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STRATEGIES AND METHODS OF PRODUCT POSITIONING

Positioning has got much attention and has emerged as a deeply investigated marketing paradigm. Positioning in theoretical, applied, and strategic aspects has become one of the key components in modern marketing science and practice.

Foreign scientists conducted research on conceptualizing and defining positioning. They defined five most frequently identified perspectives: competition, empty slot/mind, consumers' perception, differentiation and competitive advantage. Despite the scientific literature, there is lack of comprehensive definition for positioning, and there is no one entire definition of the positioning from international researchers [1].

According to the international encyclopedia "Britannica", positioning is matching a business and a particular brand with customers' needs while positioning them in the customer's memory, while discriminating against competitive companies or brands [2].

The most important object in positioning is a consumer. Two important points should be taken into consideration: the target group audience and competition. In intensively competitive markets a successful company should constantly reassess its sources of competitive advantage, ensure that the company's key success factors are permanently updated, effectively communicated throughout the organisation and monitored through the performance measurement indicators [3].

The goal is to give customers an advantage over competitors' products by recognizing the unique value of their products. Considering positioning, looking at the client's point of view is essential. One way to do this is to draw a two-dimensional map based on key buying factors that the target customer values and think about how clients can differentiate a product from a competitor. In our opinion, for successful positioning it is essential to achieve the following requirements:

1. Is the target audience chosen correctly for positioning?
2. Does the consumer perceive our positioning correctly?
3. Does the positioning of the company impress the client?
4. Does the product's positioning correspond to the company's positioning (corporate philosophy, policy)?

For example, if the user highlights the design and chooses the most attractive product from among many products, the factor in deciding to buy is the design. Alternatively, if the consumer chooses the cheapest product, price is the key buying factor.

It is also essential in the positioning strategy to determine the attributes that may accompany the functions. For example, it is natural that detergent can be associated with products from any manufacturer, but detergent "Joy" managed to impress users and create a big hit, daring to define the positioning like disinfection can be done [4]. American "Life Buoy Soap" also made a considerable impression, leading to the positioning of "Royal Disinfectant Soap" [5]. By giving users new value, we can increase the uniqueness of products and satisfy customer needs even if this is a standard feature.

There are several two features associated with one product that a user can remember. Therefore, after removing functions and attributes, we need to limit the user's criteria to about two. Enumerating product attributes and exploring positioning opportunities can significantly influence the success or failure of a marketing strategy.

The narrowing of attributes should consider the aim of positioning, for example, to make the company's products more attractive than other products of competitors.

A positioning check should be performed after successful positioning approval. After narrowing the attributes and refining the positioning, we should verify that the developed positioning is valid and effective by running various consumer surveys. It is not uncommon to lose sight of whether the target customer's needs are considered at the positioning stage, so it is necessary to check again whether it can be differentiated from competitors. An important step is constantly analysing consumer opinion about the company's products; only in this way, we can achieve marketing goals.

In order to build its market position, businesses should choose correct solutions concerning the introduction of new products [6]. Product positioning is necessary for the development of effective marketing strategies in modern competitive market [7].

In our opinion, positioning skills are also an essential step in the marketing process, as they significantly impact the sales and profitability of products. We believe that consistency with 4P

positioning and marketing mixes (product, pricing, distribution channel, and promotion) is essential for successful positioning.

Thus, we can say that the choice of positioning methods requires detailed study and the creation of new practical recommendations considering the company's current state and needs.

We concluded that positioning could not be ignored when developing a marketing strategy. However, to commit to positioning, we need to know the position, issues, and situation of the company. The positioning strategy is to position the company and its products more attractively than the companies and products of competitors in the selected target market. The company's leaders find the right place to which the company should move and then turn the shortcomings in the products of competitors into advantages in their products, based on the marketing strategy.

Thus, positioning is an activity aimed at creating unique effects for products and forming a unique, differentiated image in customers' minds.

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