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Positioning for Profits!

By Kimberly Stevens

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by: **Kimberly Stevens**

Last Friday, I was spending one last day of freedom with a dear friend who was expecting to have her first baby at any minute. We decided to hang out by the pool.

On the way there, we stopped to pick up some lunch to eat pool-side. Given the choice of Wendy's, Subway, or McDonald's, I chose Subway because I knew I could get a relatively low-calorie, low-fat lunch there.

How did I know that? Because I'd seen their commercials starring Jared who had lost something like 150 pounds by eating an all-Subway-sandwich diet.

Now, I don't need to lose 150 pounds, and I don't plan to go on an all-Subway-sandwich diet. However, I also didn't want to blow the 648 calories I had burned on the elliptical trainer that morning.

From the moment we walked in, I knew I had made the right decision. They had a poster-sized sign telling me how many calories and grams of fat each of their basic sandwiches have. That helped me make a decision about the best thing to order.

Then, they reinforced my smart decision when they handed me my sandwich-drink combo. Plastered across the sandwich wrapper, around my cup, and over my napkin were the same calorie/fat breakdowns. I was pleased to see that I was only eating 320 calories for lunch (okay, truth be told, I splurged on chips too). But, nonetheless, Subway had done their job and done it well.

I'm talking about POSITIONING. They might be a lot of things, but the thing they want you to know above all else is that they offer low-calorie fast food alternatives. Yes, they were fast. Yes, they were cheap. But the point they have hammered home with their advertisements, in-store signage, and paper goods is that I can get a meal that won't blow my diet.

Positioning for Profits!

Positioning is what sets you apart from your competitors. It's what makes a prospect choose to work with you rather than someone else. It's the part of perception that you have the most control over. But many business owners neglect to take charge of their position in the marketplace and let customers position their business for them.

How many times have you lowered your prices to get a new client who balked at your original bid? How many times have you agreed to provide a certain service to a client that you never planned to provide, don't enjoy doing, and isn't very profitable? How many times have you taken on a job that requires the most basic skills you possess and complained that you can't get clients that want to use all of your talents?

These are all things that business owners experience when they let their prospects/clients position their business for them. If you find yourself doing this, the time to change is NOW!

Are you letting the market position your business for you? If so, don't fret. Most all of us have been there at some time or another. Sometimes, it's important to take on low-end jobs. We all need to pay the bills. We all experience market downturns. We all have to build up confidence in our services.

But, if you find yourself feeling frustrated with the type of work you're doing, the amount of money you're making, or the kind of clients you are working with, it's time to take charge of your business.

Take a piece of paper and write down 5–10 things you want people to think of when they think of your business. Here are several examples, but you might think of many more: low price fast service high quality personal service caring attitude expert advice emotional support technical expertise immediate results creative ideas

Now, look through your list and choose the one thing that you want to emphasize more than any other - the one thing that will set you apart from your competitors.

Once you've selected it, write down a list of benefits that the one thing provides to your clients. For example, if you chose "high quality" from the list above, some benefits might include: you make them look good to their employees/employer/clients you help projects stay on track because your work is good enough the first time and requires no changes/edits you allow them to take one thing completely off their plate because your work meets their standards without their direct involvement

Once you've identified the aspect of your business that you want to emphasize and you've identified the benefits to your clients, sit down with all of your marketing materials. This includes your business card, brochure, letterhead, web site, advertisements, bio sheet, etc. Determine how you can tweak each one to emphasize this aspect of your business.

If you can afford it, you might reprint some of your materials. If you can't, you might come up with ways to add a tag line to your existing materials. You could print your tag line at the bottom of every piece of letterhead each time you are sending a letter. You could have stickers printed with your tag line to stick on each of your brochures. Be creative!

Positioning for Profits!

The best part about proper positioning is that you end up doing the type of work you enjoy and making more money. Many times the work is more profitable — you are able to charge more than your competitors because you are delivering more value than they do. The clients that choose to work with you are making the decision to pay a little more in order to benefit from the extra value you provide.

Kimberly Stevens is the author of the ebook series, *The Profitable Business Owner: A Step-by-Step System for Starting & Running a Successful Service Business*. Download Sample Chapters & get her free MiniCourse, *The 10 Most Common Mistakes Business Owners Make & How To Avoid Them* at:

Find Your Unique Buying Advantage And Watch Your Profits Grow

By Noel Peebles

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Clear positioning is critical for any product or service, whether new or existing. Without clear positioning it is hard to find or establish a Unique Buying Advantage (UBA).

The first thing to consider when working on your positioning strategy is the question "where do you come in first?" Then consider what key benefits you offer over your competitors. If you don't already know what your customers think about your business, do some quick research to find out.

What's the ONE WORD or phrase that comes to mind when customers think of your business? Is it service, price, selection, convenience, quality or something else? Do you really "own" that word or phrase in the customer's mind? Does it reflect the position you want?

If you can't think of that ONE WORD or phrase, then maybe you're trying to be all things to all people. Narrow the focus. You can't stand for something if you chase after everything.

Positioning is the marketing tool that helps prospects and customers identify what's unique about your product or service and your company. This enables you to turn your positioning into creative advertising.

Use your positioning to give your advertising purpose, to give it a message, and to give it the appropriate tone. Then and only then, are you on your way to developing a good advertising strategy. Do that well and you'll save

money – and make money!

Positioning will guide you to make sensible decisions about when and where to advertise, and what message to communicate. It will help you with targeting and also help you identify what benefits you are selling.

The advertising will also need to project your business' personality. Is it serious, fun or classy – positioning will help you decide. Armed with an advertising strategy, you are now ready to develop a creative idea – one that

will dramatize that single-minded benefit or Unique Buying Advantage (UBA).

So, if you want to motivate customers to do business with you instead of your competitors then the answer is to clarify your positioning and find a UBA – one that you and you alone own.

Your UBA becomes the single most important factor that drives your business, your customers, your staff and most importantly, yourself!

Let's face it, if you make a great promise to the market place, you have to back it up and so does your staff. Your UBA becomes the rudder. Once you and your staff know and understand your UBA, decision making, tactics and strategies become a piece of cake. Simply, if it doesn't fit the UBA, you don't do it.

If you do nothing else, please make time for this one marketing strategy. Your life will change for the better if you do.

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