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SUMMER/FALL 2007

NEWS

YOU CAN USE

ePRINT TIPS

ePrint Tips is AGC's online, monthly newsletter offering news, views, design/print tips and solutions for clients and friends of AGC. Go to www.visitagc.com and click on ePrint Tips to read more.

A WHOLE NEW WAY TO LABEL YOUR DISCS

LightScribe is an innovative technology that allows you to create and burn your own CD and DVD labels. With LightScribe you burn your data, flip the disk and burn your label. It's that easy! Source: www.lightscribe.com

FSC WATERMARKED PAPER

Neenah Paper Mill is the first mill in the world to watermark the FSC symbol and Chain-of-Custody number into its 5 most popular Writing brands: Environment Papers, Classic Crest Papers, Classic Linen Papers, Classic Laid Papers and Classic Cotton Papers. Source: www.neenahpaper.com

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

AIGA 2007 National Design Conference, NEXT

October 11, 2007 • Denver, CO
www.designconference2007.aiga.org

Fall 2007 Communications Network Conference

October 31 – November 2, 2007
Miami, FL
www.comnetwork.org

Association for Fundraising Professionals 24th Annual National Philanthropy Day

November 2, 2007
Signature at LaCentre in Westlake
www.afpcleveland.org

Sustainability is everyone's responsibility!

Recycling, green building and cleaning, and energy efficiency—the list of how people are saving the environment could fill an encyclopedia—of course, one that's printed with soy-based ink and recycled paper!

It used to be that only schools and environmental groups made staunch efforts to conserve the environment. Not anymore! Now, many companies are embracing the concept of sustainability, which in layman's terms means the ability to meet our present needs without jeopardizing the needs of future generations by depleting the environment.

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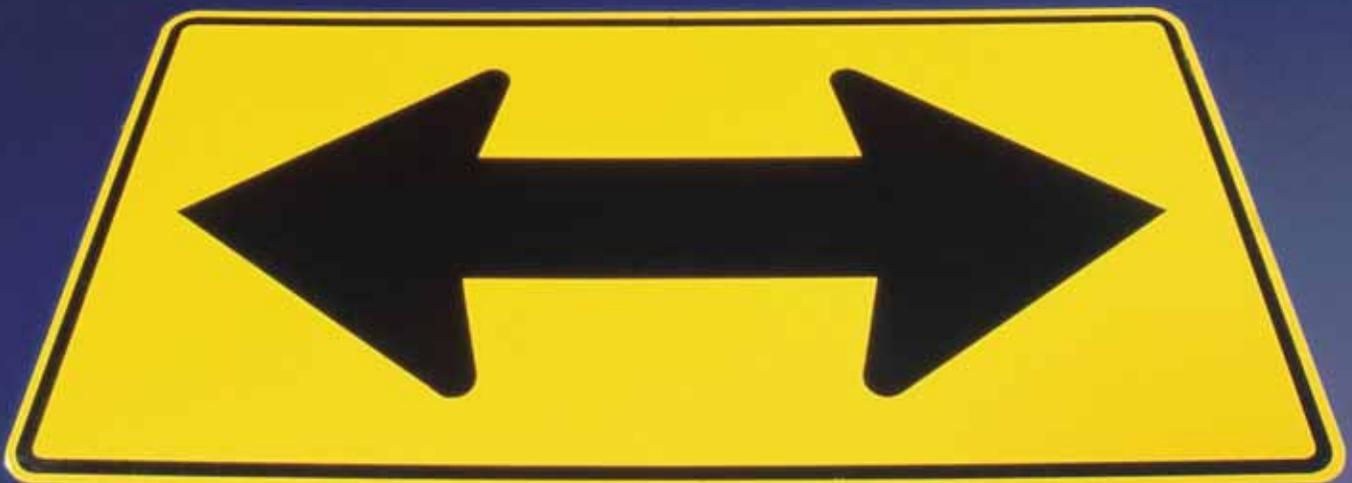
One of the most profound statements made on the subject of positioning comes from Louis Carroll's *Alice In Wonderland*. When Alice asks the Cheshire Cat which path to take, he responds, "If you don't care where you're going, it doesn't make a difference which path you take."

So it is with too many company's marketing communications programs. Without direction or focus, a business or organization often acts like a multi-headed creature—speaking from many mouths, saying nothing and going nowhere.

THE POSITIONING STATEMENT:

Why to Have One Before You Start Communicating

by Ford Kanzler



From a management perspective, positioning is the heartbeat of an effective communications plan. A well-crafted positioning statement defines your company's direction. It answers seven essential questions:

Who are you?

What business are you in?

For whom (what people do you serve)?

What's needed by the market you serve?

Against whom do you compete?

What's different about your business?

What unique benefit is derived from your product or services?

It's surprising how few companies exist where management is in total agreement on these basics or where the answers can even be found.

Don't confuse a positioning statement with market position. As Harry Beckwith states so clearly in his book *Selling the Invisible*, "A position (or statement of position) is a cold-hearted, no-nonsense statement of how you are perceived in the minds of your prospects. A positioning statement, by contrast, expresses how you wish to be perceived. It is the core message you want to deliver in every medium." Don't get the two mixed-up. Remember, companies can't position themselves as anything. It's about what the market perceives them as standing for. Wishing it won't make it so.

So, how can you get your communications program on the right path? By creating a clear, defensible, differentiated positioning statement and supporting key messages to guide you and others along the way. In most organizations this takes introspection, selling and consensus building.

Making It Happen

The following is a process for developing your company's communications direction (positioning statement) and path (key messages). The purpose of this is creating clarity, consistency and continuity in the way the organization speaks to the market. This makes all forms of communications less complex and easier to manage. Getting there takes patience, discipline, negotiation and above all an "outside-in" perspective.

The Right Information

To start, you must have information. Recall the seven questions that a positioning statement must answer? For some reason many companies don't share business and (or) marketing plans with their Marketing or PR managers. Plead, demand, and

beg if you must, but get a copy of these valuable documents. The answers should be in there. If business plans don't exist you've got lots more work in store.

The Right People

Enlist the right managers, those who are most interested and involved in key company activities. Alert them to the need to participate in the positioning effort. These are typically the CEO, CFO, and VPs of marketing, sales and customer service. It's essential that those in key, communicating roles participate in this process. You must get top management's "buy in."

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The Right Thinking

Before your initial planning discussion, invest in and circulate copies of Trout and Reis' *Positioning – The Battle for Your Mind* to everyone in the work group. The best original work on the subject, it's a quick, inexpensive read that will help frame thinking about a very qualitative subject.

Next, outline the expected outcome and the benefits that communications consensus will bring and circulate in an e-mail or memo prior to the first meeting. The most understandable benefit is that time and money will be saved in developing communications tactics. The most strategically valuable benefit is more effective communications resulting from consistent, cohesive and differentiated messages building market awareness, thus helping achieve the company's desired position.

Generate Ideas

In the first work session (it's not just a meeting!) concentrate on uncovering issues, competitive and internal differences of opinion. Get people talking and discussing the seven key positioning questions in turn. Customer or prospect survey questionnaires can provide the outside-in perspective and realistic answers about the company's present position. Also be sure to examine and be aware of what key competitors are claiming about themselves.

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A senior meeting facilitator should guide the discussion, listen and gather information. A second listener, a note-taker, is valuable to capture all the important ideas that tend to come rushing out.

One of the most important aspects of the positioning statement exercise is that all affected managers see and hear each other's ideas. It is only through this face-to-face process that understanding and consensus occurs. Try ensuring that every manager's ideas and thoughts are noted.

Challenge Their Thinking

Remind managers that the goal is uncovering direction by defining what is real, as well as, management's ideal vision. This includes company and competitors' strengths, weaknesses, competitive threats and opportunities (SWOT analysis). What is being sought are reasonable and compelling supports (key messages).

The hardest thing for many people to grasp is the concept of narrowing rather than broadening a company's focus. Trout and Reis' "Law of Focus" is very clear on this subject. Differentiation is essential. If management can't determine differences in the company, they need to look harder. Differentiating on price is usually a dead-end.

The desired result is a positioning statement and supporting messages that reflect today's reality and help move the company toward its sought after, achievable, differentiated position. Remember, claiming to be "the leader" does not make it so.

Playing It Back

When the session is over, gather the noted ideas and use them to develop a summary and recommended positioning statement. The summary should focus on contrasts and similarities among ideas. Finding and incorporating competitive messages to illustrate available positions and claims is also helpful. Craft one or two positioning statements and a set of key messages (supporting statements) for consideration by the work group. Put all of this together and distribute it shortly before the second session. It is important that everyone see it before encountering each other again as a group. Hopefully, participants will come prepared with constructive ideas and intent on reaching agreement and closure.

The second session should focus on refinement and agreement on one positioning statement and a limited set of key messages. If management output has been unfiltered, then the proposed statements and messages should be close to the final product.

It's essential at this point for the session leader (facilitator or marketing manager) to drive consensus and closure. Make careful note of agreements and modifications to the proposed statements and messages. Ideally, the leader should publish the final language soon after the session ends to prevent an endless loop of iterations, changes, additions and more meetings.

Don't put the final recommendation out as an e-mail message or you'll enter a version control nightmare and perhaps never gain management team closure.

Now Alice, the path is clear

Finally, the company begins actively applying its new positioning statement to all communications (internal and external) – from marketing collateral to sales material, Web sites to press releases. This means that if communications do not support the sought-after positioning or do not include, reflect, address or amplify the positioning statement and key messages, they are off strategy and not acceptable. Fair warning, getting managers to dump large supplies of sales material isn't easy. There are options – change high-profile materials first. This process should be repeated, as market conditions require (semi-annually is customary).

Get The Word Out

This is what's needed to initiate an effective position-driven communications program. Advertising or direct marketing personnel should also be valued in the process. Their involvement ensures that they will support and implement the positioning statement and key messages.

Now it's up to the marketing communications, public relations and advertising managers to guide and control the consistent use of the statement and key messages by all those who are communicating. That takes some more work, but the payoff is communications success. ■

Ford Kanzler is a principal of Marketing/PR Savvy, El Granada, CA, a consultancy that helps companies get their competitive strategy clarified and in place prior to communicating.

Sustainability is everyone's responsibility! *continued from page 1*

Unlike the general concept of preserving the earth by recycling and eliminating pollution, sustainability is far more encompassing. It not only focuses on the environmental aspects of human society such as the continuity of economic, social and institutional needs, but also the needs of our nonhuman, physical environment.

So, how sustainable is your company? If you haven't initiated any company sustainability efforts, now is a great time to start!

There are a number of measures you can take to do your part in creating a sustainable work environment. Here are a few examples:

- **Recycle, recycle, recycle!** If you haven't already done so, establish a companywide recycling program for paper, plastics and other recyclable materials.
- **Energize your energy-efficiency practices!** Reevaluate your company's energy resources. Using energy-efficient light bulbs and fixtures will not only save on energy consumption, but will also save your company money.
- **Green cleaning is good cleaning!** Lately, many companies are requiring their custodial staffs to use environmentally friendly, green cleaning products, which utilize non-polluting ingredients.
- **Sustainable printing is the way to go!** A big effort is being made by all business—both for-profit and nonprofit—towards incorporating environmentally friendly printing processes. Many companies are now printing newsletters, annual reports, posters, even stationery and business cards, on recycled paper using soy-based inks and varnishes.

Concern over deforestation and overflowing landfills has stimulated the use of recycled paper. Using recycled paper and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) certified paper is a more environmentally friendly paper option.

Here is a guide to the meaning and content of recycling terminology.

Recovered fiber, which often includes trimmings and cuttings, is collected from printing and converting operations.

Post-consumer fiber is paper or fiber recovered after consumer use. Examples include old newspaper, mixed waster paper and corrugated cardboard boxes.

Forest Stewardship Council Products labeled with FSC logos have been produced with fiber from FSC certified well-managed forests and often with additional recycled post-consumer fibers.

Sustainable Forestry Initiative Products labeled with SFI logos have been produced with fiber coming from forests certified to the SFI standard.

When a manufacturer identifies a recycled or certified paper product, they will specify the percentage of recovered fiber, post-consumer fiber and/or certified fiber used in the products.

There are currently more than 50 papers on the market made from recycled paper, 20 of which contain 100 percent recycled content. Others contain anywhere from 10 to 90 percent recycled content and brightness levels up to 97, based on the (TAPPI) GE scale. Many are also produced using more environmentally friendly bleaching processes, such as processed-chlorine-free or elemental-chlorine-free processes. For more information on environmentally preferred papers, visit www.environmentalpaper.org or call AGC at 216.661.2550.

Most importantly, make sustainability an exciting endeavor for your employees. Provide incentive programs for departments and individual employees who go above and beyond in sustainable efforts. Create fun contests and activities in which employees are engaged in developing sustainable initiatives.

Sustainability is not just an environmental buzzword—it's fast becoming a way of life for everyone. So make sure your company is onboard and ready to launch your sustainability program! ■





IMPROVE

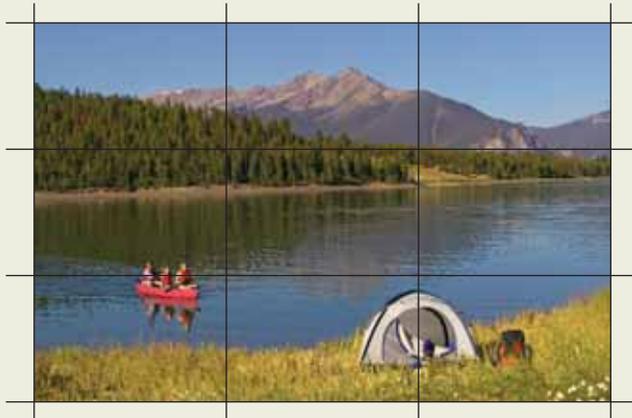
the visual impact of
images with efficient

CROPPING

One of the biggest benefits of image-editing software is the ability to change the size and dimensions of any digital image, allowing photographers and designers to think outside of the 3:2 box (4 x 6, for example) common to the 35 mm frame. Digital cameras are helping break this sizing convention, as they use an aspect ratio of 4:3 (4.5 x 6, in comparison) to frame their shots, but the trend is moving away from traditional framing and into dimensions that fit best into the design. By using the cropping tools available in almost every image-editing application, you can strengthen your image, create improved visual interest, and work smarter with your images.

Remove distracting background elements

Framing a shot with items like trees or walls can make for a tidy image, but it also can become a big distraction when placed along the gutter of a layout design. Look for items around the edges of your images that can be removed and use your cropping tools to tighten the image. The simpler the background and surrounding elements are, the more visual emphasis will be placed on your main subject.



Adjust framing to the Rule of Thirds

The Rule of Thirds is a fundamental design concept that places objects of interest at certain intersections within the image. Basically, you divide the image into thirds horizontally and vertically and place your main subjects where the lines meet. If your raw image doesn't fit within these useful guidelines, use cropping to reframe the image.

Crop to isolate color

Just as unnecessary objects in your image can be distracting, unnecessary colors can pull the viewer's attention from your subject. When evaluating your image, include a close look at the colors presented in the background and make sure they match the intent of your design. If they are overwhelming your subject, consider cropping them out to highlight your target colors.



Use special cropping features

Each image-editing application has its own set of special cropping features that will make your cropping experience easier and more efficient. Our favorite is Photoshop's ability to save a cropping dimension, with or without a target resolution setting. This feature allows you to quickly and accurately edit a series of images to exact specifications without having to mess around with complex size and resolution conversions for each image.



Crop away

Cropping images may seem like a mundane chore, but it gives you a chance to be the photographer after the shutter is clicked. Raw images are rarely perfect. Use cropping to reframe, reposition, and possibly resurrect an image and turn it into a visual element that fits your design perfectly. ■

And speaking of sustainability...

Academy Graphic Communication is doing its part to ensure a sustainable environment. We're in the process of obtaining both Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Chain of Custody Certification and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Chain of Custody Certification. Chain of Custody Certification provides a guarantee about the production of FSC and SFI-certified products.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international, nonprofit organization that promotes responsible management of the world's forests by recognizing products and processes that meet their rigorous environmental and social standards. Purchasing FSC-certified forest products supports environmentally responsible, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests. Chain of Custody is the path taken by raw materials from the forest to the consumer, including all successive stages of processing, transformation, manufacturing and distribution.

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) is a comprehensive system of principles, objectives and performance measures developed by professional foresters, conservationists and scientists, among others, that combines the perpetual growing and

harvesting of trees with the long-term protection of wildlife, plants, soil and water quality. There are currently over 150 million acres of forestland in North America enrolled in the SFI program, making it among the world's largest sustainable forestry programs.

Products labeled with FSC or SFI logos have been entirely or partially produced with fiber coming from forests certified to the FSC or SFI standard, respectively.

From a customer perspective, the FSC or SFI label represents a promise that is being made to them, a commitment to responsible environmental behavior and sound business decisions that can benefit manufacturers, shareholders, customers, the people they serve, the environment and future generations. Chain of Custody Certification standards is the mechanism FSC and/or SFI uses to ensure that the "promise" is delivered. Operations that have been independently verified for FSC and/or SFI Chain of Custody certification are eligible to label their products with the FSC and/or SFI logo(s) respectively.

In addition, AGC is committed to using environmentally friendly printing processes including, chemical-free printing, recycled/certified papers and soy-based inks and varnishes. The use of environmentally preferable papers reduces the impact on forests worldwide; reduces the need to convert forests into tree farms; conserves water, energy and reduces greenhouse gases; strengthens the market for recycled and alternative fibers; prevents pollution; encourages responsible forest management; creates more jobs; and helps to protect biodiversity and the environment for future generations. ■



Reduce: Please notify us if your contact information has changed. Reuse: Please pass this newsletter along to colleagues and friends. Recycle: Please recycle this newsletter after reading.



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