



Guide: Points of Difference Questions

This document contains:

Part 1: **Overview**

Part 2: **Uncovering Your Company's True Points of Difference**

Part 3: **Assessing Your Responses**



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Guide: Points of Difference Questions

Part 1: Overview

To determine your company's true points of difference, you must first determine what your company is really good at doing (company strengths) and which of those strengths are most meaningful to customers. Gathering the strengths and benefits will then position you and your team to begin exploring the true points of difference that make your company the best choice in the hearts and minds of current and prospective customers.

To find even more background information and examples beyond what is offered in this guide, take a look at Truth 2 in the *Achieve Brand Integrity* book (pages 37 through 47) about the importance of discovering your company's points of difference.



Guide: Points of Difference Questions

Part 2: **Uncovering Your Company's True Points of Difference**

What makes your company different? To find out, ask yourself, other leaders, and employees in your company these insightful questions. (Insert your company name in the field marked [COMPANY].)

1. If [COMPANY]'s employees were to receive an award from customers, what would it be for?
2. What makes customers rave about [COMPANY]? Why? If there isn't anything, why not?
3. If [COMPANY] ceased to exist, what would customers miss most?
4. How is [COMPANY] unique when compared to other competitive offerings?
5. What do others in the industry do that [COMPANY] would never do?
6. What does [COMPANY] do that others in the industry would never do?
7. What is [COMPANY]'s competitive advantage in the marketplace?

You can increase your understanding of how your company is perceived compared to competitive offerings by asking your customers similar questions. (Insert your company name in the field marked [COMPANY].)

1. If you were to give [COMPANY] employees an award, what would it be for?
2. Are you familiar with other companies in this industry? Based on what you have heard or read, how do competing companies compare to [COMPANY]?
3. Since you have been a customer of [COMPANY], is there anything [COMPANY] did or does that was more than you expected?
4. What are three main reasons why you like doing business with [COMPANY]?
5. If you were to describe [COMPANY] to a friend or colleague, what would you say?
6. If you did not have access to [COMPANY], what do you think you would miss most?
7. How likely is it that you would recommend [COMPANY] to a friend or colleague?
 - Use a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 = Highly Unlikely, 5 = Neutral, and 10 = Highly Likely.

Guide: Points of Difference Questions

Part 3: Assessing Your Responses

Once you collect responses to the questions above from both employees and customers of your company, you can analyze the results to determine where your strengths and meaningful benefits exist. The strengths and meaningful benefits your company provides to employees and customers set the groundwork for your points of difference. They also guide the development of powerful experiences for employees and customers, which will drive greater competitive advantage through your points of difference.

Now that you know your strengths and meaningful benefits, you can document the credibility proof points (reasons to believe) that instill understanding and confidence that your company's product or service will meet or exceed customer expectations. The following is a summary of the five reasons to believe that were shared in Truth 2. Pick two or three of these reasons to believe and challenge your team to come up with ways to deliver them.

Use 5-year-old logic: Speak to customers in such a way that a 5-year-old could understand the benefits. Share the basic facts that can be easily understood and quickly related to. Clearly explain (as if to a 5-year-old) what makes your company different *and* better than the competition.

Give value first through a personal experience: Figure out a way to offer a sample of your product or service so customers can have an experience before deciding to purchase. Sampling and/or demonstrations can prove to be a great way to build reasons to believe, which lead to your points of difference.

Brag about where you came from (your heritage): Document the pedigree behind your product or service (company history, processes, unique brand names, etc.). Make sure they're really meaningful and won't elicit a "Who cares?" response from customers.

Share testimonials from customers, experts in your field, or the media: Use written and/or video testimonials. Your customers will almost always believe other customers more than you and your employees.

Risk a guarantee: To be effective, the guarantee must maximize customer confidence rather than reduce legal risk. The power of your guarantee is directly linked to the level of risk you and your company are perceived to take. Choose a guarantee that is meaningful to your customers and one that the competition does not provide. Then your customers and prospects will know you are different.