



## TIP OF THE WEEK

December 12, 2006

In order to differentiate, we need to be able to fill in the blanks in the following sentence: "Our target customer looks like BLANK and prefers to buy from us because we offer this specific BLANK value." In other words, who is our target customer and what can they buy from us that they can't buy from somebody else? If you can't specifically answer these questions then you won't be able to grow your business with new clients or you will be forced to differentiate using price, and that's a formula for disaster. This seems so simple and easy. Yet most companies, when we meet them for the first time, haven't really thought about differentiation, much less put their thoughts in writing and shared them with their team. If you'd like to download a differentiation template go to [www.markens.com/goodstuff](http://www.markens.com/goodstuff).

Good luck. Work **ON** your business. Stay in touch.

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## Differentiation – Step One

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**In the space below, please list a few key attributes of current and future TARGET CLIENTS. Consider: size, geography, sophistication. What is their pain?**




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## Differentiation – Step Two

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In the space below, list a few key attributes of SPECIFIC VALUE (consider current and future states). Something the business unit does that the customer is willing to pay a premium for. Why a premium? Because if price is the only differentiator, in technical consultant jargon, this would be ... **VERY BAD**. Avoid quality and service, as these are hard to use as a differentiator: most customers make them *a priori* demands. Hint: your Value must be a solution to customer pain.

Consider: Product or service line, innovation, proprietary or unique product or service, competitive advantages.




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## Differentiation – Step Three

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**From the work on TARGET CLIENT and SPECIFIC VALUE, what gaps do you see?**

**What additional capability or service would enhance our offering?**

**What specific capabilities or services should we purposely avoid or omit from our offering?**



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## Differentiation – Step Four

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Write your draft differentiation statement below.

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Now go share it with your team.

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