



ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

C > Prospective Client
S > Market Development
D > Today

Brainstorming Questionnaire to support Strategic Positioning and Messaging

Company Name

- Has the name been chosen?
- Is it trademarked?
- Is the corresponding domain name available?
- Can the name be confused with competitors similar sounding company names?
- Does the name describe the business purpose of the company?
- Is the name is long, can it be nicely abbreviated?

Company Tag Line

- **Do you need one?**
For instance, if your company name is abstract, you may need a tag line to clarify your business proposition.
- **Does it capture the essence of your company?**

Corporate Logo

- **Have you selected a logo?**
If not, be prepared to be specific about the design directions: do you prefer modern or classic styles, bold or subtle colors, do you prefer a logo solely based on the company name or do you also want a graphic image?
- **What font styles do you like?**
- **Which colors appeal to you to represent your business?**

Corporate Design Guidelines

If you completed all the above steps, it only remains to establish guidelines for all the components. This will be especially crucial as you increase your visibility through partnerships, public relations etc. You do want to retain the authority to decide how your company name and logo will be represented by third parties. We have an extensive library of corporate design guidelines that can be adapted to any situations.



ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

C > Prospective Client
S > Market Development
D > Today

Business Purpose

- **What business are you in?**
- **Can you describe it succinctly and clearly?**
- **What problem are you solving?**
- **Who are your customers?**

These are a set of generic questions that launch the most critical part of the strategic positioning definition. The success of the exercise at this stage is very much dependant on the readiness level of the business owner/corporate management. For a start-up, it is essential to have either completed, or be well underway to complete the business plan.

Market Focus

- **In order to strategically identify your best corporate messages, it is vital to know which markets you want the target,**
as a whole, as opposed to individual customers. This will allow you to identify the opportunities within that market and the problems facing that market. The clearer you are in this area the greater the chances to craft positioning messages that will resonate with your intended customers.
- **This step should be repeated for each market you want to target.**

A final piece of advice. As much as you know you want to solve customer problems, customers do not like to be told they have problems. They will however easily identify with a problem statement that addresses their industry as a whole.

Business Attributes

- **Describe your business as a person.**
This is where what possibly could be the most crucial step of the brainstorming session happen. We'd like you to think about your business as a person, using adjectives.
- **Is that person exciting, calm, competent, low-key, knowledgeable, consistent etc, you get the picture.**
We'll help stimulate your creativity during this process. Don't hold back, just throw these adjectives out one after the other. This leads to a character profile that capture not only the essence of your company, but also very much incorporates your own values and ethics.



ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

C > Prospective Client
S > Market Development
D > Today

Customer Focus

Once we've defined the business purpose, the market focus and the business attributes, it is time to think about real customers. Name them.

- **Which companies are you going after?**
- **What are the characteristics of that customer?**
- **What are their titles? Their functional responsibilities?**
- **What attitudes do they have about your company? Your industry?**
- **What is your customer's purchasing process?**

This should again have been clearly outlined in your business plan. The answer to this question will go a long way to craft the messages that will appeal to your customers as a whole.

- **How about partners?**

If your business plan includes a strong partnership component, you need to identify them as well, but in a separate category, as the messages to reach them will be vastly different from the messages to your customers.

- **How about the press and analysts?**

This is yet another audience that requires a very different approach, as they will be looking for messages that will help them attract readers and customers. Your job will be to make it easy for them to achieve their goals.

Strategy

- **What is the strategy for the business by *specific timeframe*?**

We need to understand this before we sit down and start developing messages. Let us explain. As your business evolves, grows or changes in any form, it is critical to adapt the strategy accordingly.

- **Key messages can only be crafted to the current strategy,**

and the process should incorporate at least two reviews per year to ensure that consistency and clarity is maintained. If for instance your next fiscal year strategy is to increase penetration in your existing customer base, the messages that will support that strategy are going to be very different from the following year's strategy, if it is to expand into new markets.



ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

C > Prospective Client
S > Market Development
D > Today

Positioning Objectives

"Positioning is not what you do to a product.

Positioning is what you do to the mind of the prospect."

Al Ries and Jack Trout, Advertising Age, 1972.

Here we will brainstorm positioning objectives specific to your situation. These might start with "Demonstrate leadership in....Capture the attention of.... Establish mind share with... to Showcase products at...".

Primary Messages and Additional speaking points

We recommend not only to establish primary messages that address the above steps, and to share them with anyone in the company that interacts with customers, prospects and other external sources, but also to draft additional speaking points. This will go a long way to ensure consistency of messages across your entire company, and will give your sales force the right tools to address a specific customer situation.

Final Comments

These brainstorming sessions tend to be very intensive, and very rewarding. Often times, business leaders are tempted to skip that process - to go run their business! - but we have found that devoting a few hours over the course of two-three weeks will be amply rewarded by clarity of corporate goals, and foremost, consistency across your entire company.