

What a Clear Positioning Statement Does for Your Business

You have heard of taking a position. Well in the business world, often you have to create a position—a positioning message that is. This message reflects your company's values and gives customers important information when they are deciding where to spend their money.

Creating a positioning statement can be a difficult and confusing task because many businesses offer the same products and services - but it's not impossible.

Think of Colgate and Crest toothpaste. Essentially they are the same product and they perform the same functions—preventing cavities and cleaning teeth. Yet Colgate is the number one toothpaste. Why? Because it positions itself as the choice most dentists recommend.

Think about your vision for your company. How do you want people to remember you? Can you surmise it in a concise sentence? Think about brand names that are inseparable from their messages. Burger King is the fast food chain that “does it your way” and lets you customize your “flame broiled” burger. That’s how you know it’s different from McDonald’s and every other burger business. Another example is Martha Stewart, who is the purveyor of “good things” because her commitment is to bringing the good life to the masses.

A positioning message:

- Distinguishes you from the rest
- Reflects your intentions, priorities and values
- Communicates concisely how you see your business in the marketplace
- Is the center of every marketing effort and corporate communication

To strengthen and clarify your positioning message, you have to know your Ps and Cs.

Product

What exactly are you offering your customers? Are they superior to your competitors' offerings? Are you able to clearly and quickly articulate the benefits you're offering? Features describe the product while benefits reinforce what the product does

for the consumer. For example, a feature of a car is an air bag, the benefit is increased safety during high impact car accidents.

Price

We do not recommend that you engage in price wars that can ultimately cut you out of business. Instead, find ways in which you can deliver superior quality and customer service so the consumer prefers your company.

Promotion or Advertising

Do you actively and relentlessly communicate your positioning message? Do you promote the ways in which you deliver superior quality and customer service or are your campaigns mostly centered on discounts, coupons or rebates?

Place Distribution

Do you know how and where your product or service is delivered? Are the ways in which you can use this to differentiate your business? For example, a company could make a positioning statement and a promotional campaign centered on delivering its product in pristine condition within 24-hours or your money back.

Company Definition

Are you specific about what your company does and how it does it? Companies that try to be too much to too many people often fail because they cannot adequately meet customers' expectations. Be clear about what you do and how you do it differently and more desirably than anyone else. For example, Joe Boxer is an underwear company like hundreds of other underwear companies but it's clear that it offers underwear that is fun to wear. So you will never see a pair of plain white briefs in Joe Boxer and whenever you see the packaging, the website or visit a store where Joe Boxer products are sold you will see an element of fun, humor and cheekiness.

Competitors' Identification

Do you know your competitors? In order to differentiate yourself from the pack, you will have to analyze your competition. Why might a consumer pick them over you? How can you narrow the gap on them? What do you already do that is superior to their business offering and how can you constantly and consistently communicate that?

Consumer Target Definition

Do you know your customers? Do you have demographic, lifestyle and psycho-graphics information on your best customers? Do you know whom you want to target and who is most likely to purchase from you?

Channel Distribution

Where and how is your product or service delivered? Are there ways in which you can capitalize on that and make positive distinctions between you and your competitors?

Always remember when creating your positioning message to be truthful about what you can offer so that you do not disappoint your customers. Over-promising and under-delivering are the fastest way to distinguish your business in your customers' minds—and the fastest way to send them running to your competition.

Solutions At A Glance...

- ☐ Product
- ☐ Price
- ☐ Promotion or Advertising
- ☐ Place Distribution
- ☐ Company Definition
- ☐ Competitors' Identification
- ☐ Consumer Target Definition
- ☐ Channel Distribution