

Your Product is Whatever Google Says It Is

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Your positioning and messaging may be the only way to differentiate your products from the competition. Or is it?

Over the last couple of years the economy has pounded like angry surf on businesses, forcing seismic shifts in the workforce, strategies and spending. Now it's becoming obvious to many companies that while they stopped investing in marketing and gone quiet with their positioning and messaging, their products were being defined by legions of voices outside their control or influence - not always a good thing.

While you are busy thinking about your positioning, the ubiquitous eyes and ears of Google had already found your product and defined it for the world. Google pulls information from every source imaginable including your website, product information, BLOG's, Twitter, your competition, dissatisfied customers and a host of other sources - and it happens lightning fast. We are all used to typing in a phrase into the search box and seeing immediate results. In most cases Google will send the results of a search to the end user within a half a second. For most companies Google searches continue to be a primary means for researching potential vendors, products and solutions. When searches are conducted - you are found. There is no margin for error when your product is whatever Google says it is - in a half a second. How are you defined?

Here are three things every product company can do to influence what is said about them.

- Positioning Your Product

Positioning is how you differentiate your products from others in the market place. Brian Tracy, noted author says, "Positioning refers to the way your customers think and talk about you and your company when you are not there." This is certainly true in the land of Google and Web 2.0 marketing. No matter what you or your product and marketing teams think of your product, the way potential buyers perceive it will ultimately determine whether they purchase it or not. The goal of positioning is to establish mindshare with your target market. Currently, Microsoft and Apple are lobbing grenades at one another to establish customer mindshare on criteria including ease of use, reliability and price. Once you reach your target market with a simple statement of purpose, you will be on your way to influencing how people think and talk about your products when you're not there.

- Message to Your Target Market

Of course, establishing a position does no good unless you can articulate that position succinctly and memorably to your target market. That's the role of messaging. Think of messaging as the promise of your company, brand or product. The objective of messaging should always be to connect with your target market, and the best way to accomplish this is to speak their language. If you craft compelling messages that speak to the challenges and the tasks of your target market your products will be memorable and relevant. Identify high impact user tasks, the biggest problem that your product solves, articulate and quantify the consequences of doing nothing, and then describe the unique way that your product will help. This will produce messaging that's relevant and differentiates.

- Symptoms Lead to Cause

Treating symptoms of an ailing patient can help; however, it's a sure cure to treat the root cause. Here are some of the symptoms that indicate your positioning and messaging are off the mark:

- Your sales team struggles to compete and in an act of desperation, create their own messaging
- Lead generation efforts produce meager amounts of qualified prospects
- Company employees cannot state succinctly what is unique about your product

- Marketing does not convey a strong and consistent message across all collateral
- Google searches don't express your positioning, messaging and value statements

If search engine queries about your products are making brand promises and defining your product in a manner that is not consistent with your value statement, it may be time to take a step back and regain control of your messaging. Contact ZIGZAG Marketing and to learn how to create simple positioning in plain English that everyone can understand and repeat, even if they're just browsing.