

Targeting and Positioning Exercise

Discussion Guide

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Following the lecture on Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning, use this exercise to illustrate how one category of products can be further segmented and cater to many different, more specific target audiences. In the second part, students will make up a named character who represents the average person in the target market for their assigned product.

Materials needed:

Product packages from a variety of products within a product category. Chocolate cereal, toilet paper, and pain relievers make good examples. You'll need one product example for every 3-4 students.

Student Worksheets – one for each student. To assign credit for the in-class exercise, you may choose for each student to turn in a worksheet individually, or modify the worksheet and ask the students turn in one completed worksheet with the names of all team members.

Divide the class into groups of 3-4 students. Give each group a product example and worksheets. Have them report back after each question, as time allows for the size of the class. You may choose to only have a few groups report in for each question in the interest of time.

Question: What are the features and benefits of your product? Describe in as much detail as you can find according to the packaging and labeling.

Discussion: Use these answers as an opportunity to clarify the understanding of differences between features and benefits.

Question: Ford Motor Co. divisions develop a schema of a person for each model of car they produce, describing that person all the way down to where they get their coffee on the way to work. The idea is to focus on designing and manufacturing products with that person in mind. Based on the features and benefits you described, develop a character (a person) who represents people you think are in the company's target market for this product. Use as much detail as you can to describe who they are, how they live and anything else about them that reflects the wants and needs this product fulfills.

Discussion: Point out characteristics that reflect specific needs. Ask the students to clarify the characteristics they chose and to explain why those characteristics reflect the wants and needs of the target audience. Make sure they include characteristics from each category of demographics, psychographics and lifestyle attributes.

Question: Now that you have described the product and the target audience member, come up with a one-sentence positioning statement. Remember, positioning means how a consumer thinks of your product, especially with respect to competing products in the same category.

Discussion: Evaluate the positioning statements according to how well they capture the differentiating characteristics of the product in consumers' minds. As a follow-up, ask students to place their product on perceptual maps using features and benefits from the first part of this assignment as the axes.