

Positioning

WHITEPAPER



INSTICOM

The agency that boosts your reputation.



The Building Blocks for a Durable Positioning

A fresh outlook on positioning

A good positioning helps organisations to grow. It legitimises the organisation with its stakeholders and it is the foundation to build your reputation on. With a durable positioning, it is all about determining your position on the market and in society. Too often the latter remains left out, which is why organisations sometimes miss out on opportunities or lose relevance and influence. This whitepaper describes a practical approach for a (re)positioning, that allows organisations to reinforce their reputation and expand their social relevance.

Positioning

Traditionally, positioning is aimed at creating a distinctive brand position within the market or within a specific market segment, so that the brand gets a unique position of preference with its target audience. With just a market perspective, it will be increasingly hard to differentiate yourself. Organisations and brands not only operate in a 'market' with 'target audiences', but they are a part of society in general. They have to deal with social standing. Traditional positioning is therefore no longer sufficient to be recognized as an organisation or as a brand.

How can you make sure that your organisation builds a distinctive, relevant position, that allows you to gain trust and become an A-brand?

The core of new positioning: society and the market

Organisations should mainly focus on the position they want to uphold in society, aimed at citizens, politics and social organisations. Corporate social responsibility plays an increasingly big role in the trust stakeholders give. Clarifying the organisations's intentions on this matter is now part of the core of repositioning an organisation.

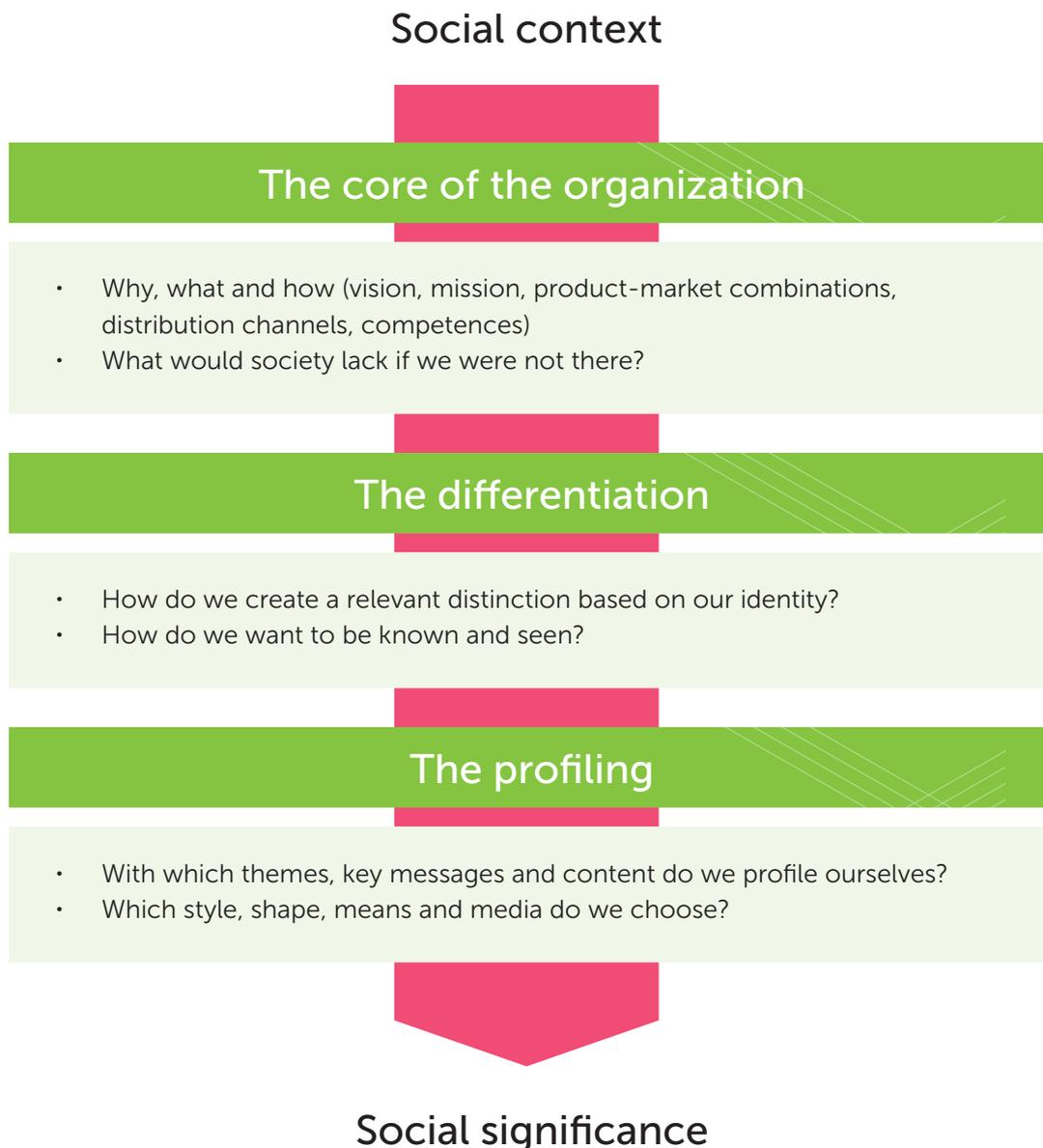
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) or social value?

Clients, prospects and other stakeholders expect that organisations contribute to solving social issues, e.g. CO₂-emission, child obesity or trade with countries with little regard for working conditions. Many organisations adhere to this by developing CSR activities. The problem is, however, that in many cases, these activities remain on a side track, don't receive the attention they deserve, cost a lot, or are not perceived as genuine by stakeholders. The success rate is much higher when the role an organisation takes up in society is in line with the identity and the core business, as is the case in e.g. Eneco (Limiting CO₂-emission by means of sustainable energy provisions).



Levels of positioning

Positioning comprises of three levels (see image). Many ways of (re)positioning are not efficiently executed, because it is not clear at the start on which level the positioning problem is situated. If the business positioning is not described clearly, or is no longer in line with the external world, than it is nearly impossible to determine a distinctive positioning for the social brand. And without a clear brand position, there is no firm foundation for communicating a corporate message.



Based on the hierarchy of positioning (Roland van Kralingen)

A durable positioning

The next questions – based on the three levels of positioning – are a guide line for repositioning. Depending on the level (business, brand or communication) the required time for each question will differ.

How can an organisation receive answers to these questions, so as to make its new position relevant, attractive and distinctive?

Insight in social context

Sensitivity to the surrounding environment and making their own role relevant characterizes succesful brands and organisations (see frame: examples of social positioning). The positioning must be in line with social developments and in concordence with the agenda and needs of stakeholders.

Collecting insight about the organisation's surroundings is the foundation determining your position. For example, gain insight into widespread social developments by means of trend rapports, expert interviews, etc.

Additionally, insight into visions, domains and expectations stakeholders have is necessary as well. Listening to stakeholders often yields surprising insights and helps choosing the position. Means tot his are e.g. stakeholder meetings and competitor analyses.

Inside-out or outside-in?

Is positioning an inside-out or een outside-in process? Good positioning is based on an iteratif process, in which the organisation must undertake research in the external environment, e.g. in social developments on the one hand, and in the needs and agendas of stakeholders (outside). On the other hand, the organisation must take its own identity, core values and competences into account (inside). Both perspectives are connected with each other in the positioning process. Dit goes for all three levels of positioning.

Choosing a position

Positioning means making hard choices, while taking the insights about the internal and external environment into account. For example, choices about:

Business positioning

- productcombinations (rejecting, adapting or developping services or products, looking for new markets, etc.)
- phrasing the social relevance (What would society miss out on if we weren't here?)

Brand positioning

- brand architecture (e.g. umbrella brand, endorser brand or separate labels)
- exposing the most distinctive values and characteristics of the organisation

Communication positioning

- domains of profiling: domains one claims up to the positioning
- core message: Which elements must the core message have, and which not?

¹Riezebos, R., Grinten, J. van der (2008), Positioning; step-by-step plan for a sharp positioning..



The chosen position must fulfill a number of criteria: feasibility, credibility (proof), ambition, relevance, uniqueness. It is important to involve people from different ranks in the process of making these choices, so as to ensure that the new position can also count on internal support.

Taking a stand

A social position also entails that an organisation has to take a stand in public discussions. For example, Google regularly makes a statement with her doodles, among other for gay rights during the Olympics in Sotsji. The fear at (commercial) organisations to rub people the wrong way by taking a stand and lose profit on that account, is usually unjustified. A strong position in a specific group is to be preferred over a weak position in many groups.

Phrasing, visualising and translating

Positioning well works inspiring. This goes for employees as well as customers and other stakeholders. A concise depiction of the position in word (position statement and core message) and image ensures the position to be a compass for policy decisions and communication.

Example of social positioning

Ikea makes design and an attractive living environment accessible to everyone. A clear position that also displays the social relevance of Ikea: people with a smaller budget – who are often left out – can live comfortably as well.





Want to see how your organisation can get more out of the positioning strategy? Please contact::

Hans Karperien
Managing Director

T +32 497 07 75 38
E hans@insticom.be

Av.Victor Jacobslaan 80 | 1040 Brussels
T +32 (0) 2 627.06.00
E info@insticom.be | W insticom.be

