

**Book Title: The New Positioning: The Latest on the World's #1 Business Strategy**

Author: Jack Trout (with Steve Rivkin)

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**Summary**

This book is by two authors, Rivkin and Trout, where the latter is also one of the co-founders of the positioning theory. The authors showcased the relevance of positioning as a positive marketing strategy, and share their combined years of marketing experience.

The technology which surrounds us today has definitely played significant roles in our lives, affecting us in many aspects. Moreover, advances in the IT industry have been so great that numerous technologies have changed the way we live, work and play.

As devices, software and Internet-based offerings get introduced in the market, we are now being exposed to more and more products, brands and value propositions. This especially holds true in the world of technology, as competition is exceptionally stiff with companies trying to vie for their share of the customers' attention. And this where positioning, which is what this classic marketing book is all about, offers a solution.

**For New Marketers**

I feel that this book is a must-read for new marketers, as positioning is a foundational marketing concept. The book has given me a perspective of how a consumer's mind operates, and marketers should take advantage of that. Furthermore, the authors constantly share tips and tricks for a successful positioning campaign.

**Understanding the Mind**

Firstly, this book begins by listing simple facts about the mind which many may not know about. The authors guide the reader into how the mind works in relation to receiving and responding to marketing messages. They break it down into five essential characteristics of a consumer's mind:

1. Minds are limited
2. Minds hate confusion
3. Minds are insecure
4. Minds don't change
5. Minds can lose focus

The authors mentioned that as technology generates more information, minds are unable to keep up the fast pace. It becomes increasingly difficult for marketers to get a marketing message through to a consumer. Hence, for a product or service to have a foothold in the market, positioning is a necessary business strategy for companies.

**What is Positioning?**

Positioning simply means to 'own' a place in the mind of a consumer, like a bookmark. Trout and Rivkin stated that positioning is simply concentrating on an idea or a word

that defines the company in the minds of purchasers. Therefore, by understanding how the mind works, marketers can use it to their advantage and successfully drive demand for their products.

### **Marketing technology**

I find relevance in the second statement from a technology point of view. While most feel that technology is ever-changing and complex, marketers should bear in mind that “simplification” is possibly the answer to such complexities. Trout and Rivkin recommended focusing on one powerful attribute, and driving it into the mind. I agree with the authors, especially in the field of technology where devices and software have so many functions. I am sure marketers would not want to confuse customers with a list of features and functions in their marketing messages, and inadvertently postpone a sale.

In the second part of the book, the authors illustrated repositioning with several case studies. For the case of Lotus Development Corporation (later acquired by IBM), they wanted to inform customers that they were developing other types of products, and go beyond their brand name of 1-2-3 spreadsheet. Hence, the authors felt that “spreadsheet” could be used as a starting point to reposition them with the “groupware” concept. Through this example, I was able to appreciate the idea of using what is already in the customer’s mind in bridging to a new offering.

### **Useful tips**

For a marketer to understand the importance of positioning, one must not neglect the pitfalls of the process. Hence, drawing from their work experience over the years, the authors shared beneficial tips and real-world examples. I was drawn to the point on the importance of naming a product. A name can identify a product, differentiate it from competition, and can even aid recognition by consumers. Also, marketers are advised to trust common sense and embrace the obvious.

### **A Long-Term Process**

Lastly, the authors have identified the implications and danger of losing market position in today’s world. For example, with alternative web browsers like Firefox, Opera and Google Chrome, Microsoft Internet Explorer’s market share has been diluted. With the fast-changing, always competitive IT industry, consumer attitudes can shift quickly and unpredictably. Companies can lose sight of their markets.

Marketers should note that positioning is not a short-term effort. Building and maintaining a proper image and identity will lead to effective, long-term results. Therefore, positioning will be important in helping companies focus, and to ensure accurate perceptions are embedded in the target consumers’ minds.

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