

Sales and Service Excellence

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MARKETING/MISTAKE

Marketing Mistake

Missing a positioning statement.



by Lenann McGookey
Gardner

QUICK EXPERIMENT: Ask six people in your company, *What is the most powerful, provocative, short message we can hope to deliver to our prospects?* My prediction: you'll get about as many different answers to that question as the number of people you ask.

Why is this important? Because in a world in which everybody is exposed to over 1,000 marketing messages daily, you need to carefully hone a powerful, provocative message about what you have to offer, and then deliver that powerful message, and deliver it, and deliver it, to have any hope of your prospects becoming aware of you!

Al Ries and Jack Trout, originators of the *Positioning* concept, wrote, "Since so little about you is ever going to get into the minds of the people you wish to reach, your job is not a 'communication' project. It's a selection project. You have to select the material that has the best chance of getting through."

This is still true, and yet

most firms are missing a *Positioning Statement!* The price of this error is high. When you have no message—or many different messages—nothing sticks.

Think of it this way: your prospects don't know you and they don't care—so don't try



to attract them with a complicated message because it's too hard to sort out the meaning.

So what's the answer?

Coming up with powerful, provocative messages—your *Positioning*—doesn't begin with the message but with prospects. Who are they? What do they care and worry about? What other messages are they receiving? And what might you say that will differentiate you and create some interest?

It's good to work with a pro-

fessional on this. They'll be more objective about the strengths you have that can be conveyed in a short message that will grab people. This is not the time for laundry lists of capabilities or complex explanations—remember, the target audience has no interest now, so they probably won't invest much time deciphering a long description.

By *provocative* I mean that the message must provoke *interest and inquiry*—you can later deliver a more complex, nuanced version of what you can do. But initially, you have to get them interested. And yes, you'll probably need a *Positioning Statement* for the enterprise, and then for individual products or service lines. Work hard on honing your most powerful, provocative messages, and then invest in getting them out. You'll then have the best chance of catching interest and sales.

Without a powerful, short message, your sales are likely to be anemic. SSE

Lenann McGookey Gardner, a former #1 sales rep at Xerox, offers cutting-edge sales training. She is the author of *Got Sales?* Visit www.YouCanSell.com.

ACTION: Create a positioning statement.

SALES AND SERVICE EXCELLENCE