Positioning: How to Be Seen and Known
การกำหนดจุดยืน: ทำอย่างไรให้เป็นที่รับรู้และจดจำ

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Abstract

In today's business, political, and academic situations, people often misunderstand the role of communication. There are many forms of media and advertising. We, architects, architectural companies, or schools of architecture, need to think about how to be seen and known in an over-communicated society and marketplace. We need to create a "position" in the prospect's mind to grip with the problems of communicating. "Positioning" is all about understanding the psychology of the mind and how we can manipulate perceptions to make whatever we are selling more attractive and unique. It is how we differentiate our product in the minds of our customers and prospects. It is not too hard to get into the mind. The answer is to be the first. If we cannot be the first, we need to find a way to cope with the product or the person who did get there first. Then, we must find the way to maintain leadership by searching for what we do not need and what we do need to do. Also, there are many strategies for staying on the top such as covering all bets, understanding the power of product, establishing multi-brands, etc. Nevertheless, the truth is that if we cannot get to the top rung, we should have to admit and we subsequently have to let it go. Then, if we cannot be a leader, how can we position ourselves as a follower. It's different between being a leader and being a follower. There are many ways to find specific positions not being occupied by anyone else such as size, price strategies, or technology. Finally, how can we play the positioning game; it needs to be carefully justified. To be successful at positioning, we must have the right mental attitude. We need to become an outside-in thinker rather than an inside-out thinker, which requires patience, courage, and strength of character.

บทคัดย่อ

เนื่องจากในปัจจุบันนี้โลกมีการสื่อสารเกิดขึ้นมากมาย โดยผ่านทางสื่อต่าง ๆ หลากหลายประเภท หากเราเป็นสถาปนิก หรือองค์กรใดองค์กรหนึ่ง ทำอย่างไรที่จะทำให้ผู้คนสามารถรับรู้ จดจำ และยอมรับได้ ดังนั้น ในแต่ละบุคคลหรือองค์กร ควรจะต้องมี "จุดยืน" ของตัวเองที่ชัดเจน เพื่อก่อให้เกิดการรับรู้ จดจำ และยอมรับในแง่บวกแก่ทั้งตัวบุคคลหรือองค์กรเอง การที่จะให้ผู้คน สามารถรับรู้ จดจำและยอมรับเราได้ นั้นไม่ใช่สิ่งที่ยากเย็นจนเกินไป ในทางการตลาด สินค้าที่เกิดขึ้นก่อนย่อมเป็นที่รับรู้และจด-จำได้ก่อนเสมอสำหรับลูกค้า เช่นเดียวกันกับหน่วยงานหรือองค์กรใดก็ตามที่เกิดขึ้นก่อน หรือสร้างสรรค์สิ่งใดขึ้นก่อนเป็นรายแรก

"การเป็นที่หนึ่งหรือการเป็นผู้นำ" ถึงแม้จะไม่ใช่เรื่องง่าย แต่การรักษาความเป็นที่หนึ่งไว้นับว่าเป็นสิ่งซึ่งยากกว่าหลายเท่า สิ่งใด
ควรปฏิบัติ สิ่งใดไม่ควรปฏิบัติก็เป็นส่วนสำคัญในการรักษาความเป็นผู้นำไว้ นอกจากนั้น ยังมีกลยุทธ์อีกมากมายหลายอย่างเพื่อ
ครองความเป็นหนึ่ง เช่น การป้องกันความเสี่ยงในทุกเรื่องที่จะเกิดขึ้น การเข้าใจถึงอำนาจหรือคุณค่าของสินค้าหรือผลิตภัณฑ์ของ
ตน การเพิ่มชื่อของสินค้า การขยายฐานของสินค้า เป็นต้น แต่สิ่งที่ลืมเสียไม่ได้ก็คือ ถ้าเราไม่สามารถเป็นหนึ่งได้ด้วยความ-
พยายามเต็มที่แล้ว อย่าพยายามฝืนหรือดึงดันที่จะแย่งหรือครองความเป็นหนึ่ง "การเป็นอันดับสอง" ก็เป็นอีกทางเลือกหนึ่ง เรา
สามารถหา "จุดยืน" หลายอย่างให้กับตัวเองในการเป็นอันดับสองได้อย่างเหมาะสมและสง่างาม เช่น การหาจุดยืนในเรื่องของ
ขนาดผลิตภัณฑ์ หรือราคาที่แตกต่าง หรือแม้แต่กระทั่งเทคโนโลยีในการผลิตภัณฑ์นั้น ๆ ซึ่งถ้าเป็นสถานศึกษามหาวิทยาลัยที่
จัดตั้งขึ้นมาใหม่ก็ควรจะต้องหาแนวทาง หรือ "จุดยืน" ที่ชัดเจนและแตกต่างจากสถาบันที่เกิดขึ้นมาก่อน แต่ในที่สุดแล้วสิ่งสำคัญ
ที่จะทำให้ประสบผลสำเร็จในการกำหนด "จุดยืน" ก็คือ การคำนึงและพิจารณาถึงปัจจัยภายนอกและสภาพแวดล้อมต่าง ๆ ที่เป็น
อยู่ ซึ่งมีผลกระทบต่อตนเองหรือองค์กรก่อนที่จะกำหนด "จุดยืน" ที่ชัดเจน ทั้งนี้ต้องอาศัยความพยายาม ความอดทน และการมี
ลักษณะเฉพาะที่ชัดเจนในตนเองของบุคคล หรือองค์กรนั้น ๆ และถ้าทำได้ การรับรู้ จดจำ และยอมรับก็จะตามมา

"Positioning" is the way to achieve a certain position, to give the direction of how can we be known and seen? Do we need to be known and seen? If we are in business, political, or academic world. There are too many companies, too many products, too many schools, etc. How can we get to our goals? How can we get to the customer's mind? How do we make our customers or people understand us? Do we need to join marketing or advertising war? Positioning is the way how we differentiate our brand, or company, or in our main concern, school of architecture or our organization in order to win customers and prospects.

Actually, there are almost 20 schools of architecture in Thailand. If we are the newest school of architecture, we need to put ourselves in the right position. If we cannot identify positioning of ourselves in the field of architectural practice, our graduated students are just ordinary architects who can practice professionally, but does not have any expertise or specific field of architectural approach. It is very important for architects to be suitably known and seen because we does not work for free. We want to design the best buildings with the best effort and the best creativity, If we cannot catch into our customer's mind, how can we get the great job?

What Positioning is All About?

In today's business, political and an academic situations, people often misunderstand the role of communication. In our globalization society with various forms of media and advertising, very little of communication actually takes place. To be effective, an organization needs to create a proper

"position" in the prospect's mind and to attract their attention. Not only the company's own strengths and weakness, and "position" should be considered, but also those of its competitors which are equally important.

To be successful, the positioning of basic approach is not to create something totally new and different, but to manipulate what is already up there in mind, and the connections that already exist.

Strategies that have worked in the past are no longer responsive in today's marketplace anymore. There are just too many companies, too many schools, and too much noise in marketing. Why? Why do we want to build up a new approach to marketing and advertising? Especially in professional field like architecture?

In today's over-communicated society, the best approach is to simplify the message. In the new architectural design approach, Less is more which we have known that is the period of "Modern Architecture" [1]. "Less is more" is an aphorism that might be inscribed on every building of Mies van der Rohe, it is clear. The message needs to be sharpened to cut into the mind of today's prospects.

Also, when we want to communicate the advantages points of a product, company, organization or even ourselves, we need to turn things side-out. Not only inside your own mind, but also we need to look for the solution of our problems from inside the company or organization.

Nevertheless, it is not necessary that the looking out view is any more accurate than the view from outside. By turning the process around, and focusing on the prospect rather than the product, the selection process is simplified. Also, we can find more suitable concepts and principles that enhance the effectiveness of communication.

How to Get into the Mind

In the process of positioning, nothing is more important than communication, because positioning is all about how we can understand the psychology of the mind and how we can manipulate perceptions to make whatever we are selling more attractive and unique. The more we understand how minds work, the more we will know how to differentiate our brand [2]. Anything is possible with communication going for us. A successful communication means saying the right things to the right person at the right time. Positioning is the system to find a window in the mind.

How do we get into the mind? This is the biggest challenge. The way to get into a person's mind easily is to be the first [3]. However, if we can't be the first, we have to find the appropriate approach to compare ourselves with the product, the person, or the institute who did get there first. The way to get into a person's mind is the second. However, there is no place for the second. Only the first person, the first product, the first company, the first school to occupy the position in the mind is going to be hard to dislodged.

Moreover, people have learned to rank products, companies, or schools on mental ladders. We must then know the levels on the product ladder in the mind before we can begin the process of positioning. However, if we cannot get to the top ranks from the beginning, we might have to let it go. Weaker competitors have no hope of going head-to-head against the top position.

It is generally believe that anything can happen if only we try hard enough. But no matter how hard we tried, no matter how much investment and how much design technology we put in, we cannot get to the top spot. The problem cannot be solved only by outside factors.

Positioning of the Leader

How to position ourselves to be the leader? The answer is challenging. To be a leader we need to be the first to get into the mind of the prospect, then and there [4]. So how are you going to be the leader in architectural practice or architectural education? It is quite easy, actually.   Can you remember "Somrak Kamsingh, the first Thai gold Olympic medalist in boxing"? Compare with Vijarn Ponrit, the second Thai professional boxer who won the gold medal in Olympic Games 2000? Also, do you know the first Thai architect who is honored as honorary member of AIA, (Hon. FAIA)? Everybody knows that he is Dr. Sumet Jumsai. Also, Khunying Jaratsri Tepirat is the first female architect who become the first female governor. Nobody recognizes other female architect who was appointed as deputy governor. You just have to get there first with the most.

In the past, the first brand in the customer's mind, usually gets more the long-term market share than any other. It is also true to the reputation of architectural firms. The condition would not changed easily in the time to come. In term of the professional companies or schools of architecture, we have to be the first to get into the mind of the prospect in order to be the leader and then follow the strategies for staying a top [5].

The chances of leading brands have to take the worst of the advantages are obvious. Customers often choose the same brand for their next purchase, as they chose for their last purchase. Then, shops are more likely to stock only of the leading brands. In fact, leading brands in the market are often identified as the household goods name (i.e., "Fab", "Walkman", "Post-it", "Liquid Paper", "Palm") while other competitors do not have this privilege.

Usually, the larger, well-known, and more established companies or organizations have the opportunity to recruit outstanding college graduates. As a matter of fact, the firms will attract more and better employees. Like the airline will always keep one brand of cola, one brand of wine, one brand of apple juice, on an airplane flight.

The Instability of Equality

In some categories, if two leading brands run neck to neck, consumers are much more comfortable to pick the one that is well-known, Therefore, it tends to be only the brand that is likely to get the upper hand and then dominate the market for

years to come. The leading brand will have to maintain the leadership.

To Build a Leadership Position

To be the leader, you have to comply to the prospect's terms, not your own terms. It's too bad to say that you are No.1 and because of psychological reasons. If you are known to be at the top rank, then why are you so insecure that you need to be reconfirmed repeatedly.

The most important thing is to keep your position in the prospect's mind [6]. "The real thing", advertising campaign of Coca-Cola, is an excellent case as market leader. In the architectural field, nobody can compare to Dr. Pinyo Suwannakeree in terms of ability to conceive traditional Thai architecture. Likewise, Asst. Prof. Rangsan Thorsuwan is also known as a successful career as an architect who is keen in European style architecture.

To Cover Bets

Unexpected situations can happen anytime and leaders should cover all bets. They need to know when to surrender or abandon their pride and adapt new product developments as soon as it shows signs of promise. Normally, when a competitor launches a new feature or a new product, leaders tend to develop or invent their new product as well. Also, as soon as the sign of promise of new product development is coming, leaders should cover all bets instead of thinking that they can do no wrong.

Power from the Product

The success of one leading product does not necessarily lead to the equivalent in others. The power of organization itself is derived from the power of those successful products [7]. At the same time, the position of the product in the prospect's mind is derived from the power of the organization as well. An institute's reputation is derived from graduated students and alumni who practice successfully as well as related field of work. Actually, the older and more well established the institute is, the more successful alumni's it will be. In the same way as great architects are known by their excellent design work.

Covering with Multi-brands

Times change as well as products come and go, in author's opinion, there is no need to put for much effort to change position. To reflect changing technologies and changing tastes, why don't we introduce a new product with different name with different identity [8]. This is the classic strategy of "multi-brand". Each brand is uniquely positioned in the prospect's mind. For example, Architects 49 Co., Ltd. Is known as one of the best architectural firms in Thailand. There are many corporate companies working closely in the field of built environment under the name of 49 group such as, Landscape 49, Graphic 49, Model 49, and Interior Architecture 49. All are the design firms. Last 2 year, the new one has been added up under 49 group of companies, "ANTRA BUSSA", which is the professional company with expertise in facility management. It is not working as professional design at all, but it is the post-occupied building service. Also, it is easier to build up a new position from their unique service in the prospect's mind.

Cover with a Broader Name

Leaders can also get benefits from broadening the range of applications for their products [9]. Achieving market leader is not the end of a positioning program. It is only just the start. Leaders are in the best position to exploit opportunities. To keep far ahead of the competition, they should effectively employ the advantages of their leadership.

Positioning of a Follower

It is different between being leader and being follower. What works for a leader does not necessarily work for a follower. Leaders can often "cover a move" of competitor and "maintain" their leadership. It is absolutely different with followers. They are not in the same "position" to take advantage of the covering strategy. It doesn't work at all when a follower "copies" a leader.

What do happen with some unsuccessful products? Why do they fail? It might depends on "better" rather than "speed" of action to achieve expected goals management. However, being better than other competitors is not enough. We need to introduce our product to the market before someone else take the "being the first" opportunity by adapting a more massive promotion and advertising launch. The same rule is also applicable for school of

architecture. There are opportunities to diversify education in school of architecture into various specific areas. Beyond architectural design, some schools may choose to be the best in other fields such as design technology, or architectural management . Just being the first in those fields is the first key to success.

How can we find "established alternative positions." There are many ways to create available "space", not occupied by someone else [10], such as sizing, the price strategy, the factory manufacturing; Technology trap and Everybody trap. To find the "new position" or available space, we need to think in reverse direction, or to go against the rules.

The Sizing

The effectiveness of sizing approach depends on the existence of an open "point" in the prospect's mind. Sometimes, opportunities come from the opposite side. For example, there are many opportunities to build up ability to compete in computer market based on large size model. In the same way as architectural school, the biggest school does not usually mean it can produce best new architects. Students in bigger faculties tend to get less of design critic from instructors or design advisors. Even though it does not happen to every school. Why do we not set up the architectural school with appropriate student/instructor ratio supported by the best academic equipment and the best instructors or professor who be known as the best architects in specific field of practice? In this case, even if students need to pay more tuition fee than normal rate at other

architectural schools, it stands a chance for success. Every architectural student would like to be educated by the ones who are the best in the field.

The High Price

Price strategy is an advantage, especially if we are the first to establish the "High-price Position" [11]. Some products employ the high-price concept for their entire product. Like "JOY", the highest priced perfume in the world. The high-price concept is not only effective for luxury products, but it is effective for other products also. However, it is too often that greed gets confused with positioning thinking. Using high-price policy is not the way to get more money or to get rich. The first thing is to establish the high-price position in the mind of customers. Secondly, you need to put that position with a valid product story. The same as private schools or bilingual schools of architecture that charge more expensive tuition fee. Therefore, they should offer more special and distinguished programs for students such as studying abroad, corporate educational programs with other top class foreign universities.

Finally, the secret of success is that a high-price concept should be receptive by customers in the category. Otherwise, the high-price concept just kills you by driving prospective customers away.

Moreover, to establish the high-price strategy, do not do it in the stores. The better way is to advertise the campaign to the public by employing public relation department. The price (even high or low) is as much a product feature as anything else. If

we put our product position right, the "price surprises" never happens in the store. However, advertising campaign do not need to show exact prices but they need to accurately communicate the high-end product story. What we should do is to position our brand clearly in a particular price category.

The architectural fee is a good example of positioning in upscale architectural firms. If you are one of the best architectural companies, you would charge fee differently from the small or new firms. Professional establishment, team work, variation of professional experiences, or good design process and technology are all necessary to create high professional standards.

The Technology Trap

Do not overlook the technology trap. Even the excellent research of successful technology can fail if there is no really strong "concept." For example, in **1993**, Pepsi Co., Ltd. launched "Crystal Clear Pepsi", the first "Clear Cola". It should have been a big success. However, there was a big hole there that made a disastrous result. Yet less than **1** year later, "Crystal Clear Pepsi" was gone. What went wrong? Look at the positioning claim from the prospect's point of view. Was it the first clear cola? It was not true. There are at least two others Clear Cola. They are Sprite and Seven-Up. Even though the tastes are not the same as Cola, but they are almost the same.

The way to trick the prospect is wrong. We should not try to do it. Advertising is not a debate, it is

a seduction. The prospect will not sit still for the finer points of verbal logic. As the politician said that If it looks like a duck and walks like a duck, I say it is a duck.

The Everybody Trap

It is also wrong to be everything to everybody. In political arena, politicians use to commit suicide in policy by taking a strong position on anything not to step on anybody's toes. In today's politics or even in the field of competitive organization or company, we must have a strong position. Competitors are around you. You cannot confront them or by not making enemies, by being all things to all people.

To be a winner in today's competitive environment, you must go out and make "connections" and carve out a space in the "market" of your professional field. Moreover, you have to lose a few things.

How to Play the Positioning Game

"The Words" are the things that make a lot of problem for the positioning game **[12]**. Incorrectly, some people assume that words have meanings. It is not true. The meanings are not in the words. Like a bowl of salt which is empty until we fill it with salt, a word does not contain meaning until we use it and fill it with meanings.

It is the same way with adding salt to a leaky bowl, we will not get anything. So, if we try to put

meaning to a leaky word, it is better to discard that leaky word and use another. If you want to reposition your brand product, organization, or company. Firstly, you must change the container. Mental rigidity, as a leaky bowl, is a barrier to successful positioning. Today, we have to be able to use and select words with as much disdain for the history book as for the dictionary. Also, we must have a large degree of mental flexibility to be successful at our positioning. Words have no meaning, like empty containers, we need to fill them with meanings.

As a matter of fact, for architects as designers, it is hard to expand our roles to be property developers or contractor or even construction management consultants at the same time. The company needs to define space for itself in the architectural world to create "position."

In the economic situation today, there are a lot of competitors especially in the sector of academic institutes. Some architectural schools offer special programs by providing extensive practical, or specialized professional training, and broad theoretical foundations for individuals or students. It is not only for more revenue, but also the strategies to build up reputation or position through "special organized courses". There are still ample space for schools to "position" themselves.

Besides understanding the role of words, we need to know how words affect people and then we need to manipulate words with the right choice.

"Change" is the other thing that causes problems in the positioning game [13]. New products, new services, new markets, even new schools are constantly being born. They gradually mature and then obliviously gone. New patterns emerge and then disappear. Do we need to keep pace with change? Exactly, the opposite answer appears to be true because Change has become a way of life for many organizations. If we keep changing, how can we stop ourselves. We must be careful of change.

What else do we need to play the positioning game? There are many requirements such as vision, courage, objectivity, simplicity and subtlety. We need to take a long-range point of view to cope with change and to determine our business in the right direction and stick with it.

If we have positioned ourselves in the right direction, it can ride the currents of change, ready to take advantage of those opportunities that are right for it. But be careful! When an opportunity arrives, we must move quickly.

Furthermore, to be successful in the positioning game, we must be brutally frank. We need to eliminate all ego from the process of decision-making. One of the most critical positioning aspects is being able to evaluate products objectively and see how they are viewed by prospects and customers. We need somebody else to kick our ideas off. We must remember! When you think that you have found simple idea that is the solution to your problem, you have lost something, the objectivity. We need other

persons to take a look at what we have wrought and vice versa.

"Subtlely" is the one of the things that we need. We need to balance two things between a unique position and an appeal which is not easy. "Sacrifice" is the important part of positioning. We need to be willing to give up something in order to establish that unique position. The smaller the betters, it is often better to look for smaller markets that we can own exclusively rather than a bigger target we have to share with three or four other brands. We cannot be all things to all people and still have a powerful position.

Summary

Finally, if we would like to play the positioning game, we need to know the rules of positioning [14]. Firstly, to win the battle for the mind, we cannot compete against companies or organizations with strong established position. Secondly, we can go around, over or under, but never head to head. The leader is on the top rung of product ladder, the No. 1 position already is in the prospect's mind. We need to follow the rules of positioning to move up the ladder. In our over-communicated society, "positioning" is the important thing that we should keep in our mind to win other competitors and get into customer's mind perfectly.

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