

Does Your Brand Positioning Actually Sell?



George Schildge

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Does your brand position and messaging actually sell? Can your customer understand and explain what you do and how it's different from alternatives in the market?

With an effective branding you can create experiences that transform your organizations and the lives of individuals.

Every business has a brand. Your customers, potential customers, and employees already have a perception of what your business means to them. What comes to your mind when you hear “German Automobile” or “Computers”?

It might be a brand or it might be an emotion. Whatever you chose at the time has a position in your mind. Now ask yourself why you chose that computer or automobile. You might find it interesting. The brand positioning is a very powerful thing.

From an academic stand point, positioning is how you differentiate your product or service from that of your competitors and then determine which market niche to fill. Positioning helps establish your product's or service's identity within the eyes of the customers. A company's positioning strategy is affected by a number of variables related to customers' motivations and requirements, as well as by its competitors' actions.”

Building your brand will enable you to communicate your messaging to customers, employees, and stakeholders more efficiently, so they immediately associate your business with their needs. Branding builds a unique personality for an organization. It differentiates your business from others in the industry and therefore attracts a defined type of customer. What prospects do you want to attract?

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[Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) used the following positioning statement in 2001 (when it almost exclusively sold books): “For World Wide Web users who enjoy books, Amazon.com is a retail bookseller that provides instant access to over 1.1 million books. Unlike traditional book retailers, Amazon.com provides a combination of extraordinary convenience, low prices, and comprehensive selection.” Do you think this strategy still holds true today?

In this article, I will take you through a practical process to help you create a differentiated position and messaging that supports your brand that actually sells.

Archetypes in Branding

The most successful companies instill a brand and product lines with meaning. Because archetypes provide products and companies with meaning, they provide a bridge between the human motivations and the products and services that fulfill human needs.

Archetypes become the unconscious frameworks that determine how and why people think and react. They provide a means to assess an organization or team’s unconscious archetypal stories and to discover how these are related to its values and strengths.

Understanding the archetypal story being played out in any organization has many benefits, such as:

- Establishment and maintenance of a compelling brand
- Development of a healthier organization
- Creation of stronger teams and better communication
- Creation of a positive future consistent with the organization's culture

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By identifying unconscious archetypal stories, teams, and organizations can learn what motivates their leaders, what values are deeply held by their corporate cultures, and what brand identities will help them connect more readily with customers. This assessment will be instrumental in the development of buyer personas, product positioning, and outreach programs.

Methodology Used to Obtain Information

You need to set a baseline and determine where your brand stands today to help with your brand building process. We use two online workbooks and an online marketing assessment to be completed by a cross section of the organization. These are used to develop and facilitate a greater understanding of the organization's perception held by the key stakeholder group and employees. If you have the time, it's good to go outside the organization and ask a few customers about their perception of your organization, as well.

I suggest you create, a small group (3 to 5 people) of the organization's management team. This will be your steering committee for the branding process and will be called upon throughout the process to check assumptions, ask clarifying questions and gather additional information.

Assemble a Stakeholder Group that will help drive the position and message within your organization. The Stakeholder Group will be asked to take and complete the following assessment and workbooks ahead of your Stakeholder Group retreat meeting.

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Stakeholder Meeting

I suggest you hold a stakeholder meeting to brainstorm and gather information to develop the organization's positioning statement, ideal customer profile, buyer personas, brand values (the core values that reflect who you are), brand messages for the organization's product and major attributes.

Messages developed during the branding process should reflect the 3Ps that define who the company is, what it does, and where it fits -- **Promise, Position, and Personality**. To develop your brand identity, we begin by distinguishing the messages that the organization's and its product delivers to its customers and employees.

During the workshop, you will be diving into the following questions and begin to explore some of the following questions.

- **What is your Business Solution?** How does your products/services solve a particular problem or add value?
- **Who are your potential clients or customers?** Where are they; what is their industry; what is the size of their organization; what are their needs; what experience have they had with your kinds of service; and what is the buying process?
- **What is your Unique Customer Advantage?** What differentiates you from your competitors? What do you do better, different, faster, cheaper, with higher quality or with a different spin?
- **What is your Business Identity?** What are the qualities you want to be known by? What do you do to live up to these qualities?
- **What is your "30-Second Commercial?"** What words concisely sum up your positioning strategy in a way that is memorable and meaningful, with both style and content?

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Before the stakeholder meeting, I highly recommend that you have the following workbooks and assessment completed by a cross section of your organization.

- Buyer Persona Workbook ([Start here](#))
- Positioning and Messaging Workbook ([Start Here](#))
- Marketing assessment ([Start here](#))

The results from these workbooks and assessment are compiled before the meeting to draw preliminary conclusions.

Competitive Assessment

Before you begin, research and gather competitive data into a framework -- an overview of findings -- that makes them manageable.

I use the "[SWOT](#)" model to begin with. The approach has stood the test of time and is a valuable summation tool, providing a clear framework to put our key findings together in one place for at-a-glance assessment.

The final SWOT analysis will be most conducive to your alignment conversations. By distilling the analysis into short, actionable insights, you can get everyone on the same page and set the stage for your strategic recommendations that will follow.

Next up is to define your ideal customer profile. This is who your marketing target.

Ideal Customer Profile (ICP)

Sales is a hyper-targeted, data-driven, repeatable science. You will describe your customers and understand who your ideal customer is and what similarities they have. Then you define your customers with the following criteria:

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- Demographics - their age, gender, income, etc.
- Psychographics - their personality type, preferences, etc.
- Behavior - their similar likes and dislikes, sports, hobbies, etc.
- B2B companies should also note characteristics of your ideal businesses to work with, including:
 - # of employees
 - Revenue
 - Geographic scope
 - Type of business
 - Decision-making
 - Budget

Create Buyer Personas

For brand positioning to be truly effective, you have to know who you are talking to. Take what you already know, and bring some new insights, then combine them into several buyer personas. You will explore what makes them unique, and then craft all content around them. Buyer personas (sometimes referred to as marketing personas) are fictional, generalized representations of your ideal customers.

You will create profiles that describe specific segments of your current clients. Ensure that the profiles are tangible, so that you can envision this person and what would motivate them to find your business.

Having a deep understanding of your buyer persona(s) is critical to driving content creation, product development, sales follow up, and really anything that relates to customer acquisition and retention.

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Brand Development

Information obtained during the retreat meeting will be utilized to develop the brand positioning, messaging, and an outreach program. From the retreat meeting, you should uncover the messages that resonate with the organization's key audience and specifically to the buyer personas. This is all entered into a messaging model with the following elements:

1. Brainstorm 10 key messages for your audience and then create a short label to make them easy to chart
2. Weight the importance for each prioritization criteria. Be sure that your total weight equals 100%
3. Evaluation criteria is based on effectiveness, credibility and resonance perspectives
4. Rank each message (Green, Amber, Red cells) on a scale of 1-10
5. Sort the results to identify the messages that are most effective, credible and resonate with your audience
6. View the automatically generated "Message Map" which provides a visual representation of the data from the prioritization exercise
7. Identify which messages to cut, and which to refine based on the evaluation criteria for solid messages

Now that you have your position with supporting message elements, which convey your brand and positioning directly to the customer, you can move on to your collateral material.

What do your marketing materials communicate about your brand? Your marketing materials will be reviewed to ensure that your brand messages are communicated in everything your customer or potential customer sees and hears. You will make sure that your company literature reflects your brand values and tells your story.

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Brand messages will focus on the benefits of your business to potential customers. Instead of what you do, the brand messages will communicate what you can do for the customer.

If inconsistent, you may need to update your marketing collateral and website. This may include a completely new or a redesigned website, so that it provides an immediate visual link to your brand value and messages.

Go-to-Market Strategy

Your Go-to-Marketing Strategy is the framework by which your organization understands what they're doing and want to do. The marketing strategy, ultimately, will be nested within your business strategy.

Your marketing strategy will address three core elements: customers, competitors, and capabilities, the "strategic triad." In other words, how is your organization providing value to your customers? How are you differentiated from your competitors? How do your capabilities enable you to innovate, operate and fulfill the promise you've made and do so in a profitable way?

The marketing strategy is an integrated Go-to-Market Plan for your products and/or services designed to help you define your target markets, create the content, build the outreach messages, and help with the overall marketing process.

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You can short cut process and simply copy your competition but that will leave you as a commodity and typically competing on price. Brand positioning can either hinder your business, or propel it, depending on the level of accuracy and effort applied. Many marketers and management teams don't have the clarity and conviction of following through on their words. Without certainty, you default to the status quo. Turn everything you do into an expression of your desired positioning and you can create something special. This takes courage; to actively position your brand means you have to stand for something. Only then are you truly on your way to owning your very own position in the mind of your customer. Follow this method and you'll be on your way to building a solid brand.

Once you have your positioning and messaging defined and completed it's time to focus on your Go-to-Market plan.

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Welcome to Matrix Marketing Group!

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