

Marketing Strategy 2 Preparing A Positioning Graph

So the hard work is complete, and we have some data tabulated. our customers have had their say. We call this "DATA"

The next step is to look at it, scratch our heads, and see what that means for Our Company. In the first stage, the focus was on being objective, just to take the info down. This next stage is more intuitive. You, the people who live and breath Our Company are now invited to look at the raw data, at the tabulation and summaries, and write out the main points that strike you as being interesting or important.. We can call this "INSIGHTS"

Just note down what you find interesting, what is new and surprising, what re-affirms what you already thought, what insights this gives you into the market, our website, our products, how we view the business, our competition, the future etc. This is qualitative stuff; we do not need percentages or numbers for these INSIGHTS.

The next step will be to decide what the leadership of Our Company sees as the critical "battlefield" for the customers mind. That means that once we have a list of INSIGHTS, we choose those INSIGHTS that are the most important (we feel, and perhaps our DATA from our customers re-affirms this). We call this the STRATEGIC AREAS.

For each of these STRATEGIC AREAS, we will draw up a POSITIONING CHART. In essence, it looks like the attached sample. Except for one key difference: The QUALITY axis will be for one of the STRATEGIC AREAS. Each STRATEGIC AREA will have its own separate POSITIONING CHART. The other Axis on each of these charts will be the QUANTITY that corresponds and that makes sense. Of course the most useful one will be the number of times our survey participants mentioned that item, or the number of hash marks we noted in our survey. But it could also be the number of people in the survey interested in it or that mentioned it, or it could be the Dollar revenue size of the competitors/players in the market, or even the estimates of the our management. But we try to stick to the numbers our customers gave us, if at all possible.

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Once we have these several POSITIONING CHARTS ready, we can have a discussion going forward. This is the strategy session. It will look at options that are presented to Our Company by the POSITIONING CHARTS. At that point the management team members weigh the options, and see how options from one POSITIONING CHART add to, or subtract from options in other POSITIONING CHARTS. That way a strategic vision can be developed, a Unique POSITIONING Strategy (USP) enunciated, and that can be translated into an operational Sales and Marketing plan.

NOTE: the thinking part is done in two phases :

A) choosing the STRATEGIC AREA really chooses the questions/ issues/ theater of battle. That is the question that later is answered by the strategy. So once people put together their STRATEGIC AREAS, we come together to kick them around and choose the key ones.

Then it is technical work to create the several POSITIONING CHARTS. That again, (like the tabulation) is more technical.

B) Once that is done, we again come together for a strategic discussion on choosing a USP and MARKETING STRATEGY.

Steps and Suggested Schedule:

1. Making a list of INSIGHTS and sharing it with each other – 1 week
2. Generating Positioning Charts and Strategic Options – 3 days
3. Strategic Marketing Strategy discussion and formulation 1 day.
4. Finalizing details of translating Marketing Strategy to USP and operational details. Including engineering message, media and operations to achieve strategy.

Some classic reading material is Al Ries and Jack Trout, "Marketing Warfare", "Positioning, the battle for you mind", Ogilvie's "Confessions of an Advertising Man", "Ogilvie on Advertising" etc. Also Prentice Hall's "The vest pocket CEO" has a description of putting together a positioning chart.