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## **THE CONCEPT OF BRAND POSITIONING**

*The article provides analytical aspects of features of the positioning concept in marketing, studies the principles and opportunities for promoting brands, expanding market share, increasing of sales volumes.*

*Keywords:* analytical forecast, brand, positioning, trademark promotion, marketing, volume of sales.

*Файвишенко Д. Концепції позиціонування торгових марок. Дані аналітичні аспекти особливостей концепцій позиціонування в маркетингу. Исследованы принципы и возможности продвижения торговых марок, расширение части рынка, увеличение объемов продаж.*

*Ключевые слова:* аналітичні прогнози, бренд, позиціонування, продвижение торговых марок, маркетинг, объем продаж.

**Background.** Nowadays, the choice of the positioning concept and marketing communication tools are important factors in brands promotion and increase of their competitiveness. It is the formation of the concept of positioning and use of tools of marketing communication determined by the characteristics of the proposed or existing brand structure. However, the choice of a complex of marketing communications is complicated by use of separate elements of the positioning concept. On the whole, the relevance of the topic chosen is not ambiguous, positioning in marketing reflects the possibilities of brand promotion, expanding the market share and increase of turnover, as well making a brand acquire the nature of a brand equity.

Positioning issue analysis, term definitions, development of concepts were studied in works by well-known domestic and foreign researchers,

namely: D. Aaker [1], T. Ambler [2], O. V. Kendiukhov [3], K. Keller [4; 5], C. Lovelock [6], Y. Mohylova [7], J. Jacoby [8] and others. However, there is no agreed idea on defining this term as well as on formation of the positioning concept and on the use of marketing communications tools among specialist and researchers studying market positioning.

*The aim of this article* is to determine the essence and role of positioning, to generalize the theoretical experience, to develop the conceptual approach to marketing positioning, and to view the process of positioning diagram build-up.

**Material and methods.** The following methods were used in the course of the research: the principle of consistency of the overall connection and development allowing to reveal the dialectics of the interrelation between the positioning methods and tools, gnoseological analysis (analytical, generalization, scientific abstraction, logical, comparison) for precisising the main notions of positioning and conceptual approaches.

**Results.** Nowadays, efficient brand positioning has become a priority concept for many types of businesses, its decisive function being to distinguish a brand among its competitors, as well as to make a trademark acquire the nature of brand equity [3, p. 237].

It is positioning that becomes the most important stage in brand assets management strategy. If one occupies thoroughly developed positions, there would be no problems with directions for new products development, market expansion, communications, prices, and distribution channels. Apart from that, understanding of the positions occupied by a brand is a condition for confidence, clear thinking, and feeling of staff goal-orientedness [9, p. 126].

Thus, P. Kotler in [10] studies positioning as a set of measures helping a product to occupy its own place in relation to similar goods in the mind of the target audience, different from others and advantageous for the company; the process of creating a company service / product and image, based on the perception by consumers of competitive products / services. In his other work, the researcher sticks to the opinion that positioning comprises securing the desirable place for a product, which is, without doubt, different from others both on the market and in the target audience's mind.

P. Kotler's idea about positioning being a set of measures, correlates with the definition formulated by T. Ambler: positioning is a set of tools that helps to create brand image, and that image as much as possible should compare favorably with competing brands, which in the process of positioning using both real and imaginary characteristics of the product / service [2].

In [11], famous scientists E. Ries and J. Trout approach the definition of positioning rather vividly: "Positioning is an operation on the potential buyers' consciousness. Positioning starts with the product, a piece of product, service, company, institution, or even person. Positioning is not what you do to a product. Positioning is what you do to people's mind, i.e. you create a position for a product in the mind of a potential client. Positioning is how you differentiate your product in the consumer's consciousness".

In K. Keller's opinion, positioning comprises processing a group of consumers or a market segment for creating a system of knowledge about goods or services and forming positive attitude towards them [5, p. 117], i. e. here we also see the understanding of positioning as a process. C. Lovelock also follows this path, stating that positioning comprises the process of achievement and preservation of a distinctive place on the market for an organization and/or separate offers [6, p. 305]. However, contrary to P. Kotler and J. Trout, this opinion already does not give primary value to people's consciousness.

According to D. Aaker opinion, positioning being a process of creation of an image and value among the target audience consumers in a way that they understand why the company or brand exists in relation to its competitors [1, p. 56].

A. Mohylova [7] proves that products positioning on the market means providing a product with such a place on the market and in the buyer's mind that would not be a subject of doubts and is clearly different from other products. It is an integral part of a brand image, aimed, first of all, at consumer's consciousness transformation so that the brand becomes not just famous, but also substantially different from others on the market, has a special value for the consumer and is source of internal and external growth for the company.

J. J. Lambin's opinion is also worth of attention: positioning is developing the company's project and informing about it to allow the company draw attention of the target audience [12]. At the same time, M. Stone stresses that positioning is defined not by the company or product quality but by the way how such qualities are perceived by the consumers [13].

Thus, two main approaches to marketing positioning definition can be distinguished as:

- process approach: positioning as a process of image and value creation (J. Trout, A. Ries, P. Kotler, K. Keller, C. Lovelock, D. Aaker, H. Assael);
- comprehensive approach: positioning as a set of measures and tools forming a certain product or brand image in the consumers' consciousness (P. Kotler, T. Ambler).

The process approach appears to be more reasonable as positioning comprises an action, a sequence of certain procedures implemented through a set of marketing tools.

In the process approach aspect, research by O. Kendiukhov [3, p. 237–242] is notable, as he believes that the problem is caused by the absence of clear understanding how an ideal brand position should look like. A clear idea of an ideal brand position is a necessary condition for studying positioning as an integral process and for developing its efficiency assessment system.

The researcher proves that, logically, the understanding of the ideal consumer has to be the starting point in determining the ideal position of a brand. Thus, brand ideal position comprises:

- a) means consumer perception of a brand, which
- b) forms an ideal consumer.

An ideal position has to be treated as absolute, and only afterwards the criterial basis of assessment of positioning efficiency as the level of approach to the ideal.

Based on such a point, O. Kendiukhov formulates the definition of trademark ideal position – its perception by the consumer in a way making him/her absolutely sure in the unique advantages of this trademark over others, linking only positive associations with it and being perceived as an irreplaceable value and necessary life accessory; it is the perception when a consumer is its fanatic supporter, fully convinced that consumers buying goods of other trademarks make a wrong choice, and feels obliged to recommend such a trademark to others, and feels spiritual unity with other consumers choosing this trademark. Thus, according to O. Kendiukhov, positioning is a process of controlling trademark consumer perception, its aim being:

- convincing the consumer in the unique advantages of this trademark over other trademarks;
- formation in the consumers only positive associations with this trademark;
- formation in the consumers of the feeling that this trademark is irreplaceable and vital;
- formation of fanatic devotion to the trademark;
- bringing up the feeling of duty to recommend this trademark to others;
- formation of the feeling of spiritual unity with other consumers preferring this trademark;
- formation of consumer belief that other consumers buying products of other trademarks, make a wrong choice.

I. Vikentyev believes that positioning is a system of client stereotypes regarding an object, which makes this object understandable, safe, and different from others [14].

Synthesis based on the process approach for these and other definitions of the "positioning" notion allows making generalizations regarding a brand: brand positioning is a process of creating its image, distinctive features, positive associations, and value in the consumers' mind to form a stable image of a brand and ensure customer loyalty towards it.

Positioning as a process starts from formation of a brand position project or, as more frequently said in the literature, of the positioning concept.

D. Cravens sees the positioning concept as formulation of the essence of the company offer, indicating company's ability to satisfy its consumers' needs and preferences. This author makes an absolutely valid point that a company positioning concept has to be guided by the reasons making clients deal with it instead of its competitors, and to broadcast such reasons onto the target audience. The positioning strategy is a key element of the positioning concept. Here, again, we come across two approaches to its definition: strategy as a long-term plan and strategy as a type of marketing activity. For instance, in P. Doyle's opinion, a positioning strategy comprises marketing activity according to the choice of target

segments setting up the competition area, and company distinctive advantages determining the competition methods [15].

Positioning strategy development can be based on various grounds.

J. Wind distinguished six alternative grounds for brand positioning [16, p. 79]:

- 1) according to product functions;
- 2) according to advantages, problems solutions, or needs;
- 3) according to use;
- 4) according to users category;
- 5) with regard to other products;
- 6) based on break with a certain product category.

**Conclusion.** Thus, the results of research of the peculiarities of marketing positioning concepts allow making the following conclusions:

1) brand positioning is a process of creating its image, distinctive features, positive associations, and value in the consumers' mind to shape a stable image of a brand and ensure consumer loyalty towards such a brand;

2) any positioning concept is based on the brand differentiation, product for any attributes;

3) brand positioning concept contains the project of its image in the consumers' mind and a set of means to form such an image, including the brand name, main positioning mindsets, main advertisement plots, as well as the main communication means;

4) development of the main positioning mindset is mainly based on two principles: rational (for instance, "High quality for affordable prices", "Why pay more?") and emotional (for instance, "For real men!", "Because I'm worth it!");

5) prospective direction for developing an efficient positioning concept is the systematic approach based on incorporation of series of factors affecting the brand, degree of their influence, and resolving a set of marketing tasks for getting as close as possible to an ideal brand position;

6) formation of any position concept in marketing is based on the consumer perception, therefore, when developing the relevant positioning concept, one should take account of the whole set of external and internal factors affecting such perception.

There exist prospects for further research – to perform a more thorough analysis of positioning concepts, their use in practice, formation and implementation of brand positioning strategies in the present-day conditions.

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**Файвішенко Д. Концепції позиціонування торговельних марок.**

**Постановка проблеми.** В умовах насиченої конкуренції саме позиціонування відіграє важливу роль у процесі створення бренда, сприйняття сильної торговельної марки споживчою аудиторією, використання інструментів маркетингу.

Аналіз питання позиціонування, визначення терміну, розробка концепцій раніше досліджувались у працях відомих вітчизняних і зарубіжних вчених. Сьогодні вони також набувають актуальності щодо визначення цього терміну, формування концепції позиціонування та використання інструментарію маркетингових комунікацій.

**Мета статті** – визначення суті та ролі позиціонування, узагальнення теоретичного досвіду та розробки концептуального підходу щодо позиціонування в маркетингу, розглянуто процес побудови позиційної схеми.

**Матеріали та методи.** Застосовано принцип системності загального зв'язку та розвитку, методи гносеологічного аналізу (аналітичний, узагальнення, наукової абстракції, декомпозиції, логічний, порівняння).

**Результати дослідження.** Уточнено основні поняття щодо терміну "позиціонування", надано аналітичні аспекти стосовно концепцій позиціонування в маркетингу, а саме – розкрито існування процесного та комплексного підходу.

**Висновки.** Визначено, що позиціонування торговельної марки – це процес створення її образу, відмінних властивостей, позитивних асоціацій і цінностей у свідомості споживачів із метою формування стійкого уявлення торговельної марки та забезпечення прихильності споживачів до неї.

В основу розробки позиціонуючої установки покладено два принципи: раціональний та емоційно-психологічний. Перспективним напрямом розробки ефективної концепції позиціонування є системний підхід, що базується на врахуванні комплексу чинників, ступеня їх впливу та вирішенні певних маркетингових завдань щодо наближення до ідеальної позиції торговельної марки.

Перспективами подальших досліджень є більш детальний аналіз концепцій позиціонування, використання їх на практиці, формування й реалізація стратегій позиціонування торговельної марки в сучасних умовах.

*Ключові слова:* аналітичні прогнози, бренд, позиціонування, просування торговельних марок, маркетинг, обсяг продажу.

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