PERSONAL BRANDING SERIES • VOLUME 03

Developing Your Unique Value Proposition

Connect what you do to what people actually need, say it clearly and find out whether it lands.

03

START HERE

A note before you dig in

"Unique value proposition" sounds like something you'd hear in a conference room right before everybody checks their phone. But the idea underneath is simple: why should this person choose you, for this problem, right now?

Here's what I want you to let go of. You don't have to be the only person on earth who does what you do. You just have to be clear about who you help, what you help them with and why your way works for them.

This guide helps you build that answer from the ground up, starting with the people you want to serve, and then test it in the real world before you print it on anything.

CC

YOU'LL WALK AWAY WITH

- A working understanding of value, features, benefits and differentiation
- Clarity on a specific audience problem and who makes the decision
- A one or two sentence value statement you can actually say out loud
- Versions for conversation, your website and proposals
- A simple way to test your message with real people

WHAT'S INSIDE

01 Understand value and positioning

02 Investigate the need

03 Turn your approach into benefits

04 Write a clear value statement

05 Test it and tighten it

Time: 60 to 90 minutes, then a month of small steps

Best for: working professionals, business owners, career changers and anyone figuring out what is next

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read a lesson, look at the example, then answer the questions in your own words. Pencil is fine. Messy is fine. Treat your first answers like a rough draft and check them against real conversations and real evidence before you put serious time or money behind them. Then come back to the 30 day plan and actually do it. That part is where the change happens.

LESSON 01

Understand value and positioning

Value is what someone gets compared to what it costs them.

What value means to a customer

Value is the benefit someone receives compared to the money, time, effort and risk it takes to get it. Benefits can look like saved time, better quality, less worry or more convenience. A feature is what you provide. A benefit is why it matters. People buy benefits and confirm them with features.

Value is not the same as being different

Your value proposition explains why your offer matters to a specific audience. Differentiation explains how you compare to the alternatives. You don't need to claim nobody else can do it. A meaningful difference can be the audience you focus on, the process you use or an unusual mix of skills.

WORTH KNOWING

Value	Benefit received compared to the cost, effort and risk of getting it.
Feature	What you provide or how something works.
Benefit	Why that feature matters to the person receiving it.
Differentiation	How your approach compares to the other options someone has.
Alternative	Whatever your audience would do instead, including doing nothing.

EXAMPLE (fictional)

A mobile notary meets clients wherever they are. The mobile appointment is the feature. The benefit is convenience: no driving across town on a lunch break. The notary still has to meet every state requirement, but the reason someone picks this notary is that it fits their day.

WATCH OUT FOR

- Listing features and assuming people will figure out the benefit
- Claiming you're the only one who does something
- Forgetting that "do nothing" is always an option your audience has

YOUR TURN

Describe one feature of your work and the benefit it gives someone.

What alternative might your audience use instead of you?

What makes your approach different in a way that matters to them?

LESSON 02

Investigate the need

A problem matters because they feel it, not because you can solve it.

Find a specific problem

Start with a situation where people need help. How often does it come up? What does it cost them in time or money? What happens if they just leave it alone? Be careful not to assume a problem is important just because you happen to be good at solving it.

Know who makes the call

The person who uses your service isn't always the person who pays for it. Figure out who approves the decision and what they care about. If you're going after a job, the decision maker cares about experience, availability and credentials. If you're selling to a business, the person using your work and the person signing the check may want very different things.

EXAMPLE (fictional)

A designer going after independent restaurants learns that managers need menu changes made fast, but owners control the budget. So her message has to speak to both: quick turnaround for the manager and predictable pricing for the owner. If she only pitched speed, the owner would wonder what it's going to cost.

WATCH OUT FOR

- Assuming a problem matters without asking anyone who has it
- Pitching only to the user when someone else holds the budget
- Ignoring how often the problem actually shows up

YOUR TURN

Describe one specific problem your audience deals with.

What does it cost them when it goes unsolved?

Who makes the decision, and what proof would they need from you?

LESSON 03

Turn your approach into benefits

Explain how you help in words your audience already uses.

Explain how you deliver

A clear approach describes your process: maybe an assessment, a custom plan, the work itself and support afterward. Then explain the benefit of that process in plain language. Never promise an outcome you don't control. You can promise a clear process and a solid deliverable. You can't promise their sales will double.

Back up what you say

Evidence can be work samples, testimonials you have permission to use, documented results or qualifications. Match your claims to your evidence. If you're new, show your process through a pilot project or a sample instead of inventing results.

EXAMPLE (fictional)

A marketing specialist offers a monthly planning session and a content calendar. The benefit she promises is a clearer, steadier publishing routine. She does not promise more revenue, because that depends on a lot of things outside her control. A sample calendar shows exactly what clients get.

WATCH OUT FOR

- Promising results you can't control
- Using claims bigger than your evidence
- Describing your process in insider language

YOUR TURN

What process do you use to solve the problem? List the steps.

What is the plain language benefit of that process?

Which claim can you back up with evidence today?

LESSON 04

Write a clear value statement

It's a working draft, not a slogan.

Use a simple structure

Name the audience, the situation or need, what you contribute and why your method works. Write it the way you'd say it to someone at a networking event. And make sure it describes something you can actually deliver, every time.

Make versions for different settings

A short version works in conversation. Your website version can add proof and a next step. A proposal version can explain scope, terms and expected outcomes. Change the length and detail, but keep the audience and the core benefit the same across all of them.

EXAMPLE (fictional)

"For independent restaurants getting ready for seasonal menu changes, I create organized photo and menu files that make updates easy to publish everywhere they market."

That names the audience, the moment they need help, what she makes and why it's useful. Nothing fancy. Very clear.

WATCH OUT FOR

- Writing something that sounds like a billboard instead of a sentence
- Changing the core benefit every time you describe yourself
- Promising more in the statement than you deliver in real life

YOUR TURN

Draft your value statement in one or two sentences.

Rewrite it the way you'd say it out loud to a friend.

What proof and next step would you add for a website version?

LESSON 05

Test it and tighten it

What people do tells you more than what people say.

Get useful feedback

Show your statement to people who look like your intended audience. Ask them to tell you what you offer, who it's for and why it might matter. Then ask what's unclear, what else they'd consider and what would make them trust you. If their answers don't match what you meant, the message needs work.

Watch behavior

Compliments feel nice. Inquiries, referrals, trial sign ups and purchases tell you more. Run a small test, write down what happens and change one big thing at a time. Remember that a small test can point you in a direction, but it can't prove a whole market.

EXAMPLE (fictional)

A consultant tries two versions of her introduction in five relevant conversations. Most people understand the version about organizing client onboarding. So she uses that version in a small pilot and tracks how many inquiries it brings in. She's letting real responses decide, not her favorite wording.

WATCH OUT FOR

- Asking "Do you like it?" instead of "What do you think I do?"
- Changing five things at once so you can't tell what worked
- Treating a few friendly conversations as proof of demand

YOUR TURN

Who will you ask for feedback? Name five people.

What will you ask them?

What action will tell you the message is working?

WORKSHEET

Value statement builder

Work left to right, then write your statement at the bottom of the page.

AUDIENCE	THEIR SITUATION OR PROBLEM	WHAT I PROVIDE	THE BENEFIT	MY PROOF

QUICK REFERENCE

The short version

Tear this page out, screenshot it, tape it by your desk. This is the whole guide on one page.

01 Value is the benefit compared to the cost, effort and risk.

02 Features describe what you do. Benefits explain why it matters.

03 You don't have to be the only one. Be clear about who and why.

04 Start with a problem people actually feel, and learn who decides.

05 Explain your process in plain words and never promise what you can't control.

06 Use a simple structure: audience, need, contribution, reason it works.

07 Keep the core the same across conversation, website and proposal.

08 Test with real people and trust actions over compliments.

PUT IT TO WORK

Your 30 day plan

Small, real steps. Pick the dates now so this does not turn into one more thing you meant to do.

WEEK 1

Research

Interview three potential audience members about a specific problem and what they use now.

Date: _____ Done when: _____

WEEK 2

Draft

Write your value statement and gather two credible examples that support it.

Date: _____ Done when: _____

WEEK 3

Test

Share the message with five relevant people and record how they explain it back.

Date: _____ Done when: _____

WEEK 4

Refine

Update the statement based on feedback and try it in one real channel.

Date: _____ Done when: _____

My very first action, the date I will do it and how I will know it is done:

What support, time or resources do I need to line up?

THIRTY DAYS LATER

Look back, then keep going

Come back to this page a month from now. Compare what you planned with what actually happened. No judgment. You are collecting information, not grading yourself.

How did people explain my offer back to me?

What changed in my statement, and why?

What real response did I get, and what will I test next?

SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

- Emily Wale Koya, Personal Branding Roadmap, pages 3 to 10. Supplied reference.
- Personal Branding Expertise Guide, pages 3 to 15. Supplied reference.
- Business Start Up Training Programme, Trainee Workbook 1, pages 4 to 14. Supplied reference.

Examples in this guide are made up to teach a point. They are not real clients or documented results. This guide is educational and does not guarantee any professional, business or income outcome. Rules change, so double check anything legal, tax or regulatory before you act on it.