

Isn't That Special?

What if someone told you there was a way to raise your revenue without spending tons of money on some exotic new software or a complicated marketing campaign? Would you be interested? Skeptical? Curious? Probably all the above. Any of us in this industry would be a fool to at least not investigate the possibility of raising our revenue by any means, and yet there is one simple question you can ask yourself that has the potential to generate more visibility for your business and elevate sales. "What makes you special?" That is the question. You probably have heard it referred to as a unique selling proposition.

We see them all day every day, and they have become so commonplace that we don't always consciously notice them. If you consider brands like Subaru, FedEx, or Domino's, chances are you know what their USP is without even knowing what it is. You know that document is absolutely going to get there overnight, or you will have that pizza pie in thirty minutes or less. We have come to expect that, and it has been burned permanently into our brains. As auto recyclers, no matter the size and scale of our business, this is of no less value to us. We need to find what appeals most to our customers and make that our own USP.

Our USP is a little different for all of us depending on our location, customer demographic, or even the climate. So, ask yourself, what makes you special? What do you do different that will appeal? When it comes down to it, all of us in the recycled auto parts industry pretty much offer the same parts. So, what sets you apart from those around you? (I really dislike words like "competitors" and "competition" as it makes it seem like we are not all working together, when in fact I believe we are, or should be). Maybe you have a warranty that rivals that of the OEMs. Perhaps you have a delivery system in place that is incredibly fast. Maybe you donate to the local VFW based on percentage of sales. The possibilities really are endless; you just need to find what works for you.

My dad (the founder of Rocki Top Auto) is a perennial entrepreneur. When we bought him out, he almost immediately started a new business, something he and mom always wanted to do. It started out as kind of roadside fruit stand and has blossomed into a full-on grocery store. We are a very small town, and many years ago when the giant blue store moved to town that was the death knell for a lot of the local small businesses. The one actual grocery store even failed in the face of "always low prices." It defies logic, yet there was Ma and Pa starting a little store at the time, and it is as busy as ever.

What did they do differently that made this possible? You would kind of have to see it to get it. They are not cheaper. They are not the best and biggest. The place is unique and has a certain curiosity about it that keeps people coming back. Some customers will always

prefer mom and pop stores, while others like the different options. Some people just stop in to see what the place is, and others are there on the regular. You can get pretty much anything you would get at any normal grocery, but on any given Saturday you might discover an impromptu flea market happening in the adjacent lot, or a car show, or maybe someone has a boat parked in front for sale. You might hear live bluegrass music, a bunch of oldsters sitting around drinking coffee and gossiping, or the gospel being preached. If you ever find yourself driving through Ladysmith Wisconsin, stop and check out Holly's Last Stand and see it for yourself.

The point is it works very well despite looking nothing like convention. In your own business, find what makes you special. Find what you do a little differently, what you do better. Promote that! If you cannot find anything different or special, maybe now is a good time to figure it out. As grandpa always said "there are seven days in a week, someday isn't one of them."