

The Secret To Winning More Work

By Amy Graver

Anyone who sells products or services understands how difficult it can be to win business. You often find yourself up against prospects who are under pressure to control costs, and therefore only seem to be interested in your price.

How do you move the conversation past price to demonstrate your value in the marketplace, and justify the price or fees you deserve? The secret is to compose a powerful customer value proposition.

What Is a Customer Value Proposition?

A customer value proposition is a clear statement that can help direct prospects to focus on what your products/services are truly worth and what makes you unique in the marketplace. It should explain how you will solve potential customers' specific problem(s), how the solution will benefit them, and why they should select your products/services over your competitors. This is your unique selling proposition. Once a prospect understands what you offer, they can make an educated decision about whom to work with or what to buy.

Most companies do not have a value proposition, or they do not have one that truly impacts and motivates client opinions. I believe it is because many companies (and marketers) do not fully grasp the power of a well-written value proposition—or understand how to use one to win

business—so it's not in everyone's purview. This is great news for you, because it can be to your sales advantage to write and use one.

The value proposition should be created with your marketing director or team—so that the messaging is on point and consistent, and aligns with your brand. Then it can be turned over to your sales team to use in proposals and/or pitches. Below, I break down the three steps to crafting your own customer value proposition.

Step One: Make It Distinctive

Invest the time to uncover and understand what your prospects are looking for. Learn everything you can about their business, pain points, and unique requirements/preferences. It may be beneficial to create a customer persona. Armed with this knowledge, it becomes clear how your offerings exceed those of your competitors on the precise points that are of utmost importance to your prospects. Determine one or two points of difference that will provide the greatest solution and value with the most unique distinction from your competitors.

Step Two: Make It Measurable

Demonstrate and document the value of your products/services and communicate this in such a way that is relatable to your clients' business priorities. To make

your value proposition persuasive, you must prove that you fully grasp their critical challenges. Use case studies to demonstrate savings, value, and results they would receive if they choose your products/services.

Step Three: Keep It Going

Prove your value proposition over time. This is not a one-time effort; you need to sustain and maintain your unique claim. Your value proposition should be adopted company-wide—not only by sales—and it should guide the way you conduct business.

Your customer value proposition should be the foundation of your business strategy. It should be your call-to-action to focus deeply on exactly what you offer, what challenges you're addressing, and how best to offer a solution. It should also encourage you to continue to look for ways to distinguish yourself and for ways to communicate your uniqueness to your prospects. A great customer value proposition will affect every part of your business and align your company top-down. If done correctly, your effort will be rewarded with winning more business, better products and/or services, and increased customer retention/satisfaction.

Now that you understand the secret power of a great customer value proposition, will you create one for your business? ■

STORY BEHIND THE PICTURE |

“Creative Compositions” - This image was actually a composite of two images taken at different shifts and is a great example of leveraging technology. Combining images from multiple lens shifts can open up image opportunities and produce some great architectural photography.

Columbus Metropolitan Library - Hilliard Branch, Hilliard, OH. DesignGroup. ©Cory Klein Photography, corykleinphotography.com.

Need Some Inspiration?

Here are two examples of companies with great customer value propositions:

Uber

“Tap the app. Get a ride. Uber is the smartest way to get around. One tap and a car comes directly to you. Your driver knows exactly where to go. And payment is completely cashless.”

Why it's great: Uber's customer value proposition centers around convenience.

Apple, Inc.

“Why there's nothing like an iPhone. Every iPhone we've made—and we mean every single one—was built on the same belief. That a phone should be more than a collection of features. That, above all, a phone should be absolutely simple, beautiful, and magical to use.”

Why it's great: Every phone is a collection of features; what makes Apple's customer value proposition unique is their commitment to simplification through design.

