

Low-Cost Positioning: How to Make Your Brand Irresistible

Brands are everywhere. In fact, studies show that the average person living in a large urban city today runs across 3,000 brands every 24 hours. Not convinced? Start counting the brands you see from the moment you wake up tomorrow morning ... from your brand of alarm clock, to your brand of sheets, toothbrush, toothpaste, refrigerator, breakfast cereal, smart phone, computer. Then, head outside and notice the dozens of brands on the sides of busses, in the aisles of your neighborhood store, and the on billboards on the highway. You get the picture.

This is the world in which *your* brand competes. In fact, business owners today face two harsh realities: (1) It's more and more challenging to compete in this ever-growing sea of brand choices, and (2) this brand influx comes at a time when marketing budgets are tighter than ever due to struggling economies.

Despite all that doom and gloom, I'm here to tell you that you *already have what you need* to build a strong brand and stick out. In fact, you have five assets you can use immediately to create a powerful brand, without spending a lot of money. In this and a few follow-on posts, you'll learn more about these five assets.

So, what's the #1 most important low-cost asset you already have in your brand-building arsenal? Positioning. A smartly-positioned brand is the foundation for success.

What is “brand positioning,” anyway? It's the way you want your customers to *perceive, think, and feel* about your brand, compared to competition. It's a unique and specific piece of mental real estate that your brand owns in the minds of your customers, and it clearly defines the reason your brand exists.

Some small business owners scoff at positioning and say, “We're too small – we don't have, or even *need*, a positioning.” The truth is: Small companies need a positioning even more than big companies. Big conglomerates have the budgets to make mistakes now and then, and can recover quickly. But, if you're small, even minor branding mistakes can cost you a lot. In fact, an unclear brand positioning for a small company could mean the end of the company - fast.

You Already Have a Positioning

Here's another branding myth: “I've never given my company's positioning any thought, so I don't yet have one.” The reality is: You already have a positioning, whether you like it or not. That's because your customers have perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about your brand *right now*. The question is whether those perceptions, thoughts, and feelings reflect the positioning you want.

Bottom line? If you don't have a clear and well-defined brand positioning statement, you just aren't in the driver's seat, and your chances of business success are limited.

By the way, positioning isn't just the product or service you sell. Take chewing gum, as an example.

Let’s face it: All gum is made up of the same basic ingredients – a chunk of gum

base, some sweetener and flavoring. But, how those same “products” are positioned as brands can be dramatically different:

- Clorets gum eliminates bad breath.
- Hubba Bubba provides big bubble-blowing satisfaction.
- Dentyne Fire and Ice offers intense flavors.
- The sugar-free Five gum brand is for health-conscious consumers to help attract the opposite sex.
- Orbit provides white and beautiful teeth. The brand says, “You can have beautiful teeth even if the rest of you isn’t so beautiful.”

Get the idea? Getting your positioning right is the single most important part of the branding process, but “getting it right” requires that you first define it in a brand positioning statement that includes six core elements: Target Market, Customer Needs, Competitive Framework, Benefits, Reasons Why, and Brand Character. How well those six elements fit together to form the basis of your brand makes the difference between success and failure. And, that’s how you get your brand to stand out among the 3,000+ brands your customers are barraged with every day.

Brenda S. Bence is an internationally-recognized branding expert, Certified Executive Coach, dynamic trainer and Certified Speaking Professional, and the author of several award-winning books, including the *How YOU™ Are Like Shampoo* personal branding series. Her book, *Smarter Branding Without Breaking the Bank: Five Proven Marketing Strategies You Can Use Right Now to Build Your Business at Little or No Cost*, shows small and medium-sized businesses how to leverage five branding assets that they already have, unleashing a treasure chest of tips, tools, and techniques to catapult their brands and increase revenues immediately, at low cost – or no cost at all.



With an MBA from Harvard Business School, Brenda’s career has spanned more than two decades and has included developing mega brands for Procter & Gamble and Bristol-Myers Squibb across four continents and 50 countries. Now, as President of Brand Development Associates (BDA) International, she travels the world speaking, training, and coaching individuals and companies to greater success through creative, yet practical, corporate and personal brand development.

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