

How to indentify your unique selling points

In last month's issue, Gilly Dickons explained the steps practice managers can take to conduct an alaysis of their competitors. In this article, Dickons exams how to look at your own practice in order to identify and develop your own unique selling points

Unique selling point or proposition (USP) is a term business owners hear on a regular basis. But what does this term really mean? Let's start with looking at the dictionary definition of a USP. A USP is a feature or characteristic of a product or service that distinguishes it from others of a similar nature and makes it more appealing (Oxford English Dictionary, 2019). In other words, a USP could be thought of as what you have that your competitors don't. So when we are talking about a business's USPs, we are looking to identify the features and characteristics that will help to set that business apart from the competition.

Identifying your USPs requires some serious thought. One way to start is to take a look at how other practices use their USPs to their advantage. This requires careful analysis of other practitioners' websites and marketing messages. In last month's issue of *Journal of Aesthetic Nursing*, we looked at how you can carry out a competitor analysis by visiting websites and social media platforms (Dickons, 2019). To maximise your efficiency, you could identify their USPs at the same time.

USPs can relate to the practice, practitioner and the treatments on offer. Here's a brief guide as to how to uncover your own USPs and how then to use the messages to support your conversations, both online and verbal, with prospective new clients.

Put yourself in your customers' shoes

Step back from your daily tasks and carefully consider what you believe your clients really want. Of course you are a

practitioner, but do your clients simply want their lines filled? Many customers are looking for something more than that. Things that may be on their wish list may include:

- ▶ Experience
- ▶ Quality
- ▶ Discretion
- ▶ Convenience
- ▶ Reliability
- ▶ Friendliness
- ▶ Cleanliness
- ▶ Customer service
- ▶ Feeling valued and pampered.

Remember, the price of the treatment is not the only or most important reason that clients will come to you for their treatment.

» Remember that the price of the treatment is not the sole or most important reason that clients will pick you over your competitors «

Gain an understanding of what motivates your customers' buying decisions

Your clients will make decisions based on what they think they want, rather than what they actually need. Take some time to think about what may motivate the enquirer. It's OK to say 'Can I ask what made you call us today?'. Remember that knowledge is powerful—if one person thinks of your company a certain way,

then it is possible that others so too. Use this information as you work to identify your USPs.

Ask your existing clients

Your best source of information is your current clientele. As your practice grows, make sure that you ask your clients why they come to you for treatment. Once you have an understanding of what it is they like about you, use the information to help to solidify this vision of your company and attract more clients.

Identifying USPs

In aesthetic practice, I would suggest that there are three main areas to build your USPs: the practitioner, the practice and the procedures on offer.

Practitioner

The identity of the person providing the procedures will be of crucial importance to many customers. Assuming that you are the practitioners, identify at least four USPs about yourself. These can be both factual and feedback based:

- ▶ Fact: I am a trainer within the aesthetics' industry to my peer group (i.e local ambassador for Allergan/Galderma/Merz)
- ▶ Feedback: What has been said about me? Use testimonials/client feedback, surveys, reviews.



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Reading customer feedback and reviews is a great way of establishing what makes your service unique

Practice

Another thing that is of great importance to potential clients is the environment in which you treat your clients. Again, identify at least four USPs, based on facts and feedback:

- ▶ Fact: Location, situation and style of the practice, for example, 'We are situated in a beautiful listed Georgian house in private grounds, offering discretion.'
- ▶ Feedback: Quotes from testimonials where clients have expressed that they appreciated the clinical environment or setting.

Procedures

Identify at least four USPs regarding the treatments you offer and the products you use:

- ▶ Fact: Personal treatment plans on offer; awards won for products/treatments you offer
- ▶ Feedback: Again, this can be from testimonials or the media, but should be comments that focus specifically on either the range of treatments the clinic offers, or if the clinic specialises in a certain treatment area.

Once you have identified at least four USPs for each category, evaluate them and then use the strongest ones to help build a very specific brand that appeals to your prospective clients' needs.

Which USPs differentiate you from your competitors the most? These will become the focal point of your messaging as you move forwards.

Conclusion

Identifying your USPs can be a daunting task, but making the effort to do this can help you to strengthen your clinic's brand, helping you to hold on to your current clients and attract new ones.

Next month we will examine how you can use the USPs you have identified across your website and social media platforms, as well as with your inhouse staff, to enhance your business. ◀JAN

References

Oxford English Dictionary. USP definition. 2019. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/usp> (accessed 24 April 2019)

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