



“What do you do?”

UBP - Your Customer’s *Unique Benefit Proposition*

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What do you do?

“What do you do?” is a common question often asked by new friends, acquaintances and business colleagues, usually upon first meeting. It’s an important topic of conversation that comes up early in pretty much, any, dialog and can start a long thread of discussion, new opportunities and relationships. For some reason I always struggle with the answer to this question. Sure, I can quickly blurt out the industry I’m in (“I’m in marketing”), the business I do (“We provide marketing services like...”), and/or my role (“I own a marketing agency”). Or if I’m feeling really talkative and engaged, I can communicate my Unique Selling Proposition or USP (“Smart Marketing Solutions, is a leading full service integrated marketing agency that has worked with... and delivers... to medium to large-sized...”). But, does that really hit home with the audience, assuming every new conversation is a potential new client or business associate? Is it compelling enough to win business on the spot? Does it differentiate me from the competition? And, is it to be remembered?

When I was asked this question most recently, I decided to answer a bit differently this time. I said, quite confidently, “I minimize marketing risk for clients looking to create, grow or sustain profitable business relationships with customers.” (*Wow. Did I just say that? Went the bubble over my head. And, where did it come from?*) This answer sounded so much sexier than any other one I’ve ever heard from someone else or responded to myself (mind you, that question is asked quite often). And, I have to think it has taken me years to craft and confidently recite responsively. What made it so different from other answers mentioned above, and what separates that answer (and me) from any other competitor, is the fact that it revolves around the primary customer benefit that I provide TO CUSTOMERS with my business. I help clients “minimize marketing risk.” It’s such a customer centric answer. It includes marketing so I get across what I do but it really hits home for anyone who has ever shopped for and/or considered a marketing professional to support their business.

Answering this question this way usually leads to additional questions of How do you do this? What services do you provide that allow you to do this? And more... I even have some canned responses to those questions that validate my position as an expert at what I do and a leader in my market. Some examples include: “Marketing helps drive sales, and, as you know, there are no guarantees in marketing.” “What we do that’s different from any other agency is we minimize our client’s risk which leads to the highest chance of sales return.” “We do this with our approach, strategy and experience providing services for leading companies like XYZ.” “Here are some examples on how we’ve achieved success for our clients.” “We’re proud of what we do and it really works. (subtitle: “If you’re looking for a marketing agency, you need someone who really cares about this for you and knows how to execute and deliver!”) – Everything seems to flow



from that point and is focused around the single most important benefit **for the customer**. *Hope you're getting the picture.*

The more I think about it the more a **Unique Benefit Proposition, or UBP**, makes sense for any business professional to have prepared for response to that ever-so-important and frequently-asked question.

Difference Between Features & Benefits: A Refresher

In my NYU marketing course I remind students often of the fundamentals of marketing planning. One of those fundamentals is to be sure to know the difference of Features and Benefits. It's amazing how easily it is to confuse the two. Remember:

- A **feature** describes a part of a product or service.
- A **benefit** sums up how a product/service will directly offer a user a solution.

I often paint the picture of several different features and benefits to make sure the point is driven home. In reference to selling a new automobile this may include:

- 450 horsepower (feature)
- Safety (benefit)
- Power steering (feature)
- Gas cost savings (benefit)
- Leather seats (feature)

I'm quick to always say "Great marketers sell with features yet lead with benefits." The same translates when selling yourself or your own business. This holds true not only to new prospects, but in every answer to the age-old question "What do you do?"

How to find your UBP

In coming up with your Unique Benefit Proposition, it's important to ask these few questions and/or do these few things:

1. What's the single most important benefit I provide clients, they respond to and is important to them for choosing me/my business over any other alternative?
2. How defensible is it? In other words, if all your competitors start answering this question the same way, how is it that you will back that statement up, differently and most uniquely?
3. Stay away from lame answers to this question like "customer service." Outstanding customer service is expected and doesn't really solve a customer's pain or problems. Think about your customer. Then do some soul searching for your business. Clearly you must have some break-out stories of success that you can highlight a unique benefit proposition from.
4. Keep the focus on the customer and not yourself. It's not always about you and how cool your business is. You're in the business to serve customers. Illustrate that. Communicate its importance and keep it centered around them!



Practice your UBP on colleagues. See how they respond? Edit it. Keep it concise and constantly fine tune it. You may have a few different ones for different audiences. Keep it customer centric and you will get new business from it!

About the Author

Angelo Biasi is General Manager of SMART Marketing Solutions, LLC, a leading full-service integrated marketing company in Florida and New York since 2001. He has helped create and execute marketing plans and integrated marketing solutions for companies such as Playtex, Bic, Rogaine, Tauck, and over 35 colleges and universities, to name a few. Angelo has an MBA in Marketing from the University of Connecticut and teaches Marketing at New York University where he has for over six years. He has been quoted and/or featured in USA Today, Mobile Marketer magazine, Mobile Commerce Daily, Luxury Marketing magazine, BNET TV and Business Currents magazine, to name a few. For more information or to learn more, email him at abiasi@smartmarketingllc.com, visit www.smartmarketingllc.com, call him at 239.963.9396 and follow him on Twitter @angbiasi.