



How to position your new brand in the marketplace?

Positioning is everything

As a brand you cannot be all things to all people. An audience of 'everyone' is not a strategy for success it is a recipe for failure.

Try to appeal to everyone and you risk connecting with no one.

Positioning involves making tough choices, it means being brutally honest with yourself.

What is it?

Positioning is: Defining who your target audience is, how you're different from the competition, then committing to a direction that clearly and favourably distinguishes your brand from its competitors in the mind of your customers.

Positioning focuses on making you unique and different from your competitors, and uses that to define how you look, what you say, and how you do what you do.

Warning!

Brand positioning is inevitable. Every brand has its position in the marketplace and although you can't control this process you can influence it.



In other words if you don't take a pro-active role in your brand positioning you're leaving it to others, customers, competitors, economics and the media to define that positioning for you.

The way to start taking control is by defining a brand positioning statement.

What is a positioning statement?

It is not your tagline, slogan or your mission statement.

It's not for public consumption like your tagline it is 'for your eyes-only'

It is simply a one or two sentence statement that will help you to make critical key decisions that affect your customer's perception of your brand.

Its purpose is to guide the marketing, production and operational decisions of your company.

The goal is to clearly identifying your target market, the main benefit you provide to your audience and your rationale.

The power of creating a positioning statement is that it forces you to clearly identifying your target customer and (their) need, instead of your company or the product you offer.

How to create your positioning statement

Once the audience is defined, the next step is making a list of the needs or wants that your target market has and the benefits that your product or service uniquely provides.

This is your unique selling proposition, or USP.

Now – Try this classic, simple formula used by many brands over the years.

It will help you clarify what your offering is, where it sits in the marketplace and what the key benefit is.



Formula:

What: The only [category]

How: that [differentiation characteristic]

Who: for [customer]

Where: in [geographic location]

Why: who [need state]

When: during [underlying trend]

Harley Davidson used a variation on this formula to craft their positioning statement, which is:

- The only motorcycle manufacturer
- That makes big, loud motorcycles
- For macho guys (and “macho wannabes”)
- Mostly in the United States
- Who want to join a gang of road adventurers
- In an era of decreasing personal freedom.

You have to agree that this statement does give a very clear and precise picture of what Harley does and who they do it for. You can also see how this was then used to create their brand tagline which is:

“American by birth, Rebel by choice”.

And if you have ever seen any Harley Davidson ads it is easy to recognise this brand positioning in everything they do.



Define your positioning statement

Based on the formula I mentioned above write your positioning statement.

Take your time on this it is important.

What:

How:

Who:

Where:

Why:

When:



One important thing to remember when positioning your brand for success is:

Don't blindly follow the leader!

Many companies become preoccupied with chasing the next big thing, the latest fashion or trend.

Trends end, fashions fade and technology moves forever onwards

Basing your business, your logo, your brand or your new idea on a trend makes you a hostage to forces beyond your control.

Yes be aware of trends and fashion - 'the new kid on the block' and, if it feels right, you should certainly incorporate it into your thinking; but don't make it the core of your business.

Remember: Whatever font, colour, material, or product is today's 'must have' will NOT be tomorrow's.

Focus on what won't change

There are plenty of core (timeless) values that won't change whatever the trend. Things like:

Service, Reliability, Speed, Affordability and Practicality

They might sound obvious and they probably sound boring but most mediocre brands pay nothing more than lip service to them.

If you want to build a brand that will stand the test of time DON'T blindly follow everyone else'.