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USP: What is it and why is it crucial to your dental marketing?

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Many dental practice advertisements and marketing materials try to answer the question, "Why choose us?" The standard answers usually include high standard of care, quality materials, trained staff, comfortable treatment, variety of procedures. These all sound like good reasons. However, when a dental practice in the area advertises the same benefits, these will not become deciding factors.

The better question is, "Why choose us instead of our competitors?" What do you offer [your competitors](#) do not? What does your practice do better than the others? What sets you apart from the rest?

This is your unique selling proposition (USP), and it should be central to your branding [marketing efforts](#). A strong USP should identify a problem the patient has, then describe how your practice solves that problem in a unique way.

5 things to know about your practice

What sets you apart? It sounds like a simple question, but it can be difficult to define. A good way to start is to make a list of everything that differentiates you and your practice. Use these five points as a guide:

1. Character—A dental practice has a personality, and it inherits this from the doctor. Perhaps you are a perfectionist, very serious about your work, and extremely detail-oriented. Maybe you're an outgoing, fun-loving artist with a passion for esthetic excellence in everything you do. Whatever your personality, chances are it has an influence on your practice, from the mood in the office to the decor in the reception area. Even in a multi-partner practice, the group dynamics and preferences of each doctor have an impact.

2. Skill set—Identify the procedures and types of dentistry for which you have the most experience, training, or natural talent. Also, think about specific education or skills outside their realm of dentistry that bring a unique element to the practice. For example, an engineering background lends itself to precision restorations, an emergency medicine background adds a layer of safety to dental sedation, and an extensive knowledge of herbal medicine indicates you're interested in holistic medicine.

3. Niche—If you're a certified specialist, such as an orthodontist or pediatric dentist, this will define your practice to a certain extent. However, there are other dentists with similar credentials. A niche is different. It is a one-of-a-kind style of medicine. Perhaps your practice is holistic, cosmetic, progressive, traditional, high-tech, economical, or high-end.

4. Location—Is there anything unique about your physical space? Think about what differentiates your building, and who might benefit from it. An office located among retail stores allows patients to easily run errands on the way home, while plentiful parking helps them avoid the parking hassle. Ground floor offices are easier for mobility-impaired individuals to access, and large rooms are appealing to those with claustrophobia.

5. Patient benefits—Nearly every office has an email address, but only a few offer [appointment scheduling through an app](#), or electronic submission of patient forms. Every dentist wants to make patients comfortable, but some take extra steps, such as massage chairs and warm towels. These are just a few examples of the many ways that dental practices can go the extra mile for patients. Identify the "extra miles" for you and your team.

Defining and using your USP

Just as every person is unique, so is every dental practice. If you've assembled a rather long list of seemingly random details, the next step is to review that list and determine which ones most effectively fill patients' needs or solve their problems.

Start by identifying your target market. Go beyond demographics and think about their typical lifestyles, habits, problems, and preferences. Try to put yourself in their shoes. Are they hurried? Do they want to be pampered? What are some common health problems? What do they want or need that only your practice can provide?

The strength of a well-done USP lies in showing patients why your practice is better rather than by simply telling them. Convenience is of utmost importance to busy working parents. Simply saying that your practice is convenient means very little to them. On the other hand, a location near the school, offering weekend hours, and having above-average flexibility in your cancellation policy does demonstrate convenience.

Although a USP does not need to be a formal document, it is advisable to put it in writing for your own reference and to share with your marketing team. It can be a simple memo summarizing your target market, the need that your practice fills, and how it fills that need. This message should be at the core of your marketing campaign and should align with your branding.

The process of identifying your USP can also be a great inspiration for restructuring or expanding your practice. Keep in mind new and creative ways that you can meet patient needs or solve problems.



Naren Arulrajah is president and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, a complete internet marketing company that focuses on SEO, social media, marketing education, and the online reputations of dentists. With a team of more than 180 full-time marketers, Ekwa.com helps dentists who know where they want to go get there by dominating their market and growing their business year after year. If you have questions about marketing your practice online, call (855) 598-3320 to speak with Mr. Arulrajah.