

4 C's For Strong Positioning

You have a choice about how you want to position your business. You can position it as a stand-out company or as one more in the pack of businesses after your customers' money. Given the choices, it's easy to see which one is more strategic. Here are 4 C's to help you create strong positioning.

Company definition—are you specific about what your company does and how it does it? Don't be one of those companies that try to be too much to too many people. Joe Boxer is an underwear company like the hundreds of other underwear companies. But, it's clear that it

offers underwear that is fun to wear. So whenever you see the packaging, the website or visit a store where Joe Boxer products

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are sold you will see an element of fun, humour and cheekiness.

Competitors' identification—do you know your competitors? In order to differentiate yourself from the pack, you will have to analyse your competition.

Why might a consumer pick them over you? What do you already do that is superior to their business offering?

Consumer target definition—do you know your customers? Do you have demographic, lifestyle and psychographic information on your best customers? Do you know whom you want to target?

Channels (distribution)—where and how is your product or service delivered? Are there ways in which you can capitalise on that and make positive distinctions between you and your competitors?

Lowering Prices So That It WORKS For Your Business

If you are going to lower prices, consider these strategies and be sure to communicate the reasons why to your customers.

Offer it only to the first 50 callers 'because supplies are limited.' Create a special offer only to existing customers because most businesses spend 6 times more trying to attract new customers.

By taking special care of your existing customers 'you're willing to pass on your savings in the form of lower prices.'

Consider a special offer to first time users 'because unlike your competitors, you understand the value of a long-term relationship with customers.'

Tell your customers what your competitors would normally sell your product for and explain why you are willing or able to better that price.

Make sure your customers can quickly and clearly compute the value they are getting.

Show them the savings they'll experience, or other demonstrable benefits they'll enjoy, over the life of the product or service you're offering and make a comparison with your competitors' offering.

People do not appreciate the value they are being given unless you clearly educate them on precisely how that value is computed and why you can or are willing to offer that much value. Always give the reason why.

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Improving Your Power On The Web

Does your site cover all your markets? Do you have several categories of clients? Is your site content designed for each of these?

Is it engaging? Does the content clearly state why your visitors should care and what's in it for them?

Do you clearly state features and benefits? Have you used

case studies, sample client lists, and testimonials?

Do you speak with authority as a leader in your field? Consider writing articles on important issues in your industry. They will be picked up by search engines, and you can offer them to publications that your target markets read - always with a link back, or reference to your site, of course.

Do you have a call to action? Think strategically on every page. Invite the visitor to take a quiz, or go to the next page. Just make it easy and obvious.

Are you considering all avenues? Explore all ways of promoting your site: creating articles with a link to your site, advertising in e-zines, appending a signature file to your e-mail.

Making Trade Shows Work For You

Conferences are great places to market your products and services if you do some advance planning. Here are some tips:

- Book early to assure your booth has the best position—a high-traffic area that is easy to find.
- Ask the convention coordinator if other companies offering

products or services similar to yours will be present. If so, consider taking a booth nearby. You're sure to get visitors from competitor's booths.

- If you're planning to exhibit at a specific convention, try to attend the show the year before. Take notes on how booths are laid out and what you'll need to do to stand out.

• Design and construct your displays well in advance. Make sure that you have all the hooks, Velcro, screws and nails to attach displays.

- Collect business cards and mail promotional material later. You'll build a list of potential customers and generate leads.

**Whether you think you can, or think you can't— you are right.
-Henry Ford**

Satisfied Employees Equals Satisfied Customers

A company's personnel are the most important people it serves. Satisfy and challenge them and you will almost certainly exceed your customers' service expectations."

William J Brodbeck

Employee satisfaction is a key component of customer satisfaction. So then, it stands to

reason that a happy employee who is engaged in what they're doing and who has a sense of purpose will naturally do a better job of servicing your customers than one who is not.

If you take good care of your people, they'll take good care of your customers and in turn, your business. Simple and true. Now consider your own

business. Have you created an environment where people enjoy their work, are challenged and can contribute significantly? Where they treat your customers as their number one reason for doing what the business does?

We can help you develop and grow a team of people who'll treat your customers as number one every day!



Break Even At First—Generate Super Profits Later

Sounds crazy? This concept can be a powerful tool for growing your business. The logic is this: you should be willing to break-even on an initial promotion — or even lose a little — if you know you will make money on the back-end.

To put that another way — you make the first offer so attractive that you lock clients in for ongoing services or products. It's in these "on going" or second generation services that the real profits are generated.

A classic examples is, of course,

what's been happening lately with mobile or cellular phones. Companies are practically giving the phones away in order to get the revenue that flows from their use.

Another classic example is a newsletter. By offering valuable content and including undeniable offers, you have the opportunity to learn more about your clientele and stay top-of-the-mind with clients. For example, if you run a beauty salon and you offer practical and proven hair care tips with incentives for

products you begin to establish yourself as a trustworthy authority.

For more information, contact your Principa Alliance member.

Crisis Management is Good Planning

It's difficult to think about, but a time may come when a major crisis strikes your business. If possible, the last thing you want is to be left unprepared. You might ask yourself, did I see this coming? Now what do I do?

Consider crisis management as having two parts to it: prevention and dealing with the crisis at hand. First things first, put together a list of the potential crisis that could threaten the business. Some crisis can be more difficult to predict and prepare for, but others such as natural disasters, fires, and workplace violence, can be bet-

ter anticipated.

Follow that up with developing a crisis management plan. Establish fire drills and evacuation plans, document primary contact numbers for emergency response teams including home numbers for management and supervisors.

Dealing with the crisis requires that management be able to immediately indentify that a crisis is occurring and be able to respond appropriately with the correct action plan. It's vital that decision-makers be made immediately aware so that tough

choices can be made to resolve the issue as quickly as possible.

A huge benefit of crisis management planning is that it sets up the correct thinking (drills, contact list, decision making, action) so that even the most unexpected events can be dealt with in a smoother and more effective manner.



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5 Suggestions For How To Handle Criticism

Criticism doesn't have to hurt or elicit anger. Here are five ways to lessen its impact.

1. Consider an Apology: When appropriate, it shows your regret that a conflict or misunderstanding is occurring.

2. Agree: If the criticism is valid admit your responsibility and apologize. You might agree by saying, "You're right, I do interrupt sometimes. I'm sorry." Then drop it and move on.

3. Share Your Perspective: If you do not agree with the criticism, communicate how you see things without placing blame or personalizing the situation. Wait awhile after hearing the criticism so you don't seem "defensive."

Give it some time and then state your side.

4. Make amends: If you did or said something deserving of the criticism, think about what you

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can now say or do to "mend fences" with the other person.

If you are unsure, ask the person, "What can I do or say to make this up to you or to help make things better between us?"

5. Set Some Boundaries: Use this technique when you get criticism in an abusive manner.

Even if you did do something to warrant some criticism, you have the right to put limits on how you are treated! Be polite, clear, and firm.

Make sure your limits are clear and reasonable.

We can help you increase trust and improve communication in your organization. Ask us today about our "Business Workout" seminar series and learn how participation in these informative, fun and fast-paced workshops can help you build a much better business (and have more fun in the process!).

Office Humor: Actual Business Signs

At an optometrist's office: "If you don't see what you're looking for, you've come to the right place."

On an electrician's truck: "Let us remove your shorts."

In a podiatrist's window: "Time wounds all heels."

On maternity room door: "Push, Push, Push."

On a taxidermist's window: "We really know our stuff."

On a butcher's window: "Pleased to meat you."

Outside a radiator repair shop:

"Best place in town to take a leak."

At a car dealership: "The best way to get back on your feet - miss a car payment."

Outside a muffler shop: "No appointment necessary. We'll hear you coming."

About Our Consulting Services

We're not your average advisory firm. Far from it.

Our membership in the Principal Alliance means you have access to the collective knowledge and expertise of an international network made up of hundreds of professionals who specialize in consulting to small and medium-

sized businesses, just like yours.

When you add to that our experience, support and guidance, you can be confident you'll have all the help you need to make your business truly extraordinary. *We can and will do so much more for you than just 'keep the score'.*

Our goal is to help you build a stronger, more profitable business, so you can enjoy greater financial freedom and a higher quality of life as a result.

Contact us today to discuss how we can help you build a business that delivers on its promise—to you, your team, and your customers



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