

Marketing positioning for medical optics – S.C. Dayane GT Impex S.R.L.: Part II, Marketing positioning. Theoretical-methodological aspects

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Abstract

Market positioning, concept introduced by Jack Trout and Al Ries, initially focused on the idea of creating a unique position in the mind of the consumer through advertising and branding, and evolved over time to include a more comprehensive marketing strategy, including product design, packaging, pricing, and distribution strategies. Positioning in the medical optics industry requires a specific approach due to the highly specialized nature of the market and the importance of trust, precision and innovation. The field of medical optics is characterized by innovation and progress offering revolutionary solutions that redefine how medical conditions are diagnosed, treated and managed. The present work explores the marketing positioning in the case of a business that deals with the marketing of medical optical products, but also provides medical services in order to run the business (consultations, optometry exams, glasses repairs). To determine how this business positions itself against the competition, we can analyze the strengths for which the consumer chooses these services, but also the points that can be improved for better positioning on the market. Part II of the present work presents the theoretical-methodological framework of marketing positioning. This chapter aims to review the basic concepts of what marketing positioning means, such as market research, positioning factors, brand identity, key elements etc. Information related to the survey method and positioning scheme is also presented.

Keywords: Marketing positioning, Marketing of medical optical products, Marketing of medical services,
Healthcare consumer

JEL Classification: D21; D83; L84; M31; M37

1.1. The concept of market positioning

Marketing positioning is a strategic process that is defined by the unique place held by a brand or product in the market or in the minds of consumers. Positioning can be defined as a crucial component of the marketing strategy that differentiates a company's product from those of competitors, aiming to create a distinct and favorable perception (Edu & Negricea, 2012). In recent years, several researchers, theorists and marketing experts have delved into the elements of marketing positioning, examining its theoretical and practical foundations but also its evolutionary nature in response to market dynamics and technological advances (Urde & Koch, 2014).

The specialized literature identifies several key elements for marketing positioning:

- Target market identification, which refers to understanding and defining the specific market segment that the product or service is intended to serve, this involves demographic, psychographic and behavioral segmentation (Dibb et al., 2019).

- The Unique Selling Proposition (USP) which focuses on the benefits and distinctive attributes that differentiate a product from its competitors. From Porter's point of view, this element is essential for competitive advantage and positioning (Payne & Frow, 2014).
- Brand identity and image that are highlighted by developing a brand identity that conveys the desired image to the target audience.
- Positioning statement, which involves a statement that communicates the unique value of the target market brand. This involves the target audience, the frame of reference, the point of difference and the reasons to believe in that brand (Yulistiana et al., 2021).
- Customer perception and experience, which illustrates the positioning reflected in all customer interactions and experiences. This aspect refers to product design, pricing, distribution, but also to promotional activities (Jain, Aagja & Bagdare, 2017).

The literature emphasizes the dynamic nature of marketing positioning, influenced by technological advances, changing consumer behavior and competitive pressures. Three significant trends have emerged in the last decade:

- Digital transformation - which implies that the development of digital channels has transformed the way companies generally approach positioning. Digital marketing allows more precise customization and targeting, increasing the relevance and impact of positioning strategies (Melović et al., 2020).
- Consumer-centered approaches highlight the fact that individuals are more informed and influence to a greater extent the way a brand communicates with them, this aspect requires a change towards consumer-centric positioning (Mothersbaugh & Hawkinsm, 2016).
- Sustainability and ethical considerations, refers to the increased awareness of social and environmental issues that led to the integration of sustainability and ethical considerations in positioning strategies. Brands position themselves based on their commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability (Korschun, Bhattacharya & Swain, 2014).

Marketing positioning remains a vital element of strategic marketing, providing a framework for differentiating a brand in a competitive market.

1.2. Using the survey to gather the data needed in the marketing positioning effort

Developing a marketing positioning strategy requires a deep understanding of the market, competitors, and most importantly, the target audience. The survey, as a data collection method, provides crucial information that helps companies understand consumer needs, preferences, behaviors and perceptions (Sarstedt & Mooi, 2014).

Using the survey in a scientific approach allows for in-depth exploration of consumer attitudes and behaviors by providing the opportunity to analyze responses more complexly, clarify ambiguities and explore the reasons behind consumer choices (Aaker & Moorman, 2023). This depth of information is crucial to developing a nuanced understanding of your target market.

Positioning in marketing is not only about functional benefits, but also about emotional connections. Surveys in the form of interviews are particularly effective in capturing the emotional and psychological aspects of consumer behavior, with open-ended questions and interactive dialogue helping to identify the emotions, values and beliefs that drive consumer decisions (Barnham, 2015).

Surveys are important for identifying unmet needs or missing essential features for the consumer, elements that are crucial for effective positioning (Brace, 2018). This information is invaluable in creating a unique proposition that addresses these unmet needs.

Effective positioning is based on clear and compelling messages. By analyzing how consumers describe their experiences and preferences, companies can tailor their messages to meet consumer expectations and preferences.

1.3. Positioning scheme - tool in planning the positioning approach

A marketing positioning scheme provides a structured approach to defining a company's place in the market by systematically addressing key components such as market segmentation, target market definition and unique selling proposition. This framework provides the clarity needed to align all marketing activities with the company's strategic goals (Andaleeb & Hasan, 2016).

Selecting the most viable target markets based on criteria such as segment size, growth potential, and alignment with company strengths ensures that marketing efforts are directed to segments with the greatest potential for success (Brace, 2018).

In a market with many competitors, differentiation is crucial for a company to stand out and capture the attention of consumers.

The positioning approach is based on a scheme that includes six well-defined stages (Edu & Negricea, 2012):

- The study of the brand situation involves an analysis of the brand in question, a comparison of it with competing brands and the conclusions related to positioning that emerge from the interpretation of the data obtained.
- Specifying the competitive advantage - this stage outlines the elements by which the company differentiates itself from the competition so that a clear positioning strategy can be formulated.

- Communicating the competitive advantage involves drafting a positioning statement by sending a clear message to the consumer through which the established differentiation elements emerge.
- Supporting the competitive advantage – the stage involves maintaining the competitive advantage obtained through the differentiating elements for as long as possible.
- The implementation of differentiating elements refers to the marketing mix (product, price, promotion and placement) – by what methods can the four elements be differentiated for the brand image to be unique and strong in the market.
- The effect of positioning – from which it emerges that a positioning is done correctly when the consumer notices the benefits and differences between the brand in question and the other competing brands.

The marketing positioning scheme plays a vital role in the continuous evaluation and measurement of marketing effectiveness by establishing clear benchmarks and performance indicators. The scheme allows entities to assess the impact of their positioning strategies and make data-driven decisions (Edu & Negricea, 2012).

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