



## Legal Marketing Strategies

# The Right USP Attracts Law Firm Clients

By Margaret Grisdela

### Why should prospective clients choose your law firm?

The answer can be found in your “Unique Selling Proposition,” also known as your USP.

***Entrepreneur* magazine defines USP as “the factor or consideration presented by a seller as the reason that one product or service is different from and better than that of the competition.”**

Your USP can be as short as one sentence, or even just a few words. Once defined, it will become part of your Elevator Pitch.

Here are 10 different ways that your firm can stand apart from the competition:

- **Price.** While pricing is a commonly used point of differentiation, this is not a wise strategy. Many firms offer “big firm quality at small firm rates,” or “affordable and reasonable” rates. The problem with price-sensitive prospects is that they are more likely to leave you if and when they find an attorney who will do the work for even lower rates. Having said that, there is a strong movement for “alternative billing arrangements.” You need to decide if, when, and how to address pricing in your sales process.
- **Quality.** You can (and probably do) claim to offer legal services of the “highest quality.” Of course, everyone else is saying the same thing. Plus, your client expects you to do quality work and will drop you immediately if that is not the case. A more meaningful approach on the quality angle is to explain how your firm defines quality, as measured by returning phone calls to meeting filing deadlines.
- **Service.** Like quality, every attorney promises the best service. While service is in fact frequently one of the best ways to stand out from the competition, you will need to go beyond a simple statement of service to explain exactly what service means to your firm. A frequent complaint against attorneys is the lack of return phone calls, for example. Offset this by stating your commitment to return all phone calls within a specified period of time.
- **Proprietary data or processes.** If your firm maintains access to specialized databases, or has compiled its own database of specialized legal information, these resources may legitimately enable you to work faster and with greater accuracy than competing law firms.
- **Expert status.** You or other attorneys in your firm may either be or aspire to be known as an “expert.” Accomplishments that denote expert status include notable cases, book publication, board

certification, specialized ratings, and/or extensive speaking engagements. Some states, like Florida, regulate the use of the word “expert,” so check with your state bar for guidance.

- **Access.** If your attorneys have years of experience working within a governmental agency, state legislature, or an industry standards-setting committee, you have a specialized knowledge base and network of contacts that present real value to clients and should be reflected in your USP. (Again, attorney advertising guidelines generally advise against any promissory language indicating that your firm’s relationships will increase the likelihood of legal success.)
- **Experience.** Years in practice, the number of cases you’ve handled, jury verdicts, and related factors all help to convey the depth of your legal experience.
- **Methodology.** The way you practice law can set you apart from the competition. Family lawyers, for example, can specialize in “collaborative” divorce. If your firm has developed its own distinctive methodology for handling legal matters, include this in your USP.
- **Geography / Nationality.** Where you practice law can set you apart, as well as the languages you speak and the cultures you understand.
- **Awards.** Legal awards are granted by bar associations, business publications, legal publishers, rating agencies, and others. If your firm has an award-winning track record, consider mentioning this in your URL.

**Your USP is not just a statement; it’s the beginning of your business development process.** A successful USP helps your prospect to determine if yours is the right law firm for them, or for someone they know.

*Remember, never stop marketing! The author invites your questions and comments.*

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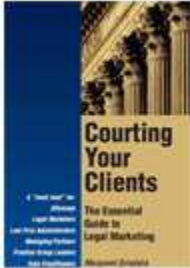
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