



COUCH & ASSOCIATES INC.

Brand Positioning

Owning a Piece of Real Estate in Consumer Minds

Meeting Consumer Needs

How do we distinguish our own unique brand from our competitors? How do we secure a place in the minds of our most perfect prospects and customers in order that they hold our product or brand in their memory - so in the exact moment they have a need for it, they think of us first?

Brand positioning is the name given to the process of humanizing our brands so that consumers can better identify and remember our brand in that exact moment they need to fill a particular correlating need. For example, if you are selling running shoes, you can establish a relationship with your consumers by establishing certain traits and values to your brand's personality. Your shoes are either;

- a. for those looking for comfort and security, they will respond to concepts like 'stability' and 'tradition'
- b. if you are targeting those who are daring and have leadership capabilities, you can use words like 'adventure' and 'pride'
- c. if your target audience is those with emotional or spiritual inclinations, you can brand your product using personality attributes like 'creativity' and 'conscientiousness'.

By establishing a common set of words that represent a common set of personality traits and assigning these words to describe your brand's personality, you can create a language that your customers can identify with, thereby choosing you over your competition because you now own a piece of real estate in their mind - it is now occupied with your brand or product.

Thinking like your Perfect Consumer

Brand positioning starts with thinking like your perfect consumer. Who is your customer? What do they want? What is that essential problem that they are facing that hinders them from being worry-free and going about their daily activities in a normal fashion? Your product or brand has to have a unique feature or unique selling proposition (USP) that will work to resolve a prospect's immediate problem. Constructing an effective brand position means identifying your consumer's behavior; how can we relieve a prospect from their pain, or how can we elevate their capacity with our own unique brand or product. Brand positioning is that ability to construct a bond between brand and buyer, and that bond (or identification) comes from common values or attributes.

Using Positive Emotion

To produce an effective tagline or slogan, marketers have to focus on tapping into the minds of their prospects and customers using positive emotions. Volvo uses "Safety" and Nike uses "Just Do It" - very fundamental ideas that trigger our basic desires and needs. To allow consumers to identify with our brands or products, we must elicit a positive emotion that triggers a part of the mind in correlation to a particular product need. A positive association is much more comforting during a purchase-making decision. Consumers are only willing to buy when they feel comfortable and don't associate any negativity or harm with their decision. Positive emotions reinforce buying decisions, so your brand identity should be positive too.

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Ways to Position your Brand

1 Market Segmentation

To effectively position your brand in your market, you have to focus on who your key audience is. The key to segmentation is understanding through research the behaviors and personalities of our potential buyers. Things like demographics, lifestyle, social class, geography psychology, every day concerns and routines, and other countless details to zero-in on your perfect consumer's behaviors. The better we understand the likes and dislikes of our perfect prospects, the better we are able to construct brand personalities they will respond to.

2 Creating Personality

At the core of a brand positioning agenda should be the fundamental features that highlight the personality and physical attributes of a brand. Attributes are developed through cohesive images, words, actions and presumptions. Brand attributes give a brand their very own unique personality and identity. The exact brand attributes that are assigned to a brand will be the attributes your perfect consumers can identify with, so think about the kind of values you want your image to sustain.

3 Assessing Competitor Position

To construct your brand positioning, you have to make a competitive analysis; what niche are your competitors already utilizing for engagement with consumers in your industry? If a particular niche is occupied by your competitors, you have to create a unique selling proposition (USP) that is differentiated from others. The better you understand where your competition lays and which market segment they have occupied, the better you will figure out what market it is best to tread in with your brand.

4 Aim for Cohesion in Messages

The basic concepts you will develop for your brand, its attributes and values, will remain at the core of your entire marketing agenda. In social media channels, messages that we sent to social media customers are always changing, (Twitter allows for 140 character messages) so we have to continuously produce dialogue and engagement with our audiences. The basic attributes and values we assign to our brand are those we have to base our entire conversations on. Cohesion is a very important element in brand positioning. Although the story and messages are ever-changing, the basic components of the media messages have to always stay the same.

5 Promising and Delivering

The personality attributes and values that you associate with your brand will be fundamentally linked to what you are actually promising your buyers. Gaining loyalty depends on delivering on that promise; if your product promises to offer the best technology in engine-making, your product must deliver on this promise. Image branding has to also be backed up by the guarantee behind the product, itself.

Staying True to our Brand's Position

Owning a space in your prospect and customers' minds is a formula that is for the most part associated with a positive emotional attachment. It is marketing's job to use consistent reinforcement to keep this bond going. Our messages must have cohesion to them; if we agree on certain traits for our brand's personality, these traits have to be honored and represented in each aspect of our messaging. The advent of social media has introduced another layer to our marketing efforts; whereas before we would advertise our brands and products using a one-time commercials or billboards, social media channels are constructed in a way in which dialogue has to be continuous - we have to engage with our prospects with engaging conversions. Brand positioning, in this sense, means staying true to the core personality of our brand in every message we deliver.