



By Richard D. Czerniawski

AVOID CONVERGING ON THE “RIGHT” POSITIONING STRATEGY

This article is an excerpt from my new book, AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing. You can learn more here: <http://bdn-intl.com/avoiding-critical-marketing-errors>

I’ve observed from my years of practice working with leading companies throughout the world that the “right” answer is the same for all of them. It’s “the first *executional expedient answer that has consensus.*” Unfortunately, it is typically not the correct answer when it comes to establishing a successful brand positioning strategy in the marketplace. The first answer usually reflects a product positioning, which, more often than not, does not serve to differentiate your offering.

To get to the appropriate competitive brand positioning strategy, the marketer needs to diverge with many potential brand ideas, reflecting differentiated positioning strategies, before converging. The potential differentiated brand ideas may then be used to engage and dialogue with the marketplace (i.e., real prospective target-customers) so the marketer may iterate his way to a brand positioning strategy that will work to create preference. By the way, this is a best practice. It improves your likelihood of success!

So, diverge before converging. Seek many potential brand ideas. If you feel you have an appropriate brand idea and positioning strategy early in the development process, put it aside, and see what additional strategic options you might generate. Use these in an attempt to best your first solution. This practice will help you overcome group-think. Additionally, it will lead you to peel the onion, enabling you to uncover key issues and reveal what matters to your target customers, within the context of their needs and those of the market.

Contrary to popular belief, your first choice is rarely the best or even the correct choice. It is typically substandard or highly flawed. As Ray Dalio states in his book *PRINCIPLES*, “There is almost always a good path that you just haven’t discovered yet, so look for it until you find it rather than settle for the choice that is then apparent to you.” Once you have additional options, use them to dialogue with prospective target-customers and adapt to iterate your way to success.

This article is adapted from chapter 3, Mis-Positioning “Brand Positioning,” of my new book, AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing. You can learn more here: <http://bdn-intl.com/avoiding-critical-marketing-errors>

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