

Technique #2 – Identify And Integrate Your USA (Unique Selling Advantage)

Your Unique Selling Advantage is that one distinct appealing idea that sets your business apart from every other “me too” type competitor. It distinguishes your particular business in a positive manner from your competition.

To identify your USA, you want to begin by establishing a statement of benefits for your business. The statement of benefits is a list of all the various strengths that you or your product or service might possess. From this list, select three to five major strengths and formulate them into a cohesive USA (Unique Selling Advantage) based upon those characteristics that really motivate your prospects to become customers of your business.

It should include items that reflect either the operation of your business or the quality of your business or service. It can include location, surroundings, price, value, product knowledge, actual buying experience from your company, etc.

It's really that single, unique benefit, essence, appeal or promise that your company makes to your prospects. One that no other competitor offers.

Most businesses (99%) cannot really articulate in one to two crisp, concise, clear paragraphs the USA of their product or service of their business. Of those who can, only several even have one. The rest are trying ineffectively to be all things to all people.

You need to have that crisp, niche driven USA. It should be one unique, attractive selling advantage that you're best suited to deliver to your prospect.

Depending on the strength, and maybe the biggest marketing void in your area for an unfulfilled niche, your USA may be one of the following.

You could sell your product or service for less.

You could specify the exact amount and sell it for less than any other company. Many appliance stores do this like Best Buy and Circuit City. They give you a guarantee that they have the lowest price.

You can sell a higher quality product or service than anyone else. You may charge more. Explain to them that you're giving a lot more value. This is a more preferable method.

You could provide more customer service or education before, during and after the sale than anyone else does at a comparable or lower price.

You might offer price guarantees or twice the level of assurance protection or warranty than your next closest competitor.

You might offer exceptional bonus products, services, premiums or gift certificates than anyone else.

You might offer a larger selection or more choices and options than anyone else.

You might have a service department that is 20 times the size of your competitors so the customer only has to wait one hour before you can service them or they might show up within 30 minutes. Unlike if you have cable, like in our area, they say they're going to show up and you're waiting three weeks before they get there. (Of course, I'm exaggerating).

You might have a trade-in program that maybe another company doesn't offer.

You might have a specific age group that you service, like the Generation X'ers, for example.

The number of possible USA's is really infinite.

You can have more than one and market to more than one group.

You really have to decide what your main USA is, what it has been or what it should be before you really begin to reconstruct your entire marketing mission. You can weave the USA into everything that you do.

You want to be certain that you can actually fulfill whatever this big USA promise is you decide on. It doesn't do any good to promote your fabulous selection of products or services if you only have two versions of an item.

Before I actually recommend some USAs, I want to describe something that is prevalent in most businesses.

You can ask a business owner to clearly articulate in one paragraph or less his/her USA. Most of them don't have an answer.

An "elevator speech" is if you get on an elevator and someone asks you what you do, you should be able to tell them concisely and clearly what it is before you get to your specified floor. They should be asking you, "Really? How do you do that?"

It's really no surprise that most businesses lack a USA. It's no surprise that they barely get by. Their failure rate is high and their owners are apathetic. They get only a small share of the potential business.

Other than having a great location, why are they going to get people to come to their business? If they don't offer an appealing promise or unique feature or special service?

Look at McDonalds. They're sitting on a corner lot with a great location, but another hotdog or hamburger joint might also have a great location. Why do people go to McDonalds versus the corner hotdog place which may even have better food? Because McDonalds offers all the other great advantages. You know what you're going to get. The restrooms are spotless, etc.

Do you want to go to a firm or company that's just there? Or one that really has some type of unique benefit? Whether it's incredible prices or selections?

Would you rather go to a company that offers you the broadest selection in the country? Or one with every item marked up half the margin the competitor's do? Or one that sells the Rolls Royce of the industry?

You gain an advantage by offering a big, unique, appealing product. You want to focus on that gap, real need or unfulfilled part of your market.

You want to integrate that USA into every part of marketing your business such as display ads, Yellow Pages, direct ads, salespersons.

Let me give you some examples. You want to put your USA into your headlines. You might have a headline of an ad that says:

"We always have 120 different doodads in on less than 15 sizes and 12 colors and in price ranges from \$50-\$1,000."

"We have 10 times the selections, 2 times the color choice, 3 times the locations, etc."

You can then take this further into your advertising or your sales letters. You can say:

"Most heating and air conditioning contractors handle just 1 or 2 lines of air conditioning. ABC Heating and Air handles the 10 best selling name brands. Plus, we are an authorized installer and service center for these other 5 brands. Why should you accept anything less than whatever choice you want to make...", etc.

I'm going to give you some short and specific examples of USAs that you can use depending on what you're offering. In other words, if your USA is that you discount price, then you might use something like:

"The average mark-up in the doodad industry is 30%. Ours is 15%."

Now, if you have a USA that is oriented for service, you might try:

“When you buy a doodad from any other company in town, you get a limited no-warranty. When you buy the same doodad from us, you get a lifetime unlimited warranty with service guaranteed within 4 hours and a loaner doodad and we make housecalls.”

You can have a USA that focuses on quality or is sometimes called “Snob Appeal.” An example of this might be:

“Only 1,200 doodads are produced annually.”

“In other words, you need to get one of these because there’s only so many of them.”

“900 of them stay in Australia where they are created, and of those remaining just 300 come to the US. So we’ll offer these to our customers as long as they last.”

That’s a quality and Snob Appeal USA.

One last thing, your Unique Selling Advantage is vital to your marketing foundation. You must clearly identify and articulate your company’s USA. Once you understand the marketing missionary philosophy, you will discover all areas of your business involve marketing while many of the strategies of putting together a marketing mission are really what would be considered traditional marketing areas.