

TEN TESTS OF YOUR POSITIONING

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Ask yourself these ten questions to help determine if your agency is properly positioned for business development success.

1. Are you Afraid?

Most agencies are positioned too broadly, and thus repositioning exercises are usually (although not always) exercises in narrowing the firm's focus. If you do not experience at least a little fear over the idea of walking away from numerous clients-to-be then you may not be claiming a narrow enough field of expertise.

2. Are you Energized?

Fear should give way to excitement. A valuable new position should get the adrenaline going as you begin to imagine the possibilities. Even years later you should be excited about your ability to find and help people who recognize your expertise.

3. Is List Building Easy?

Once properly positioned, building your target list of clients-to-be to whom you will be most compelling and relevant should be easy. Agencies broadly positioned as relevant to everyone have a hard time deciding whom to target. Once your expertise is defined it's easy to spot the people you can help.

4. Are you Getting Attention?

Upon taking your message to the marketplace you will be met with interest or you will be lumped in with the sizeable group of agencies with homogenous or irrelevant value propositions - you will be largely ignored. Well-positioned agencies break out of the herd and get the attention of clients-to-be quickly.

5. Are you Charging More?

Profit margin is the best indicator of differentiation. The fewer substitutes your firm is seen to have, the greater your ability to command a price premium. Well-positioned agencies don't compete on price – they charge more and still win the business.

6. Do you Travel?

Experts are rare and therefore travel. Generalists are commonplace and therefore do not get invited out of their local market. Your ability to do business beyond your own backyard is a strong indicator of the perception of your expertise.

7. Do you Set or Impact the Buying Process?

Experts are expected to drive. It is assumed they have processes for doing what they do, and processes for selecting the clients for whom they do it. Letting the client drive the selection process is an admission of lack of expertise.

8. Do you Incur a Cost of Sale, or Does your Client Incur the Cost to Buy?

There are costs incurred when buyer and seller come together and the weaker partner in the relationship bears the bulk of these costs. Well-positioned experts have no cost of sale. Poorly positioned generalists suffer from a high cost of sale.

9. Are you Allowed Time to Think?

Time to think is an indicator of a well-positioned expert who is charging for the value being delivered (thinking). Sweatshops are too busy completing tasks and meeting deadlines to afford the luxury to think about their clients challenges, or their own. Got your feet up on the desk?

10. Are you Getting Smarter Quickly?

Expertise drives expertise. Once sufficiently focused on an area in which you can lead, your directed thinking in that area will cause you to get better quickly. You should be twice as smart today as you were a year or two ago. Are you?