

E-LESSON #10: Unique Selling Proposition GENERAL AGENDA



CREATIVE RULE #1...IDENTIFIABLE DIFFERENCE

The **USP**, or **ID (Identifiable Difference)** is the kernel, the **skeleton** or the **foundation** on which you will build the rest of the spot.

The first thing you must do to come up with “kick-butt” creative for a client is to help the client establish a **UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION** or **IDENTIFIABLE DIFFERENCE**. These two terms mean exactly the same thing. What is it about your client’s business that makes him stand out from his competition? Cliches like “best service in town,” don’t mean anything to potential customers who are **ON**. The **IDENTIFIABLE DIFFERENCE** you’re looking for must be meaningful to the viewer or listener.

For example, if your client owns a restaurant, maybe he has one particular dish that he does better than any other restaurant in town. If the client is a dry cleaner, maybe he can get your clothes back to you in one hour or less. If it’s a jeweler, perhaps the **USP** could be that he carries an exclusive, sought-after brand. If the client is a plumber, maybe they guarantee that they could provide service within one hour of your call.

The unique selling proposition should always be something that distinguishes your client from the rest of his competitors. It must be *meaningful* to those persons (people who are **ON**) who will buy your client’s product or service from somebody this week. It should **never be cliché**.

Use the “So What? What’s in it for Me?” test

If the client has a slogan, look at it critically. If the slogan is cliché and says something like “Best service in town,” ask yourself, from the prospective of a potential buyer of your client’s product or service, “So what? What’s in it for **ME**?” “Best Service” is camouflaged **AD-SPEAK**. Push your client to find out what “Best Service” **REALLY** means to a potential buyer.

I had a client who owned an auto body repair shop. When I spoke with him about spot content I asked him the question, “What makes your business different than your competition?” He immediately told me, “We offer the best service in town.” I said, “But what does ‘best service’ really mean to me if I just wrecked my car?” The client said, “Well, all of our people are **A.S.S.** certified (or something like that).” I kept asking, “Yeah, but what’s in it for me to come all the way over here and do business with you?” Finally he said, “Well...if you come here, we’ll loan you one of our cars until we get yours fixed.” **BINGO!** There’s an Identifiable Difference.

Think about it. If you crash your car and you're not injured, what is your biggest problem? YOU DON'T HAVE ANY TRANSPORTATION. It's a pain trying to go about the course of your normal day. You can't pick up the kids from school. You can't run your errands. You have to make a special effort to get transportation.

Cerche le creneau...Look for the Hole

The French say, "Cerche le creneau," which means LOOK FOR THE HOLE. Help your advertiser find a "hole" that his competitors are not filling...and then FILL THAT HOLE. Other body shops also offered to loan cars to customers while theirs were being fixed. The **hole** in this case was that nobody else was advertising it. So we agreed to OWN that position of loaning vehicles to customers while their cars were being fixed.

The spot centered on that IDENTIFIABLE DIFFERENCE. It went something like this:

IF YOU WRECK YOUR CAR AND YOU BRING IT TO US, WE'LL LOAN YOU ONE OF OUR CARS UNTIL YOUR CAR IS FIXED. AND WE'LL REPAIR YOUR VEHICLE QUICKLY AND CORRECTLY...BECAUSE WE WANT OUR CAR BACK.

And, what if your client doesn't have a USP? Whose job would it be to help him is it to help him discover one? That would be YOUR job.

We had another client who owned a jewelry store. This client had no particular USP. He wanted to sell wedding sets and engagement rings. We came up with something that broke through the 'CRAP-O-SPHERE' of all of the other jewelry store advertisements that all looked and sounded the same. The client loved our idea and it worked for him. Here was his USP. "We can double the size of the diamond, for about the same price you'd pay for the smaller stone."

The spot focused on that USP and looked something like this.

IF SHE SAYS SIZE DOESN'T MATTER, SHE'S LYING. WHEN IT COMES TO DIAMONDS. AT _____ JEWELERS, WE CAN DOUBLE THE SIZE OF THE DIAMOND, FOR ABOUT THE SAME PRICE YOU'D PAY FOR THE SMALLER STONE. HOW? AT _____ JEWELERS, WE LOOK FOR GOOD DIAMONDS IN LARGER SIZES. THESE STONES ARE NOT ULTRA-PERFECT. THEY MIGHT CONTAIN AN INCLUSION NOT NORMALLY VISIBLE TO THE NAKED EYE. WHY NOT? WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME ANYBODY EVER ADMIRING YOUR DIAMOND WITH A MICROSCOPE? NEVER. _____ DIAMONDS ARE REAL DIAMONDS. REALLY BIG DIAMONDS. THEY'RE WHITE AND THEY REALLY, REALLY SPARKLE. SO, INSTEAD OF A QUARTER CARAT DIAMOND, YOU COULD GET HER A HALF-CARAT. INSTEAD OF A HALF-CARAT, GET HER A FULL CARAT. FOR ABOUT THE SAME PRICE AS THE

SMALLER STONE. THINK OF _____ JEWELERS AS DIAMONDS ON STEROIDS. TELL HIM THAT SIZE REALLY DOES MATTER...WHEN IT COMES TO DIAMONDS. GET HER A DIAMOND TWICE THE SIZE FOR ABOUT THE SAME PRICE AT _____JEWELERS...DIAMONDS ON STERIODS..._____JEWELERS...(ADDRESS).

Guess what, it worked. We made it much easier for people who were ON for wedding and engagement rings to hear this spot. Our commercial stuck out THROUGH THE CRAP-O-SPHERE of all of those other jewelry store commercials.

Guarantees, and offers that minimize inconvenience are examples of a potentially strong USPs.

Cliché IDs would include meaningless and obscure AD-SPEAK claims like, “friendly, knowledgeable employees,” or “family owned and operated since 1997,” or “for all of your insurance needs.” Other cliché AD-SPEAK slogans include, “Our motto is to serve you,” “Service second to none,” and “you can count on us for the friendliest deal in town.”

While we’re on the subject, here’s a good question. As a media salesperson, what is YOUR identifiable difference? What sets you apart from the other media salespeople in your market? How do YOU stand out from the clutter of all of the other media and vendor reps that regularly visit your client?

There is an on-line companion video provided with this lesson.

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