

Topic 4: Brand Positioning and Communication

Strategic positioning creates market differentiation with \$411B annual economic impact driving business success.

With 87% of consumers favoring clearly positioned brands, effective positioning shapes perception and builds loyalty.

 by **Dr. Nalin Simsathiansophon**



What is Brand Positioning?



Definition

The place a brand occupies in customers' minds relative to competitors.

It articulates your distinctive value proposition and unique identity.



Purpose

Establishes what makes your brand different and special.

Creates clear mental associations for consumers when making choices.



Balance

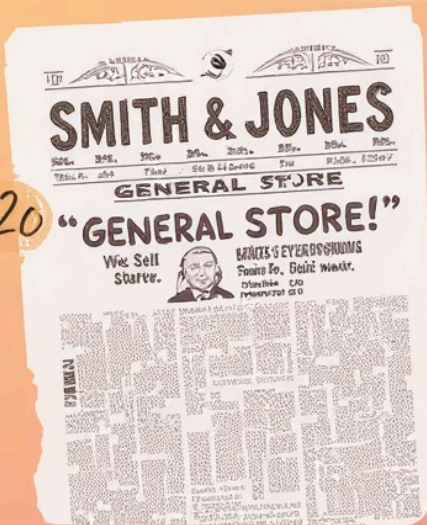
Effective positioning blends aspiration with market reality.

It must be credible, relevant and consistently delivered.

Brand Positioning

Timeline to help present

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The Evolution of Brand Positioning

1

1920s Origins

Emerged in post-World War I advertising industry.

2

1950s-60s Codification

Formalized by marketing pioneers as consumer markets expanded rapidly.

3

1970s-80s Expansion

Ries and Trout broadened positioning beyond product attributes.

4

Modern Era

Now encompasses brand purpose, mission and cultural relevance.

Why Positioning Matters



Differentiation

Defines what makes your brand unique in saturated markets.



Mental Shortcuts

Creates clear associations that simplify consumer decisions.



Shared Values

65% of consumers connect with brands based on aligned values.

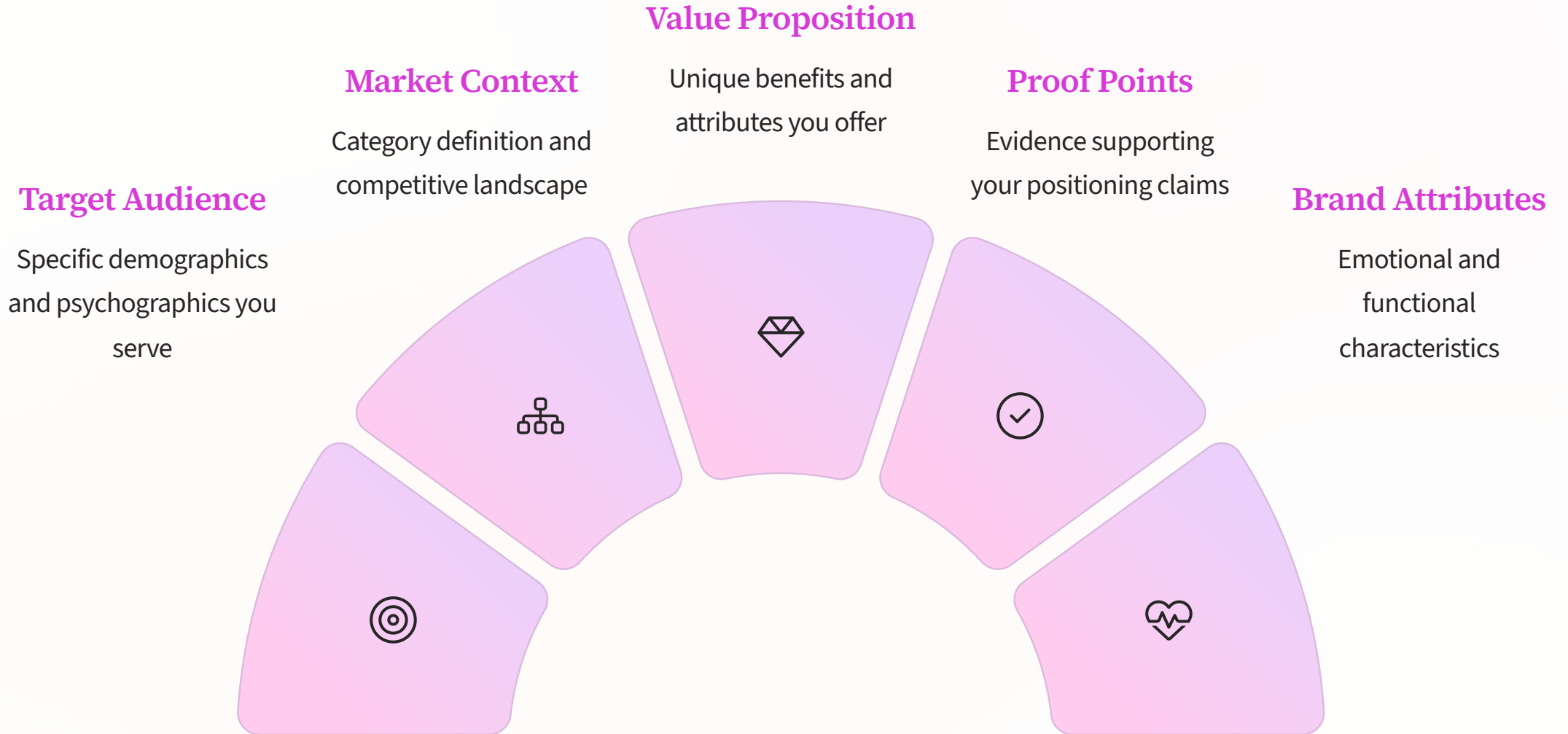


Premium Potential

Well-positioned brands command higher prices and loyalty.



Key Components of Brand Positioning



The Brand Positioning Statement

Purpose

Internal document that articulates your unique market position.

Guides consistent marketing decisions across the organization.

Components

Target audience definition with specific needs.

Category context, key benefits, and supporting evidence.

Characteristics

Balances aspirational goals with current market realities.

Clear, concise language that internal teams can activate.

Brand Positioning

A vertical image on the right side of the slide. It features a spiral-bound notebook with a light-colored cover. The words "Brand Positioning" are printed on the cover in a dark, sans-serif font. A dark-colored pen is resting on the notebook's surface. The background is a warm, orange-toned, blurred image of what appears to be a person's hands or a desk.

Brand Positioning Statement Examples



Apple

Apple: "For individuals who seek innovation, Apple provides intuitive technology that empowers creativity through beautifully designed, user-friendly products."



Volvo

Volvo: "For safety-conscious drivers, Volvo delivers peace of mind through engineering excellence that prioritizes passenger protection above all else."



Nike

Nike: "For athletes of all levels, Nike delivers performance-enhancing products that inspire athletic achievement through innovative design and technology."



Starbucks

Starbucks: "For busy professionals seeking a daily escape, Starbucks provides premium coffee experiences that foster community in a comfortable third place."

Positioning Strategies

Category Leader

Dominates through authority and scale.

Challenger

Disrupts category conventions with new approaches.

Specialist

Owens narrow expertise in specific niche.

Value-Focused

Emphasizes favorable price-to-quality relationship.

Innovation-Driven

Leads through technological or conceptual advancement.

Heritage/Legacy

Leverages authenticity through history and tradition.

Analyzing Current Market Position

Competitive Mapping

Plot your brand against competitors on key attributes.

Identify crowded positions and potential whitespace.

Perception Research

Gather consumer insights through surveys and interviews.

Measure awareness, associations and consideration factors.

Gap Analysis

Compare desired positioning with current perceptions.

Identify strengths to leverage and weaknesses to address.

Opportunity Assessment

Evaluate positioning vulnerabilities and strategic options.

Prioritize positioning elements with highest potential impact.

41> BRAND PERCEPTION IN METRICS



Creating Distinctive Positioning



Identify Whitespace

Find underserved needs in the market



Leverage Strengths

Build on authentic capabilities



Find Intersection

Balance relevance with differentiation



Focus Attributes

Own one clear position in minds

Brand Positioning Examples: Apple



Position

Innovation through beautiful design and intuitive user experience.



Target

Creative professionals and premium technology consumers.



Proof Points

Integrated ecosystem, distinctive design language, premium materials.



Communication

Minimalist aesthetics, emotional storytelling, focus on experience.



Results

40% premium pricing, 92% loyalty rate, industry-leading brand value.





Brand Positioning Examples: Volvo

60+

Years of Consistency

Maintained safety positioning for over six decades

77%

Brand Association

Consumers associate safety with Volvo first

#1

Category Position

Leader in automotive safety innovation

Volvo has successfully maintained their safety-first positioning through multiple ownership changes and market evolutions.



Translating Positioning to Communication



Strategic Guide

Positioning directs all brand expressions and touchpoints.



Messaging Hierarchy

Consistent priorities flow through all communications.



Visual Identity

Design system reflects positioning attributes.



Voice & Tone

Language style aligns with brand personality.

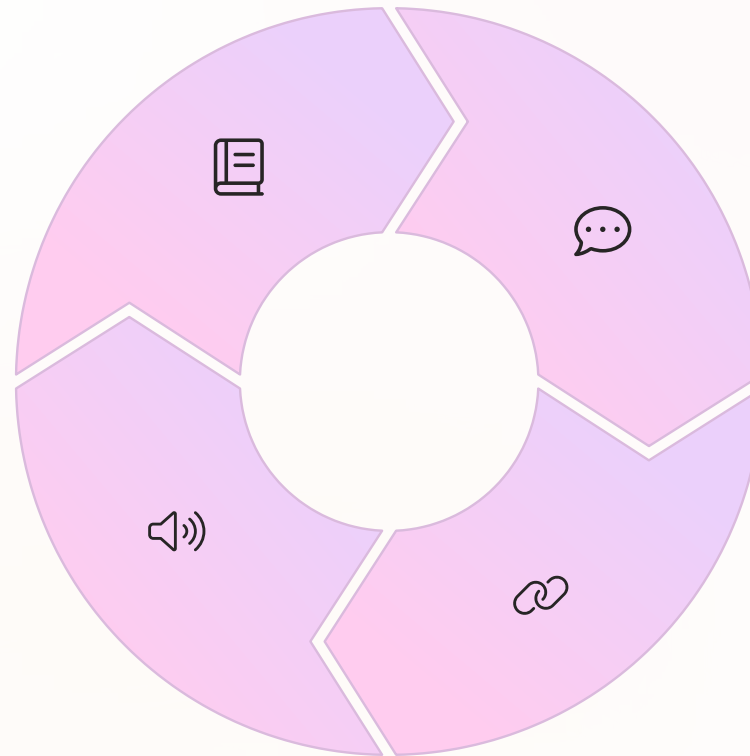
Crafting the Brand Narrative

Brand Story

Connects positioning to emotional relevance and purpose

Consistent Voice

Unified tone across all communications



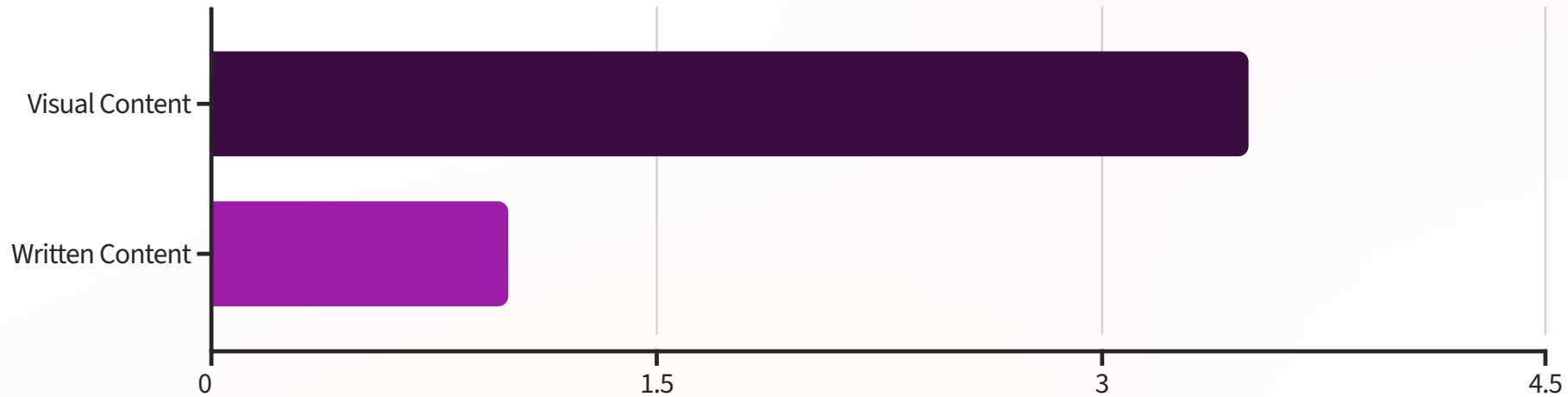
Messaging Pillars

Core themes supporting the positioning statement

Benefit Bridge

Connects functional benefits to emotional impact

Visual Communication of Positioning



Visual elements communicate positioning 3.5x faster than written content. Design systems should reflect positioning attributes through strategic color, typography and imagery choices.

Digital Expression of Positioning



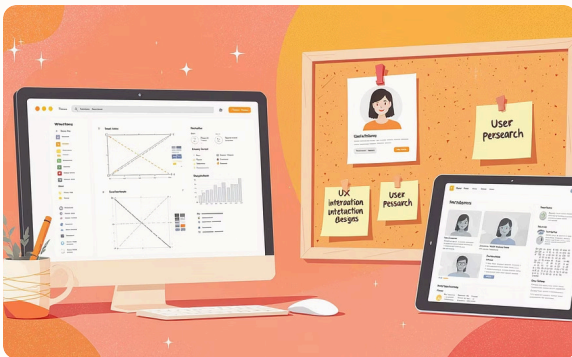
Website Experience

Digital flagship that reinforces core positioning through design, content and functionality.



Social Strategy

Voice, content themes and visual approach aligned with positioning priorities.



User Experience

Interaction design and customer journey supporting brand promises and attributes.

Measuring Positioning Effectiveness



Metric	What It Measures	Collection Method
Brand Tracking	Awareness, consideration, preference	Consumer surveys
Net Promoter Score	Loyalty and recommendation likelihood	Customer feedback
Share of Voice	Brand presence in category conversations	Media analysis
Price Premium	Sustainable pricing advantage	Market analysis
Asset Recognition	Distinctive brand element identification	Consumer testing



Common Positioning Challenges



Consistency Struggles

Maintaining unified positioning across all touchpoints and departments.



Positioning Dilution

Loss of focus through brand expansion and extension.



Internal Alignment

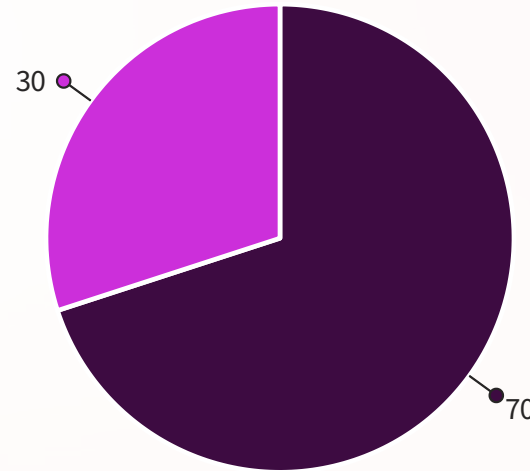
Ensuring all departments and regions understand and deliver on positioning.



Competitive Threats

Responding to competitor positioning attacks and market changes.

Repositioning Strategies



■ Failed Repositioning ■ Successful Repositioning

Market Evolution

Shifting consumer needs requiring position updates.

Adaptation to changing competitive landscape.

Balance Factors

Preserving valuable heritage while embracing new direction.

Clear communication of positioning transition reasons.

Implementation Keys

Thorough planning to avoid the 70% repositioning failure rate.

Staged approach to bring stakeholders along gradually.

Building a Positioning Implementation Plan



Alignment

Cross-functional agreement on positioning strategy.



Audit

Touchpoint review and communication prioritization.



Training

Education for consistent positioning delivery.



Measurement

Framework for tracking positioning effectiveness.



Timeline

Phased implementation across organization and channels.

Key Takeaways

1

Create Differentiation

Effective positioning establishes meaningful uniqueness



Maintain Consistency

Success requires alignment across all communications



Stay Authentic

Position from true brand capabilities and values



Measure Regularly

Continuous assessment ensures ongoing relevance



Drive Value

Strong positioning enables premium pricing and loyalty