



POSITIONING

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To win the battle for the mind, you can't compete head-on against a company that has a strong, established position. You can go around, under or over, but never head to head.

POSITIONING LAWS

The prospect

- No tolerance for being told they are wrong.
- The mind sees only what it expects to see.
- Don't try to change the mind of the prospect; it is the road to disaster. Instead, go around it.
- Words are triggers. They trigger the meanings which are buried in the mind.
- Use the words that trigger the right responses in the mind the prospect.



Communication

- Less = More.
- Select material that has the highest chance of getting through.
- Simple concepts expressed with simple words used in a straightforward way.
- To be successful in this over-communicated society of ours, play the game by the rules that society sets; not your own.
- Only seek publicity to achieve a position.
- The communication industry feeds on bad news, not good news.
- Too much publicity = bad.

Naming

- A good name is the #1 most important marketing decision.
- Only the first-mover can choose any name they want.
- All other players must pick good names. With a good name, your positioning job will be easier.
- Changing a name may be necessary if strategy deems so.
- The obvious name isn't always the best name.
- Don't think inside out, think outside in.
- The more products hung on your name, the less meaning your name has to the average consumer.



Roll out in phases

Hint: You don't have to roll your product out everywhere. Stagger the release within phases and once successful in one, repeat in another.



Chronologic
(age group)



Geographic



Demographic
(persona)



Distribution
channels

Positioning yourself: find a horse to ride



Never join a loser company. If your current company is going nowhere, join another one.



Always try to work for the smartest, brightest, most competent person you can find. If your boss is going places, chances are good that you are too.



Most of the big breaks that happen in a person's career happen because a business friend recommended that person. Keep in touch.



Original ideas will always find opposition at their beginnings. To ride an 'idea' horse, you must be willing to expose yourself to ridicule and controversy. Never be afraid of conflict.



Don't lose faith, hang in there. Be patient. The sun shines tomorrow on those who have made the right decision today.



Make sure your name is right. A strong name sets a perception in the mind of the public. Don't use initials, unless you're super famous. Avoid the line-extension trap: don't name your children after you. Inheriting someone's name also inherits their position. Make mistakes. Similar to a product, don't try to be all things to all people.

The jockey that wins the race is usually the one with the best horse. So find yourself a horse to ride and then ride it for all it's worth.

Always try to position near the center of the spectrum

Don't steer too far from the center of the spectrum. Try to be balanced and near the center. An extreme in either direction will isolate you.

Find 1) a unique position and 2) an appeal that's not too narrow.

Always focus on the perception of the prospect, not the reality of the product. Your position is inside the prospect's mind, not you or your product.

Most positioning programs are nothing more or less than a search for the obvious. The best ideas are so simple and obvious that they're overlooked. Unfortunately, obvious concepts are also the most difficult to recognize and sell.

HOW TO GET INTO THE MIND:

there is no substitute for getting there first

1. Be first. If you can't, make sure you are second.

2. Establish a strong alternative position. Build a ladder to the mind relative to a competitors ladder (relative positioning or reposition leader (hard)). Do not ignore the competition. Don't copy the leader or become a "me-too."

3. Repositioning a competitor to move an old product or idea in, you must move an old one out. People like to watch the bubble burst. Repositioning vs. comparative: don't just compare yourself "we're better than XYZ." Reposition the competitor by explaining why XYZ sucks. Turn the customer name around e.g. "Fair Trade" = "Fair to the trade, unfair to the customer."

POSITIONING DO-NOTS



1. Charge high prices for the sake of it.
2. Become damaged or considered a loser. "Once a loser, always a loser."
3. Try to trick the prospect. Advertising is not a debate. It is a seduction.
4. Be everything to everybody. Find a position and stick to it.
5. Sit still. You must constantly be alert to keep your position targeted to today's problem and today's markets.

POSITIONING CHECKLIST

What position do you own?

Positioning is thinking in reverse. Instead of asking what you are, you ask what position you already own in the mind of the prospect.

What position do you want to own?

Don't be all things to all people. Cherchez le creneau: "look for the hole," and then fill it.

Do you have enough money?

With a limited number of dollars, it's better to overspend in one city than underspend in several cities. If you become successful in one location, you can always roll out the program to other places.

Do you match your position?

Make sure your marketing motions match the position you've taken. Creativity by itself is worthless. Only when it is subordinated to the positioning objective can creativity make a contribution.

Whom must you outgun?

It's better to go around an obstacle rather than over it. Try to select a position that no one has a firm grip on. Often to create a viable position, you must reposition another brand or even an entire category of product. Establishing a leadership position depends on a willingness to pour it on when others sit back and wait.

Can you stick it out?

Our over-communicated society is always changing. You have to hang in there, year after year. If you give up a position, it may be near impossible to get it back again.