

Book Notes -- Positioning

Definition: Positioning is not what you do to a product. Positioning is what you do to the mind of the prospect. That is, you position the product in the mind of the prospect.

The first step in any positioning program is to look inside the mind of the prospect.

Positioning theory says you must start with what the prospect is already willing to give you.

Experience has shown that a positioning exercise is a search for the obvious.

Process:

1. Isolate the concept.
2. Implement it.

What position do you own?

What position do you want to own? (Avoid direct confrontation.) Be a specialist.

Whom must you outgun? If your proposed position calls for a head-to-head approach against a marketing leader, forget it. Go around the obstacle.

Rollouts: Look for places to make your brand successful, then roll it out to other markets.

Types of rollouts:

- geographic, e.g. one city
- demographic, e.g.: college campuses
- chronologic, e.g.: age groups
- distribution, e.g.; via salons

1.

In the communication jungle out there, the only hope to score big is to be selective, to concentrate on narrow targets, to practice segmentation. In a word, "positioning."

You have to jettison the ambiguities, simplify the message, and then simplify it some more if you want to make a long-lasting impression.

You look for your solution to the problem in the prospect's mind. ... You ignore the sending side and concentrate on the receiving end. You concentrate on the perceptions of the prospect. Not the reality of the product.

3.

The easiest way to get into a prospect's mind is to be first.

It's better to be a big fish in a small pond (and then increase the size of the pond) than to be a small fish in a big pond.

From the product era (Rosser Reeves and the USP) to the image era (Ogilvy) to the positioning era.

To succeed in our overcommunicated society, a company must create a position in the prospect's mind, a position that takes into consideration not only a company's own strengths and weaknesses, but those of its competitors as well.

IBM didn't invent the computer, Sperry-Rand did. But IBM was the first company to build a computer position in the mind of the prospect.

4.

An advertiser who wants to introduce a new product category must carry in a new ladder (a ladder represents a product category).

Establishing the "against" position is a classic positioning maneuver.

Avis was successful because it related itself to Hertz. ... And because people have a natural sympathy for the underdog.

Another positioning strategy is to worm your way onto a ladder owned by someone else. As 7-Up did.

To find a unique position, you must ... look inside the prospect's mind. You won't find an "uncola" idea inside a 7-Up can. You find it inside the cola drinker's head.

5.

How do you go against a company with a position like IBM?

Well, first you have to recognize it. Then, you don't do the thing that many people in the computer field try to do. Act like IBM.

... A better strategy for IBM's competitors would be to take advantage of whatever positions they already own in the minds of their prospects and then relate them to a new position in computers.

6.

Positioning leaders: Promote the category.

Introduce new products for new categories, not Ivory detergent, but Tide.

Leaders can also benefit by broadening the range of applications for their products.

E.g.: Baking soda in the fridge.

7.

Positioning a follower. Look for the hole. Zag.

E.g.: High price. Low price. Sex. Masculinity. Femininity. Age. Time of day (Nyquil -- the first nighttime cold remedy). Distribution (e.g., L'eggs -- the first panty hose in supermarkets).

The hole has to be in the prospect's mind -- not the company's or the factory's.

Advertising is not a debate. It's a seduction.

8.

Repositioning the competition.

Create your own creneau (hole).

With a plethora of products in every category, how does a company use advertising to blast its way into the mind? The basic underlying marketing strategy has got to be "reposition the competition."

Never be afraid of conflict. The crux of a repositioning program is undercutting an existing concept, product, or person.

Tylenol: "For the millions who should not take aspirin ... "

Royal Doulton (china): "Royal Doulton. The china of Stoke-on-Trent, England vs. Lenox. The china of Pomona, New Jersey."

"Stolichnaya is different. It is Russian."

Scope: Listerine gives you "medicine breath."

Don't compare, though. It's not that you're *better*, it's that you're *different*.

11.

Don't just extend the name.

The new product, if it's going to be successful, is going to require a new ladder. New ladder, new name.

Xerox. Kleenex. Cadillac.

12.

What does it mean to own a position in the mind? Simply this: The brand name becomes a surrogate or substitute for the generic name.

Fiberglas, Formica, Jell-O, Kleenex, Band-Aid, Sanka.

When you have a generic brand, you can afford to ignore the brand and promote the category.

From the prospect's point of view, line extension works against the generic brand position. It blurs the sharp focus of the brand in the mind.

Outside-in thinking is the best aid to success.

13.

When line-extensions can work:

- small-volume products
- crowded marketplace
- small budget
- commodities
- items sold by sales reps

Chapters 14-25

Sabena

Flies to Belgium. Promoting food didn't help sales. Promoting Belgium as a gateway didn't work either (like saying "fly to Philadelphia if you want to get to New York").

The trick was to position Belgium in the mind of the seasoned traveler. Ad campaign: "In beautiful Belgium, there are five Amsterdams."

Jamaica

Jamaica's positioning problem is similar to the problem of Belgium. How to put a mental picture postcard into the mind of the Caribbean prospect?

Tie Jamaica to an image that already exists.

"The Hawaii of the Caribbean."

Milk Duds

"America's long-lasting alternative to the candy bar."

Long Island Trust

Promote it as the bank for Long Islanders.

United Jersey bank

Look to the disadvantages of big city banks: slow service.

"The fast-moving bank."

Stowe

"One of the top 10 ski resorts in the world."