



Welcome!

Free Webinar – Sept 2021

Ditch Your Useless USP's.
Creating Unique Value Propositions As A Consultant

Luk Smeyers
Founder TheVisibleAuthority.com

Agenda

- Understanding USP - UVP
- Why a USP approach doesn't work in consulting
- The mistakes consultants make with UVP
- How a UVP attract the right clients
- How to craft a integral strategic narrative your target audience will respond to



Logistics

- Have a cup of coffee 😊
- You will get access to the slides & recording via my blog
- Duration 45'
- Q&A 15'
- Questions in the Zoom CHAT (or send to me via newsletter)
- You can monitor the progress of the webinar in the upper right boxes



Workshop in October...

- **NEW! Workshop:** Designing your value proposition as a consultant:
 - 3 x 3-hour virtual group sessions
 - Sharing all my UVP learnings from the past decade
 - Helping you to craft your own UVP
 - Website evaluations + quick fixes tips
 - Dates: October 19-20-26, from 2 till 5 pm CET
 - Max. 20 participants (to keep it interactive)
 - link in chat: full info page



Luk Smeyers

I teach consultants the strategies to grow revenue by standing out in a crowded market.



Value Proposition
Statement



Luk Smeyers

- CHRO role until 2007 (in consulting)
- Founding CEO of a People Analytics consultancy iNostix in 2008
- iNostix got acquired by Deloitte in 2016 (exit Feb. 2020)
- With my global visibility, I never had to sell, persuade, negotiate
- My mantra: focus, openly sharing all my learnings
- My hobbies: endurance MTB
- I live in Munich

<https://www.thevisibleauthority.com/blog/i-never-had-to-sell-persuade-or-negotiate-to-grow-my-consulting-business>





With hyper-focus, I was able to...

- ...consistently invest 30% of my time in marketing
- ...grow an organic pipeline
- ...grow revenue without doing sales
- ...close deals without doing any follow-up
- ...get enough organic opportunity to say NO
- ...always stay in my lane: FOCUS-FOCUS-FOCUS
- ...value proposition-driven: client-centered



The context of my work (1)



- High quality of life
 - 4 days/week
- With a supporting 70-30-150 business model



I always strived for 70-30-150

- 70-30-150:
 - Reduce client facing time
 - Increase business development time
 - Increase pricing (is not billing): upstream work
- Focus & specialisation:
 - Specific audience
 - Specific (prototypical) pain
 - Specific pain resolution
- Packaged in a laser-sharp value proposition

Quote – from the book: ‘Value Proposition Design’

“A value proposition targets your clients’ most pressing pains”.





I evaluated 200 consultants...

- Copy/paste? (Sea of Sameness, Stacey Danheiser)
- Using same, meaningless words (grow, change, transform...)
- No/low on proof points (not relevant for clients)
- We/I and Our (not about the client)
- Weird expertise combinations (keeping the options open)



Keeping the options open

- Counterintuitive
- Fear and ego-based
- Keep doing 120-0-70 or 150-0-50



As a result of 120-0-70: downstream

- Saying yes to protect income
- Over-servicing & under-charging (150-0-50)
- Getting into customised work
- Getting threatened as 'order taker' (body shopping)
- Managed by team members putting you in cc to protect themselves
- Measured by 'hours worked vs. hours budgeted'
- Scope creep (e.g. extra meetings)
- Stress to find new work → say yes to everything
- Leads to frustration and burnout



Examples to learn from...

- We are THE experts in the application of DevOps tools to industrialise and scale ML
- Consultant working on the verge of HR, Finance & Marketing
- We are specialists in employer branding, talent management, learning & development, performance management, engagement & digitalization
- Strategy. Marketing. Enterprise innovation. Entrepreneurship.
- Strategists, advisors, sense-makers
- We are Integrators, Innovators, Intrapreneurs
- I help to trust, to connect and to discover
- Our expertise: project management, strategy, consult, digitalization, CSR
- We deliver tailor made guidance to facilitate change
- Strategy, acceleration, execution
- We unbox your digital power
- We supercharge our clients to reach maximum performance levels

**The big vague we-we-we or I-I-I show
Where the heck is the client ???**



The big myth...

You've been fooled, you are not unique.

There are 1000's of other consultants.

- It's human: explain you are the best expert
- But...it doesn't resonate with your prospects
- They are searching for a problem resolution, fast
- They hate risk, they are prepared to pay premium for experts



Print & frame this...

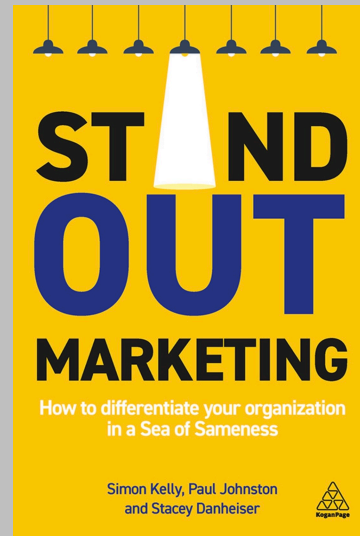
It's not what it is but what it does

- It's not what **you think** it is but what it does **to your client**
- It's not what you think it is **(inside view)** but what it does to your client **(outside view)**



Quote – Stacey Danheiser

“Feature-based, talking about us and vanity claims do NOT create client-relevant value proposition differentiation”





Example to learn from...

- We are THE experts in the application of DevOps tools to industrialise and scale ML
 - This is NOT addressing the clients' most pressing pain points (inside view)
 - Who is the client, by the way?
 - What is the output, the result and what is approach?
 - THE experts...doesn't exist...they are fooling themselves
- Changed it to: We help X (X = target audience) to lower legacy systems' operational costs (Y = output) by scaling machine learning models (Z = approach)
- Outside view !!!



USP → UVP

From inside view to outside view

Understand the patterns of value creation
(in the pressing pains of your prospect,
e.g. to lower operational costs)



What is a UVP

- Outside view
- Pain = starting point
- Specific audience, prototypical problem(s), specific solution/approach
- Most famous: XYZ - Steve Blank
- Many more: [link to a Medium article](#)



XYZ Positioning Statement

- We help X (target audience) to achieve Y (output-result-impact) with Z (secret sauce).
- I will add a long list of XYZ statements in the webinar notes

I teach consultants (X) the strategies to grow revenue (Y) by standing out in a crowded market (Z).

Needles to say: XYZ requires FOCUS !!!!



UVP in consulting

- My learnings: you need more than XYZ
- Imagine you being at a conference, explaining XYZ
- Next question always is: what/how/why?
- The unique blend:
 - XYZ value proposition statement
 - Point of View: the context of your work
 - Pain/gain statement
 - Your productized solution/approach (upstream)
 - The ‘You’ (competition can never copy)
 - Social proof: other clients telling you’ve done it before
- I call it ‘the strategic narrative’
- Learn your lines (and the team), including objections



Example of strategic narrative

(small consultancy in a specific software feature implementation)

- **XYZ:** We enable (software feature) clients (X) to make better (ABC) decisions (Y) by leveraging their (DEF) (Z)
- **Point of View:** (ABC – functional area) is changing faster than ever before and the need to get instant (ABC) insights is crucial to keep up with that pace of change. Without intuitive and always up-to-date (software term) you risk being unable to answer the most pressing (ABC) questions.
- **Pain points** (4 in total):
 - You’ve invested a lot of money in (software feature) but you are still struggling with (DEF) (business case related)
 - You don’t have an overarching vision yet of what (software feature) can do for your organisation
- **Their productized offering:**
 - 3 packages to chose from
- **The ‘YOU’:**
 - A very strong ‘About’ page with ‘how it all started’, what they learned what other clients can learn from and why they are focusing on solving those specific prototypical pain points
- **Social Proof:**
 - Clients explaining how they solved prototypical pain points with the help of the consultancy



Without UVP, the laws of marketing will never work!

- Marketing law: specific audience, specific problem, specific solution
- Unfocused: nobody cares (they search for a problem solution)
- Google doesn't care (E.A.T.)
- WOM doesn't work (don't know what to recommend)
- Team alignment doesn't work (they say different things, no sync)
- Thought leadership & trust building doesn't work
- Prequalification doesn't work (leading to a non-ideal prospect flow)
(early disqualification is a big goal & time saver)



Openly sharing

Publically announcing

your UVP (and your strategic narrative)

is your ultimate acid test



Your public UVP...

- Is your #1 qualification tool: saying no becomes easy
- Is your ultimate trust builder:
 - you understand the pains & the context
 - You know how to help them
 - You demonstrate how you've done it before
- Is your upstream insurance policy
- Is your productization toolkit
- Is your best possible team alignment



Step by step

- Use **lean principles**: step by step, fade-out/in, test & validate, iterate (and iterate)



Summary

Ditch the self-centered USP

- Most consulting USPs are made of useless, self-centered bragging
- Consultants: bad at unfolding their true distinctiveness
- The big mistake: telling their prospects the inside view
 - what THEIR unique services are
 - how exceptional THEIR experience is
 - how many years of awesome experience THEY have
 - and on and on and on...
- Forget those meaningless words and any vanity claims (social proof)
- UVP is about your client, not about you: the outside view
- Your value proposition: starts with an XYZ statement
- You need a strategic narrative: XYZ, PoV, pain statements, pain resolution, YOU, SP
- Openly share it! Your acid test!
- Move there step-by-step (it's an iterative process)

Next...

- **Next Webinar**: OCT. 8, 2 pm CET: Symptoms of poor positioning as a consultant and what you can do about it.
- **NEW! Workshop**: Designing your value proposition as a consultant: virtual group workshop, October 19-20-26, 2-5 pm CET (**link in chat**)
- **Newsletter** always has all the info's (bi-weekly):
www.thevisibleauthority.com/theauthority32

Thanks a lot!

Let me check-out questions

Kind regards,
Luk Smeyers
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My mountainbike coach



- The search steps:
 - Cycling lab + Cycling coach
 - Mountainbike lab + coach
 - Cape Epic coach
- Lab in Munich with a Cape Epic coach
- Value Proposition: ***“We help MTB-ers getting ready for stage races with our app-based test & training program”.***