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## POSITIONING THE MANTRA FOR THE SUCCESS

### Article Particulars

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### Abstract

*The entire business activity is based on product positioning. In order to build a brand effectively it is inevitable to choose the right positioning strategy. Brand positioning is the unbeatable mantra for marketers to win the battle against the competitors. The success of a brand heavily relies on well-defined positioning. Brand positioning has become a tool of marketing. The positioning offers various advantages to the firms mainly in meeting the competition effectively, it offers rich dividend of brand loyalty and promises growth. The factors like quality, product attributes, benefits, price, value, usage, competition are the bases for brand positioning. The firms must take up a research work to know the needs of customers, product category, target segments, perceptions brand personality before they finalise the positioning strategies. The marketers must design an innovative marketing communication strategy to persuade consumers to purchase the brand. The positioning strategy should match with the consumers' perception. The firms must adopt most suitable positioning strategies in order to occupy a stronger position in the consumers' mind to be a head in the highly competitive environment. This paper consists of successful positioning strategies adopted by Vodafone, Old spice and Cadbury.*

**Keywords:** Brand positioning, Brand personality, Brand loyalty, Consumers' perception, marketing tool.

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### Introduction

The constantly changing consumer needs and lifestyles and preferences have paved the way to the new ideas for the marketers. These groundbreaking ideas resulted in reshaping the thinking of marketers by first identifying and understanding the needs and expectations of the target group and then to come up with suitable products. These innovative products though unique, still there is a greater possibility of being copied by the competitors. So the marketers are continuously seeking the distinct positions for their brands in the minds of customers and hence the brand positioning has emerged as the most challenging job in today's overcrowded markets. It aims at establishing a differentiated image of the brand in the minds of the potential customers. According to Charles Mittelstadt, "Positioning refers to how you want your brand thought about in connection with the competitors in its product category. It needs to be specific to your brand aimed at specific target audience".

A successful brand positioning strategy concentrates on finding out the strong position in customer's mind and then sitting on it, which leads to gain the competitive advantage in the market. The marketing managers are constantly facing the dilemma to position and reposition the brands according to the changing perceptions, needs and preferences of the customers, therefore in the light of this fact, in this present study, we tend to focus upon describing the various strategies to position brands most effectively in the market, to give a brief account of puzzles and advancements in positioning

In order to understand how brands are positioned in the mind of customer in relation to relevant attributes positioning will be an important tool. Functional attributes or the emotional associations with the brand are the key for the formation of positioning. Positioning is the pursuit of differential advantage (SubortoSengupta, 1999). The brand differentiation strategy which is an integral part of brand positioning must be thoroughly by employees and customers. The organization will bear less expense if it adopts the right positioning strategy with right marketing mix aimed at specific target customers. A well-positioned brand must have a clear vision, a concise meaning and understand their parameters of relevance, are well positioned. Nike has done its positioning as: "Athletic Shoes for Winners"-Whatever you want, you can 'just do it' in Nikes. Similarly, 7-up positioned itself as 'TheUncola' drink by using colas as a frame of reference which creates its distinct image in the soft drink market. So the marketer must discover the positions which can award them the competitive advantage.

Positioning starts with a product. A piece of merchandise, a service, a company, an institution, or even a person. But 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. Positioning is all about how you differentiate yourself in the mind of prospect (A L Ries, Jack Trout, 2003). Positioning is also the first body of thought that comes to grips with the problems of getting heard in our over communicated society. Positioning has become the buzzword of advertising and marketing people. The basic approach of positioning is not to create something new and different. But to manipulate what's already up there in the mind. Product positioning is a concept that has changed the nature of advertising.

Today's marketplace is no longer responsive that worked in the past. There are just too many products, too many companies, and too much marketing noise. The prospective consumers are bombarded with lots of advertising messages. 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". The mind, as a defense against the volume of today's communications, screens and rejects much of the information offered it. To succeed in over communicated 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. In general, the mind accepts only that which matches prior knowledge or experience. The positioning concept of the oversimplified message was further developed into theory of 'owning a word in the mind'. Volvo owns "safety", BMW owns" driving", FedEx owns" overnight". The firms are living in positioning era. The brands Kodak, IBM, Xerox, Hertz, Coca-Cola, GE have a common thing in them. They were all the first brands in the mind in their categories. Today these brands are still the leading brands in their categories. "It's better to be first than it is to be better" is by far the most powerful positioning idea.

### **Literature Review**

Although there are different definitions of Positioning, probably the most common is: "A product's position is how potential buyers see the product", and is expressed relative to the position of competitors.

Positioning is a concept in marketing which was first popularized by Al Ries and Jack Trout in their bestseller book "Positioning - a battle for your mind".

This differs slightly from the context in which the term was first published in 1969 by Jack Trout in the paper "*Positioning*" is a game people play in today's me-too market place" in the publication *Industrial Marketing*, in which the case is made that the typical consumer is overwhelmed with unwanted advertising, and has a natural tendency to discard all information that does not immediately find a comfortable (and empty) slot in the consumers mind. It was then expanded into their ground-breaking first book, "*Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind*", in which they define Positioning as "an organized system for finding a window in the mind. It is based on the concept that communication can only take place at the right time and under the right circumstances." (p. 19 of 2001 paperback edition).

### **Significance of Positioning**

#### **Positioning is the core of the business activity**

The whole business activity is based on product positioning. No brand can be built effectively and no consistent image can be conveyed until a strong brand positioning is developed.

#### **Competition can be handled by the positioning**

Now-a -days markets are flooded with numerous homogeneous products. An effective positioning strategy can be useful in convincing the customer towards your brand. Dettol occupies the "Hygiene" position.

#### **Positioning – The growth engine**

Brands are connected emotionally with the customers. A good brand name combined with strong and clearly defined positioning leads to excellent market performance and increased market share and profits.

## **Brand Loyalty by Positioning**

Brands are the part of every consumer. If a brand is strongly positioned, the consumers always prefer to buy it, which ultimately leads to the higher brand loyalty

### **Quality**

Quality is the fundamental to position the product. The efforts are put together to build the dominant perception of quality. It can be built up by focusing on limited range of products, specializing in them and it can also be achieved by attaching higher tag to the brand.

### **Product Attributes**

Product attributes is one of the significant factor to position a brand. Sticking the facts about the product brings the credibility in positioning. Either it is LG's Golden Eye Technology, Onida's. 'Science of Sound', etc.

### **Benefits**

Benefit positioning is also vital to build brands. Consumers always look for specific benefits from the products. For example Maggi noodles for convenience cooking,

### **Value**

Once the good value brands were thought to be inexpensive, but today they are more popular among consumers. Coco-Cola & Pepsi, besides meeting with various controversies, are still well-liked by people because of the status symbol.

## **The Successful Cases of Brand Positioning in India Context**

### **Vodafone**

The leading telecom player Vodafone acquired Hutchinson and entered India with the 'Hutch Is Now Vodafone' campaign. The rebranding/positioning campaign was perfectly planned and implemented to ensure maximum recall among the audience. From customer-care centers to sim card packets – everything was made red. They even partnered with Star India and ensured their campaign ads were played during every commercial break for the first 24 hours. Another remarkable strategy that Vodafone adopted was to retain the most loved factor, the Hutch Pug dog in their advertisements. In this way the Vodafone brand was able to appeal to the larger audience easily and effectively.

### **Old Spice**

Old Spice the leading player in men's' grooming category was suffering from low sales, low consumer interest, and fierce competition. Since the brand associated with older men, they could not meet the growing segment the younger consumers. The company then decided to reach younger target groups by appointing handsome young celebrity role models as the new face of the brand.

Old Spice re-positioned itself as a brand associated with legacy and confident young men. This was readily accepted, with the original video 'The Man Your Man Could Smell Like', which resulted in sales rise sharply by 55% over a quarter. The same campaign was also paid rich dividends in social media. All aspects of the campaign showed off the brand's new look and attitude, and were a huge success.

### **Cadbury India Ltd**

The leading chocolate manufacturer Cadbury's found itself in the controversy, when a few instances of worms in its Dairy Milk bars were reported in Maharashtra. In less than two weeks, the company launched a Public Relations campaign for the trade. After three months later, the new advertisement campaign featuring Big B and a revamped poly-flow packaging. The advertisement revealed the advantage of new packing, which ultimately helped the company to reposition the brand in the consumers mind firmly.

### **Conclusion**

Brand positioning is the unbeatable weapon for marketers to win the battle against the rivals. A strongly positioned brand assumes more survival and competitive advantage for the company. The more effective positioning measures must be administered to understand the effectiveness of positioning, whatever the strategy is opted by the organization to position the brand must be unique, pertinent, reliable, evident, convincing and communicable. It's not an easy job to position a brand successfully by an overnight. It takes a considerable longer time to position the brand. So, in the competitive world, the only way to survive in the market is to build a strong positioning for the brands. If current positioning strategy fails to deliver results, the firms can go for repositioning exercise. The firms like Vodafone, Oldspice and Cadbury have experienced a sizeable increase in their sales volumes and enhanced their brand image due to better brand positioning strategies. To win business, generalists have to not only win over other generalists but also have to beat out specialists. If when positioning creates meaningful change in your organization or in the market place one of their top choices.

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