



By Richard D. Czerniawski

ARE YOU DOING WHAT'S MOST ESSENTIAL?

More companies are appointing Chief Commercialization Officers or creating specific commercialization roles for new product launches.

The word "commercialization" is an interesting one. According to Siri, commercialize means to "manage or exploit (an organization, activity, etc.) in a way designed to make a profit." In many organizations, the role or purpose of commercialization is to launch a new product.

However, our goal should not be merely to launch a product but to make it a huge success. We shouldn't simply participate in a market with our new entry but instead, strive to become the (or a) market leader.

The market leader has distinct advantages over the "also-rans" in a given category. The market leader usually sets pricing, distribution, and promotional standards. Additionally, the market leader can leverage resources and initiatives. Notably, the market leader typically enjoys the highest margins and level of profit.

It pays to become the market leader or, at minimum, a segment leader. By the way, who wouldn't want to be the market leader?

So, what's most essential in achieving commercialization success? Meeting a launch date? Oh, yes, that's important. Our target forecast is based upon a specific launch date. Miss the launch by a quarter, and the company has lost significant revenues. So, cross your "Ts" and dot your "Is."

Is having the organization prepared with appropriate staffing, resources, and materials essential for successful commercialization? Undoubtedly! If we're not ready to execute, we will retard progress and, perhaps, even turn away potential customers. We'll fall behind the proverbial "power curve" and hamper our growth acceleration rate (GAR), costing the company missed opportunity revenues.

However, there is one activity, which profoundly impacts success that frequently does not receive sufficient attention. What is it? The development of a competitive "brand" positioning strategy statement.



The competitive brand positioning strategy statement establishes *how we want potential customers to perceive, think, and feel about our brand—not product, but brand—relative to our competition*. It serves as the blueprint for the development of the brand. As such, it guides all the functional areas in the organization and activities we undertake in “commercializing” our asset.

The brand is a constellation of values that we share with prospective customers. It creates a bond, a special relationship, based on those shared values but the customers' experiences with the brand. It is far more than a product as it creates an emotional connection.

As our blueprint, it guides everything we do that interfaces with potential customers (including how we interface with them) in establishing our brand. It's the "alpha & omega"—the beginning and ending—not just of marketing but commercializing for success.



All vital functional areas should participate in developing the competitive brand positioning strategy statement—marketing research, R&D, clinical, access, sales, regulatory, finance, etc.

Creating the brand positioning strategy statement is like building a mosaic. Each member has a piece of the mosaic we need to complete to differentiate our offering in a relevant and meaningfully differentiated way versus our chosen competition.

Just the way we wouldn't build a home only using carpenters (we need plumbers, electricians, among others)—and let's not forget the architect (that's the person responsible for commercializing the asset)—we shouldn't go forward with marketers alone.

When we conduct our competitive brand positioning strategy development workshops, we encourage our clients to include the broader team. They appreciate the importance of doing so and comply.



However, it is curious that many of those chosen to participate miss parts of work sessions or entire sessions. They have to duck out for another meeting and activity. We miss their participation and ability to contribute to developing a competitive brand positioning strategy statement.

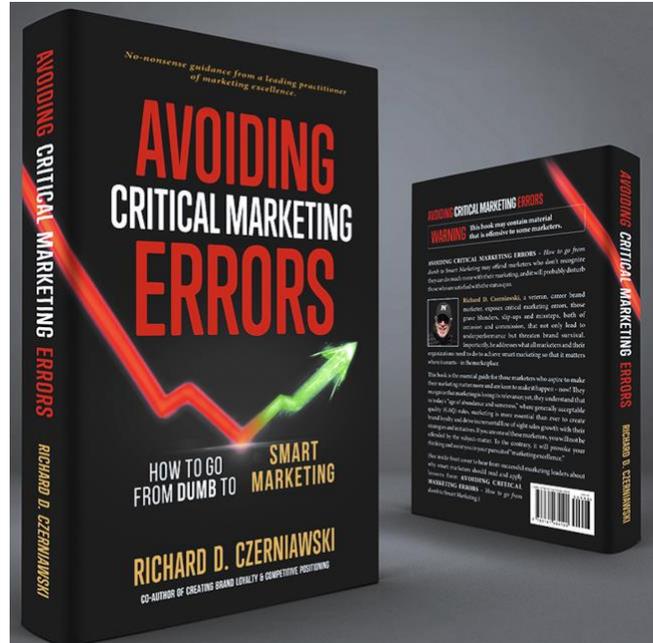
If they are not attending to something essential to do today, this very moment, to meet the established launch date or execute successfully, they are not doing what is most essential.

Just because we build a product doesn't mean customers will come and choose it. We need to create customers by building a brand. Our blueprint for brand building is the competitive brand positioning strategy statement.

So, what might you be doing that's more essential than contributing to developing a competitive brand positioning strategy statement?

Let's build it together! It will be more compelling and durable. It will help us achieve the commercial success that pays dividends for all the hard work and long hours we put into our individual roles, within our functional areas, in bringing the new asset to market.

Avoid mis-positioning brand positioning. Read chapter 3 in my most recent book, **AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing.** Learn more here: <http://bdn-intl.com/avoiding-critical-marketing-errors>



Peace and best wishes,

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