

It's Time for Positioning

By Lynne M. White

The strained economy has slowed sales to a snail's pace. At times like these, companies often retaliate into a survival mode that immobilizes every critical aspect of their business. Survival is an illusion and creates a false sense of security that if you just get to the next day through layoffs and other cost cutting measures, then you'll stay in business.

Not true. You must be positioning for your future.

As we crawl out of the economic abyss of the past few years, take advantage of the down time, don't panic, and get to positioning for when things turn. Getting ahead of the curve is critical to a long life in the business community. The "staying power" is constant positioning. Here are a few thoughts on what to consider:

- Review feedback from customers, prospects, and past clients. They will tell you where you need to go. Don't second guess them -- and relinquish your egos! Give them what they want, not what they need.
- Review your current clients' purchasing behavior. Identify your highest product purchase, purchase time, cross sell, up sell, and so forth. This will tell you which products are satisfying the greatest pain, what the greatest pain is, and who buys. Focus on more of that in the future!
- Identify your highest profit products, highest volume products, most cross/up sells, and of course, understand where you are making money and where you are losing. Trash the losers!
- Redefine your target buyers: Define no less than three primary buyer profiles, each with a different sales cycle, return, etc. Make sure one buyer target produces immediate cash, one is your bread-n-butter, and one is the big fish.
- Reposition your products / services to the new buyer.
- Ensure the primary strategic foundation of the company is stable.
- Build a sales focused organization by creating a collaborative, internal, sales focused environment.
- Thread your business goals to sales initiatives to individual performance targets. Everyone is accountable!

Positioning should be an on-going initiative in your company. With the economy in recovery, there is a very unique and powerful opportunity in front of you. Exploit it!