

If you've got it, flaunt it!

 By [Rolf Akermann](#)

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In the early days of marketing/advertising, brands had unique intrinsic qualities that differentiated them from the competition. A strong USP that set them apart was the foundation of the brand's marketing. Not anymore!



Today we live in a world of parity products. Finding differences between brands is near impossible. So it "forces" strategists and creatives to "create" the USP of a brand. Digging deep into the psyche, attitudes, lifestyle, interests, media habits and of course the demographics of the target market, they "create" the differentiating factor that sets the brand apart from the rest. Pretty hard work, which can be very successful, or fail dismally. Often these "created" USP's do not have a long lifespan and need to be revisited regularly, as the target market evolves continuously.

Today's savvy consumers

Gone are the days that a consumer switches to a different brand only because of some great advert. The easy access to information on the internet combined with trends like ensuring facts and ingredients of the products, makes it difficult to get away with "willy-nilly" promises or propositions. Worse still, is getting caught cheating (VW). The damage to the brand can be catastrophic and take a long time to repair.

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The good news is; there are still brands out there with strong intrinsic USP's, which are not being marketed. In my opinion a sacrilege. It is far easier to use something you have, than having to create something out of thin air!

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It could be that the intrinsic qualities were born out of necessity when the product was developed. But today it is a BIG advantage. St Dalfour is one of these lucky ones. Not being able to get sugar during the 2nd World War, a French family who owned a vineyard, used grape concentrate to sweeten their jams instead of sugar. With the health craze today St Dalfour has an enormous USP. Their product contains only fruit, no added sugar or preservatives. As new findings of research appear, there might be important and unique intrinsic qualities in your brand that is just waiting to be the hero to lift your brand.

If you haven't got it, get it!

No, not plastic surgery. Something real and important to the consumer today. White Star Super Maize Meal did this back in 1999. Vitamin A intake was highlighted as being important for our population (this was before the Government forced the staple foods to fortify their products). So, they added vitamin A to their product and therefore could launch the brand with a unique USP.

They positioned the brand as "The Clever Choice" and today it is by far the leading brand in the category. A small change to the production process/ingredients could lift your brand to new heights. Obviously, it needs to be something that is important and relevant to the target market. For those who cannot find/create a truly differentiating factor. Good luck!

ABOUT ROLF AKERMANN

Passionate Marketing / Brand Strategist with substantial industry experience - Thrives on building and growing successful brands...

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