
Visibility Can Equate to Higher Profits

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By Kathleen Gage

One of the greatest challenges businesses face is how to market cost effectively while gaining a good return on investment (ROI). Regardless of what industry you are in, the size of your organization and how long you have been in business, you must continually look for ways to gain and maintain your visibility to your market.

Gaining visibility is one of the most important, and yet often most overlooked, aspect of running a business. Perhaps you don't run a company, but you are in sales. Visibility applies to you as well.

Before you begin to aggressively position yourself and gain visibility, think about what the vision for you and your organization is. Gaining a vision of what the organization stands for, the impact you want to have on your customers or clients, the quality of products and services, your contribution to your community, and where you want the organization to be in the future is essential as you move forward.

Your vision is your ideal future state. The statement includes what you desire your organization to be like. Again, it doesn't really matter the size of the organization. Included in the vision are your values. What is really important to you?

Once you have your vision in mind, consider writing it down. This can help you to solidify your thoughts and to stay on track with what is truly important.

Another important aspect of your marketing is your Unique Selling Proposition (USP). It is beneficial to actually write down what makes your product or service different from those of your competitors. Whether you are in financial planning, training, banking, the beauty industry, day spas, or technology, take the time to know what sets you apart. In the consumer's mind, Company A looks the same as Company B in many ways. The same with Salesperson A compared to Salesperson B. To stand apart your job is to help the consumer understand your differences. You can do this in a very positive way without belittling or badmouthing your competition.

A simple formula to clarify your USP is to write down every reason someone would want to do business with you.

- Are you an expert in your industry?
- Do you deliver in record time?
- Do you have a unique location?
- What is unique about your business compared to your competitors?
- What is most important to your prospects and customers about doing business with you? (If you don't know – ASK!)
- What can only you do that your competitors can't do?

Once you answer these questions, create a short message to include the key information. Many people avoid doing this type of exercise thinking it is a waste of time. Fact is, when you meet with a potential customer and they ask what you do, you want to be able to concisely tell them. This process is also helpful with your current clients in that they are only one call away from utilizing the services of someone else.

Another challenge people have is once they have created a USP they seem to be married to it. Avoid the trap of having a canned USP. Make it spontaneous according to the situation.

Your USP can be used in a number of different ways; conversations, networking opportunities, on your business cards and letterhead (if it is not too long), your yellow page ad, and in your other forms of advertising.

Periodically, it is helpful to revisit your vision and USP. As you change and your customer's needs and wants change, you may find it necessary to adjust to those changes. What should drive any change are your core values more than anything else. When you are congruent with your values, success is assured.

About the Author

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