

# Staying One Step Ahead

Determine how you can stay one step ahead of your competition—one step ahead of the marketplace copycats using each of these ten techniques.

## How Do You Do It?

1. **Stress quality .**  
From the restaurant diner's point of view, it's the restaurant who employs a committed "plate checker", to ensure the dinner they ordered is exactly as they requested, before it goes to the table.  
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2. **Add value.**  
It's the florist who isn't open Sundays, but will take a customer appointment on that day when it's the only day available to the customer.  
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3. **Improve. Innovate.**  
It's the new! improved! versions that really do taste better, work faster, last longer and are easier to use like the zip lock bags of salad or cheese.  
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4. **Research and Development.**  
It's a new-to-the-public herb like St. John's Wort that alleviates feelings of mild depression and anxiety without side effects.  
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5. **Clone Near Versions of the Original.**  
It's the products with fruit and nuts, low or no fat versions, chocolate versions, hot, medium and mild versions, barbecued, salt & vinegar, sour cream and onion versions of everything from cereals to salsas to potato chips.  
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5. **Create Another Niche.**  
It's Gap clothes for kids. It's Ralph Lauren layettes for the newborn.  
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7. **Give Superior Customer Service.**  
It's the option of "live" telephone assistance at a time when "Press one for... press four for... press six..." is all too prevalent.  
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3. **Communicate Your Benefits—Differently .**  
It's walking customers to their car—holding an umbrella over them and their purchases because it's raining.  
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7. **Get Up Close and Personal.**  
It's calling a customer when the new shirts by their favorite designer arrive in the store.  
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10. **Stay In Touch**  
It's checking after the service call on their computer has been completed—just to ensure that everything is working well and to answer any questions that may have popped up.  
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