

[Sample: small business article, by Angela Booth]

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Fast-start your marketing snowball (and keep it going)

How's business? Whatever your answer, whether it's: "Just great, thank you!" or "Slow, this week," you've got marketing work to do because daily marketing is a must for every business.

Daily marketing can be a challenge for small businesses, because while larger businesses have entire marketing departments, in small businesses marketing has to be crammed in amongst all the other business tasks. When business is brisk, marketing is put on the back-burner.

Unfortunately this means that when business inevitably slows down as part of the natural business cycle, it takes time for a new marketing push to take effect. This means that your credit cards are maxed out by the business has picked up.

The answer to these business downturns?

Develop the habit of **daily** marketing. If you approach marketing in a step by step manner, it's easy to get a marketing habit. Daily marketing builds your business, because all marketing is cumulative. Before you know it, you'll have created a giant marketing snowball that gets bigger and bigger.

Many small businesses never develop the daily marketing habit because they haven't put the marketing basics in place.

The basics start with your Unique Selling Proposition.

Marketing starts with you, with your Unique Selling Proposition (USP)

Your USP is a short statement which you can use in various formats in all your marketing; it's the basis of your brand. Once you've created your USP it will give you confidence – you'll know what's great about you, and marketing will become not only easy, but also a pleasure.

If you've never thought about a USP, start by creating a couple of lists. The first list is of your strong points. Don't be shy! You're not bragging. Aim for at least ten items. The second list is of ten successes that you've had in your business. Again, aim for ten items.

Craft your USP by selecting a couple of items from each list, and joining them together. You'll find that this happens automatically.

Now create a single sentence to form your USP.

There you are: you've created your USP, the basis of your brand.

Who's your competition?

Next, identify your competitors. This should be easy. No doubt you've thought about your competitors often.

List your competitors, and next to their name, write their strongest attribute. What do they do well?

What can you do that the competition can't do?

Now you've identified your competitors and what they can do, it's time to identify YOUR strengths.

What can you do that the competition can't do?

Again, make a list of your strengths.

Identify your target market

Finally, identify your target market. Narrow your niche down as much as you can. It's easiest to do this if you think about your ideal customer. What qualities does this customer have?

Think about your customer's age, sex, income level, his/ her job, number of children, the home he/ she lives in – the more you can identify about your ideal customer, the easier it becomes to work out ways in which you can serve that customer's needs.

Assignment

For this assignment, create your USP, and develop your material about your competition, your strengths, and your target market.

If you take the time to work through this assignment, you will find that your marketing becomes automatic, because you'll get ideas on how you can build on your strengths. In addition, your competition will cease to worry you. You'll focus on what you can do – on your unique strengths.

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