

## 5 easy ways to stand out from the pack

Dean Parker

Today's market appears very cluttered. It's important to ensure your message attracts and motivates customers to your product or service. How do you stand out? What is it you offer that your competition does not? What are the benefits of your product/service that sets you apart from the rest? Whatever your points of difference are, you need to identify and promote them.

Here's 5 easy way to identity your points of difference:

1. Promotion: When promoting your service/product, do you simply list features, without clearly telling customers how they will benefit from it? Instead of "We offer quality accounting services for large and small businesses" try "We help businesses reduce their tax expense, increase their profits and operate more efficiently". Now you've got their attention - who doesn't want to reduce their tax? You must let customers know "what's in it for them" tell them point blank. Many organisations only promote features, by adding benefits to the mix, you've just presented another differentiator from the competition.

Do you use "generic" terms that can be applied by all companies. Words such as professional, quality & saves time are relative terms and can generally be applied to any product or service and therefore are not differentiating terms. Use statistics. "We've helped over 1,000 businesses generate new sales", or "10 out of 12 accredited [insert profession here] use our product/service". These statements add weight to your offering, have meaning, grab attention and differentiate you from the competition. As a customer, who would you choose?

2. Website: Look at your website. Chances are if you haven't looked at it in some time - either have your customers. Ensure the information on your website is updated regularly. Ask your sales staff for most common asked customer questions. Are these addressed in your website? Have someone from outside your organisation read your site. What doesn't make sense to them?

Most company's websites are text heavy. A website should summarise product offering and entice customers to contact you – then you can give them the full story. Don't forget to include product/service benefits. Hire a professional copywriter or Marketing consultant to give your website text a professional, polished edge.



3. Product: What features are unique? Identify and promote them. Is your product the same colour as a cheaper, inferior product? If so, change it. Is the packaging similar to others? If so, update it. Think of innovative designs or uses for your packaging [re-usable, recycled etc].
4. Customers. Ask why they purchase from you? Customer opinion of your product/service compared to the competition can highlight new differentiations that you may not have considered to promote. Customer feedback will help you craft statements that will attract other like-minded customers. Do you target a specific group of customers? Identify and speak directly to these customers in your promotions.
5. Internal review: Look within all departments of your organisation. What do you offer that others do not? How is your business better than your competition? Years of experience? What else sets you apart?

Combine all these suggestions and findings into one list. Your points of difference should be crystal clear. Ensure sales people are aware of them and your website is updated to include them. To really stand out from the pack, all communications and promotions must feature them.

\* ENDS \*

Dean Parker combines 15 years of marketing experience with a Masters of Marketing degree to help small/medium business owners maximise their profit.

Four P's Marketing Solutions assists small business with all marketing activities including planning, corporate branding, website content, trade shows, advertising and various promotional strategies.

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