identification with an issue (i.e. it strikes a chord);
- Alleviation of an anxiety (i.e. it quells a negative feeling); or
- Some sort of tangible incentive (e.g. a gift with donation).

Find the Difference

Our brains are trained to find what's different, just like in the fun exercise below. Can you find the five standouts?



1. Missing boat on left
2. Missing tower
3. Missing gondelier
4. Missing bird on top of first building on right
5. Extra window on yellow building

Now it's your turn (what makes you different?)



1. The product or service we offer to the marketplace is...

2. The top five key words or phrases our customers use when searching for us online are...

3. The top three ways our product or service helps people are...

4. The top three things we're best at are...

5. We are priced (circle one) lower / higher / equal to our competitors because...

6. One thing we offer that our competitors are unwilling or unable to provide is...

7. The main thing that makes us different from our competitors is...

8. Our best customers describe us by saying (in 10 words or fewer) ...

We are a (1) company that provides (2) in order to (3). We excel at (4) and stand apart because we (7). Unlike our competitors, we provide (6) and have the advantage of (5). For all these reasons and more, we are known as a company that (8).



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