

WHERE IS YOUR COMPANY?

A strong position statement will set your company apart from the rest.

by Rudd McGary, Ph.D.

Positioning has been an important concept in advertising since the mid-1970s. To successfully position your company in the consumer's mind, you need to articulate exactly what that position will be—and you don't need boatloads of advertising dollars to make it work.

The most visible aspect of positioning is the position statement. Famous positioning statements include, "It's The Real Thing" (Coca-Cola), and "Less Filling, Tastes Great" (Miller Brewing Co.). Each is a one-line explanation of how a company wants to position its product.

The position your company takes will make an impact on it internally and externally. It helps the company focus on what it does and how it does it. It should be part of your company's larger mission statement.

What's the cost

Some companies spend millions of dollars to find that magic combination

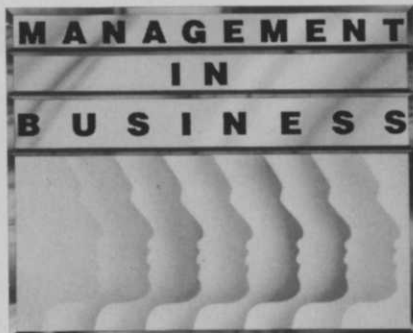
It is important to articulate a position.

of words that will stick in the customer's mind and influence them to purchase its product.

One green industry company that has used advertising to position itself nationally is ChemLawn, Inc. Its positioning statement used to be "Making America Green, One Lawn at a Time." Today, it's "We Care and It Shows." Both are designed to set the company apart in the customer's mind.

Though most green industry companies don't enjoy the deep advertising budget of a company like ChemLawn, positioning within your market is still possible.

A strong position is one that makes



you stand out in the minds of the consumer. Potential positions in the green industry include:

Professional service. Consumers want professional service from the moment they call you until they pay their bill.

Courtesy. A position statement like "Beautiful Lawns With a Smile" implies courteous service.

Responsibility. The customer wants to know what to do when mistakes are made. For example, the position statement "The People Who Work to Make Sure You're Satisfied," says that you'll do whatever it takes to make the customer happy.

Fair Price. This seems to be the most common green industry position, probably because every consumer wants a fair price. remember, you're more likely to distinguish your company with a position that isn't easily duplicated.

Safety. A position statement concerning the environment is effective in many areas. However, research has shown that consumers aren't willing to pay more for it.

All of these areas offer potential for a green industry company. The key is to choose an area that is both important to the consumer and offers a competitive edge.

Some position statements don't work for that reason. For example, a common position in the green industry is to offer a guarantee. Originally the concept worked well, but now

that it's part of nearly every company's position, its effectiveness is diluted. Unless your position statement differentiates you, it isn't working.

A good position statement has benefits within your organization as well. Employees often have an incomplete picture of the company for which they work. A position statement may shed some light on what they do and how they're to do it.

Employees generally work better together when they understand the company's position. It gives a basis for dealing with customers and helps set up all the advertising and sales efforts.

Companies that don't have significant advertising budgets need to rely on exposure to get position across. That means exploiting the times you're in contact with the customer, be it through Yellow Pages advertising, mailings, or during any office-to-customer communication.

In time, a strong position will begin to differentiate your company. **LM**



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