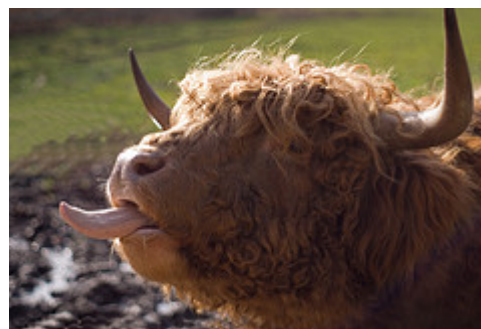


Stop trying to be better than the competition...



And start figuring out how you can be different than your competition.

So many business owners or would be start-ups sit around this time of year trying to figure out how they can be better than the competition – better product, better service, better features, and, the real killer, better price. Heck, some even strive to be “best” in class. What they should be doing is figuring out how they can simply be different than the competition.

I’m not against lofty goals – the problem is creating a better product or service is hard. Prospects often won’t take the time to understand the subtle differences that make your product or service better and you might spend all your time and energy trying to educate them on better when all they want to know is the price. If you’ve even wondered why prospects are choosing your competitors over your obviously superior offering, you may have just a hint of appreciation for what I’m saying here.

Better than the competition is the enemy of different than the competition, and different is where the money is! Instead of trying to be better or exactly like, build a strategy around a simple way that your company is different from the pack. Again, this is sometimes a place where companies will say, “well, we are different we have a better product, or we offer better service.” Really, and do your competitors all suggest they offer crappy service?

We can debate the countless intricate ways that companies can use to create a strategy of difference, but it all pretty much boils down to:

- 1) Better product
- 2) Better process
- 3) Better relationships

In my opinion focusing all of your strategic thinking, goal setting and actions on building a better process or better relationships is the surest and maybe simplest way to create a true competitive advantage that someone might care about. Would you rather lean on your 5% better product or price or on something so totally outrageous and innovative that people can’t stop talking about it?

Creating your own special way to treat customers, creating an experience that’s unique, or creating a totally new and frictionless way for people to get a result is how you stand out from the pack, it’s how you create a difference that can’t be easily copied, and it’s how innovation comes to small business.

Instead of spending your precious R&D time on product features, spend it on creating branded intellectual property, a distinct way of marketing, or on developing people and culture inside your organization that enables you to be seen as different.

I’ll leave you with two powerful questions to pose to your organization to help you get started.

- 1) What are we doing that our competitors are not?
- 2) What are we doing just like our competitors that we could change for good?

Image credit: [Laenulfear](#) Copywrite John Jantsch 2010