

Marketing Positioning

When I meet with entrepreneurs I often observe that they have more things they want to sell than is humanly possible. Many small businesses stagnate because they dilute their efforts on many different products and customers. This is a classic problem of focus. You need to determine what exactly you want to sell (and can deliver on) and who will benefit from it if they buy from you. If you do not do this, you will likely have a hard time to grow at all.

The key is to determine what aspect of your business and products fit the "low hanging fruit" model. What can you go after that will allow you build your business the fastest and then make it possible to set up for others to keep operating without you spending all you time on it. If you can set up a system to get regular sales with one product then you can evaluate expanding on this or adding products or services.

The template provided here will help you to refine your focus and communicate better with your customers. It is simple yet very powerful if used correctly. Using the template, first write an overall positioning statement for your business. Take the time to make it concise and powerful because you can then use it in all your marketing pieces, web site, introductions, elevator pitches, etc.

Summarize your offering in terms of a positioning statement

To (target, who exactly is the customer we are talking to right now)

x is the brand of (frame of reference, who we are with company name or product name)

that (primary benefit you provide that the target needs)

because (key attributes or arguments that back up the benefit)

Keep in mind the customer is reassured that you are talking to exactly them so they know your product or service will be geared toward them. By writing your benefits and attributes to a defined customer you will also get their attention quickly. The positioning statement can be only a few words up to a few concise sentences.

Value Proposition Statement

You often hear people talk about the "Value Proposition"; this is also a positioning statement and the following is a definition:

“A concise statement of the compelling promise that your product or company makes to a set of target customers that is differentiated from available alternatives, and supported by reasons to believe in the promise.”

When you write your positioning statement, check to see if it fits this value proposition definition as well. If it does you are probably in good shape.

After you have this written your statement, then ask the following questions:

1. How big is this target?
2. Who is the competition and what is their pricing?
3. Can I make money selling my product against the competition?
4. Is my differentiation clear in regards to the competition?
5. How difficult will it be to get this message to the right people and close sales?
6. Can I deliver on these sales if I get a lot of them?

Answering these questions will help you refine your offering and be more efficient in the sales process.

If you have many products or services you want to sell then take each definable product or service that you can sell and write a "sub-positioning statement" for it. Through the process you will realize which "channels" of business can be reached with the least resources. Also evaluate which targets have overlap in who they are and how you can serve them. After that, you have to prioritize so you can feel comfortable your time and energy is being used efficiently.

Hint: If you must sell multiple products, look for products that complement each other in terms of the customers being similar (marketing efficiency) and can the same resources be used to deliver these products (operations efficiency).

Use your Positioning Statement (different versions is OK) in all forms of marketing and sales communications:

1. Web Site: Make sure your home clearly shows your complete positioning. Viewers need to be able to "get it" within 20 – 30 seconds. Internal web pages are for detailed explanations of product or service, the home page is for positioning.
2. Letters and email introductions: Put positioning in the first paragraph
3. Flyers and brochures
4. Advertisements
5. Sales scripts for cold calling
6. Articles

By having defined and refined positioning you will be more efficient and more effective in selling you products to the right people. As you build sales to any target customer group you gain valuable experience that can help improve your offering with each new sale. This is a very profitable way to do business.