

Goodbye USP, Hello UBE - 10 steps to create a Unique Buying Experience (UBE)

What's the USP for the product or service you are selling? My guess is you don't have one. In fact, very few vendors have a selling proposition that is really unique. So where does this leave you, the sales person, with many competitors selling very similar things?

Where do you look to find a way to differentiate yourself from the competition?

Look in the mirror. YOU have to become the difference.

Make YOU a USP

If you are going to win pitches against strong competitors then you have to make buying from you an ideal experience, one that builds trust and sets you apart from the competition. You need to make How you sell (not just what you sell) the reason Why you win.

As a consumer, think about the experience of buying Apple products. They may have some USPs but competitors have good products as well. However, things like their Genius Bar, free training and great packaging make the experience of buying Apple different from buying another brand of phone or laptop – a Unique Buying Experience.

How do Customers describe their buying experience with you?

Creating a UBE is not a quick win. But it is worth the effort. You need to map out an ideal Customer Buying Experience from when a new customer first engages with you through to when they make their final decision.

Start with the first contact (from marketing or your sales team) and define what you want a customer to say about you at each step in their buying journey. Then, define and implement activities to execute your aspirations and ensure everyone along the customer buying journey is on board and understands just how important this trust building experience is to ensure ongoing success.

A description of 10 ideas for creating UBE (Unique Buying Experience):

1. Establish the right mindset

For potential customers, your sales process is an opportunity to experience what it will be like to work with your organisation. Every step has to be carefully prepared and flawlessly executed. Good is not enough, the customer experience must be outstanding. You need to establish this mindset in sales and in your sales ecosystem.

2. Demonstrate your understanding of the customer's business

Customers expect sales people to be knowledgeable about their industry and their challenges before they walk through the door. To secure a first meeting with a VP Sales, I recently developed a Customer SWOT in our business domain (i.e. Sales). This got me the meeting and the customer even thanked me for investing the time to develop it.

3. Prepare, execute and follow up every conversation professionally

The key to this is an Appointment One-Pager. It provides the structure and content to lead the conversation based on your preparation and is broken down into current understanding, potential challenges and questions you intend to ask, as well as your capabilities and potential benefits. We recommend creating a repository of good Appointment One-Pagers for each target industry and role.

The follow-up is also crucial and it's not just good manners to say thank you. It's an opportunity to ensure that the customer feels well understood.

4. Discover the needs of every stakeholder before you develop your solution

It's all too easy to submit your proposal before you understand the problem fully. The result can be "a shooting in the dark proposal." Sell the benefit of talking to other stakeholders and discovering their needs before you develop a solution.

5. Help the customer to sell internally

C-suite execs don't want to spend time with sales people. They have managers whose job is to evaluate vendors and proposals and select the best option. Your job is to work with your contact and make sure they have everything they need to sell your proposal internally. A Deal One-Pager helps the customer to secure internal buy-in and to shine.

6. Don't claim – demonstrate

Whenever you possibly can, do a piece of work for the customer. Showing how your solution works is more powerful than any number of claims, and the customer gets to experience how it will be to work with you.

7. Lead don't follow

A key aspect of a Unique Buying Experience is that the customer feels you are helping them to make the right decision. The Mutually Agreed Action Plan is the tool to use here. It's designed to help the customer integrate their activities and yours to make a fully informed decision.

8. Upgrade your Opportunity Planning methodology

Stop just looking inwards at sales activities per stage. Upgrade your sales process to include activities focused on creating a Unique Buying Experience.

9. Use customer feedback to improve

Only your customers know what it's like to buy from you. So, ask them. Win-loss interviews are a vital part of your process and the feedback you get after a loss is often the most valuable to improve your customer's buying experience in the future.

10. Know your subject and solutions thoroughly

Last but not least, customers want to deal with thought leaders. So, make sure you know more than they do. You can use this knowledge to help them define what they really need, rather than what they think they need. CEOs and Sales Leaders that take the time to evaluate and improve the customer experience of 'buying from your company' will learn that it can become a secret weapon in winning new business. Does this make the traditional sales process and key activities at each stage obsolete? Definitely not. It is still important to have a checklist of activities for each sales stage. But we recommend enhancing your sales process with value-added activities to create an ideal and Unique Buying Experience and make it enjoyable for customers to buy from you.

Questions to ask yourself

- a) Do your products and/or services have any USPs?
- b) Do customers say that your sales approach is head and shoulders above the competition?
- c) Is How you sell the reason Why you win?
- d) Is How you sell the reason Why you lose?

Best regards,



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