

# How to Create a Unique Brand in Five Simple Steps

Differentiating your brand in a global market where businesses compete for a piece of the pie can be a daunting task.

For small to medium sized businesses, who often feel their competitors sell approximately the same services/products, your unique selling proposition (USP) becomes more important as a way to stand out, and build a reputation based on a “special” difference.

With almost 20 years of marketing expertise and several awards to our name, CreativeWorks Marketing is pleased to share with you the following 5 key steps which outline how to create a successful USP that will help your business differentiate itself and tell your unique brand story.

These steps will lay the groundwork that you need to help make the most of your marketing and business planning activities.

Before reading the steps, let’s clarify the term USP. A USP is a summary of what makes your business unique and valuable to your target market. It answers the question: How do your business services/products benefit your customers/clients better than anyone else’s? Knowing how you are different will help you in communicating your brand value to your customer.

## Step 1: Analyze Your Competitors

Look at how other companies use their USPs to their advantage. Analyze other companies’ ads and marketing messages.

If you analyze what they say they sell, and not just their product or service characteristics, you can learn a great deal about how companies distinguish themselves from their competitors. If you have the financial resources, you could hire a marketing agency that has a reputation in market research to conduct a competitive analysis on your behalf. The more you know about your competitors the more able you are to create a brand that is different from them.

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*The purpose of the competitive analysis is to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the competitors within your market, strategies that will provide you with a distinct advantage, the barriers that can be developed in order to prevent competition from entering your market, and any weaknesses that can be exploited within the product development cycle. - Entrepreneur Magazine*

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## Step 2: Solve a Problem

Armed with the knowledge of how your competitors distinguish themselves, you can clearly identify what sets you apart. This step involves looking at your business from your prospective clients' or customers' perspective, to identify what the problem, need or challenge is that they face, and then outlining how your service/product can solve it for them. You'll need to consider all the variables of how your service or product is going to help your client in a way no other competitor can. The answer is not your customer service, as every business says that their number one selling point is customer service, unless your business is a call centre or other customer service business.

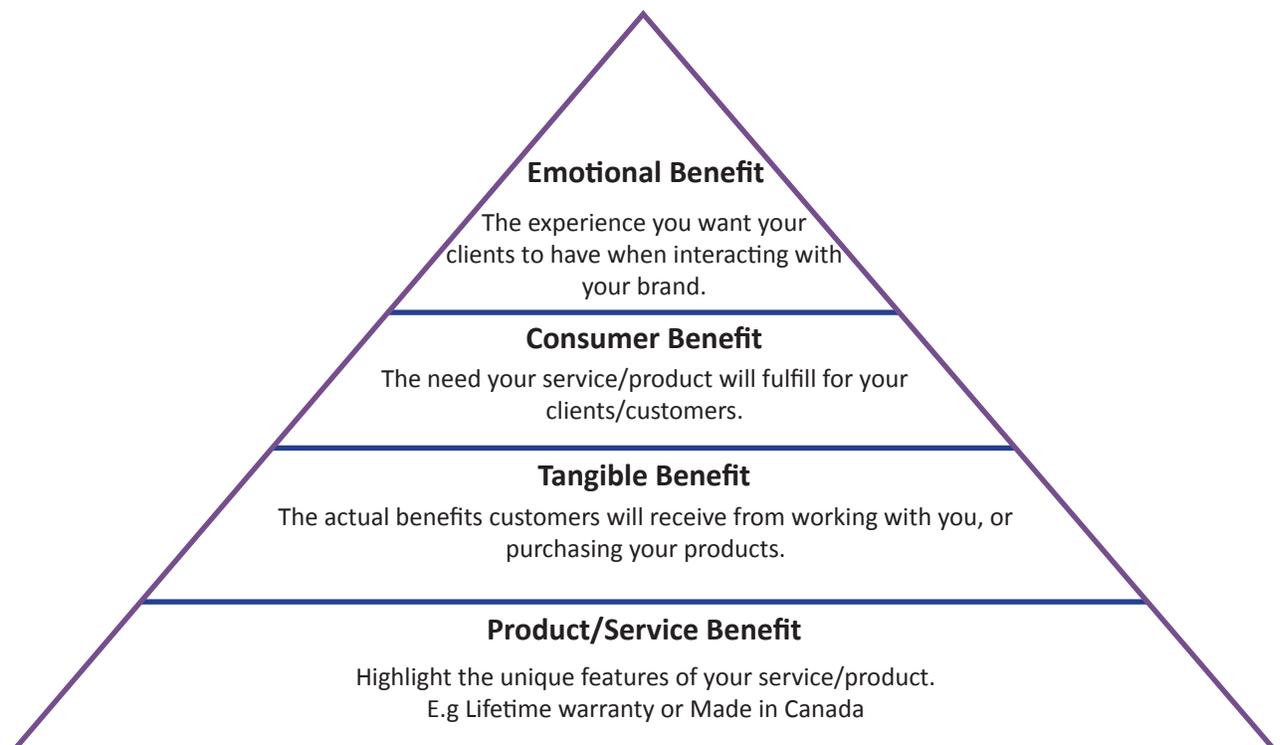


*You must continuously decide on how to make your personal brand more valuable by knowing what skill-sets, capabilities and aptitudes to invest in and which not to - throughout the course of your career. - Forbes Magazine*



## Step 3: Big Benefits

Now that you have identified how your business solves a problem, list a few of the biggest benefits of working with you. Explain why your services are important to your customer and why they should choose you over another provider. The benefits of your brand are the tangible values you are delivering to your stakeholders. You'll need to consider attributes and features, tangible benefits and emotional benefits, as well as brand personality.



## Step 4: Your Target Audience

This is a trickier step than you might think, as your target audience is NOT simply everyone who buys your product/service, it is that your value proposition must be relevant to your target market. Since we all enjoy a good fishing analogy, here's one as it relates to using the right tools to attract the right audience:

If you want to catch salmon, then you need to use a specific fishing net. Otherwise, if you try to catch salmon using a general fishing net, although you may catch a few salmon, you are more likely to catch trout and sturgeons as well. Think about what you've identified in steps 1 to 3, and then be as specific as you can when identifying your target audience for your service/product. If you have more than one service or product, you may have specific audiences for those as well. You'll need to consider the geography of your audience, age, gender, level of influence, what types of marketing they are likely to engage with (online vs. offline), etc.



*One of the biggest mistakes that budding personal branders make is trying to appeal to everyone. Think about the game of darts: You have to aim in order to hit the board. (If you let your darts go without aiming them, you probably won't be very popular.) If you hit the board, you score. And if your aim is very good and you hit the bull's eye, even better! - Susan Chritton, Personal Branding For Dummies*



## Step 5: The Pledge

A big part of a successful USP is making a pledge to your clients. This is a promise of sorts, which clearly states the type of promise or guarantee that you will provide to your clients. This could be a statement that you can either publicize or simply keep internally. Either way, it is a statement of your commitment to your USP. For example, in Toronto we have a pizza delivery service that promises to deliver your pizza in 30 minutes, or it is free. This promise speaks volumes about the type of commitment they are making to their customers and the value they place on customer service.

Using specifics to identify what makes your business unique and valuable to your target audience is unquestionably one of the most important and valuable processes your business will ever undertake. When you can clearly state how your business services/products benefit your clients better than anyone else's, then you are well-positioned to differentiate your brand and develop strategies for business growth.

If you have any questions about branding, would like additional materials, or would like to speak to a branding expert at CreativeWorks Marketing, please contact us at [info@creativeworksmarketing.ca](mailto:info@creativeworksmarketing.ca) or call 416-653-3053.

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3100 Steeles Avenue East, Suite 202  
Markham, Ontario  
L3R 8T3